

HISTORY 520 READINGS IN ASIAN HISTORY: SUBALTERN SUBJECTS AND "POSTCOLONIAL" HISTORIES

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Meeting Time: Th 2:20PM - 4:50PM
Location: LA 203
Office Hours: Tu-Thu 12:30-1:30
Web Page: <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/>

Course URL <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/HIS520SubalternCourse.html>

NAU Policy Statements <http://www2.nau.edu/academicadmin/plcystmt.html>
Classroom Management Statement <http://www4.nau.edu/stulife/handbookmanagement.htm>

Description, Background, and Objectives

The Subaltern Studies project originally emerged from a group of historians dissatisfied with the ways in which traditional historiography erased histories of subordinated groups in South Asia. Over time, however, Subaltern Studies has become intellectual hot property across the world and also developed a broad interdisciplinary following. Much of the current global interest in Subaltern Studies comes from the ways the project intersects with, and contributes to, a larger "postcolonial" critique. Historians and scholars from a variety of disciplines today regularly cite Subaltern Studies in their work, or use the Gramscian category of "subaltern" as it has been deployed by Ranajit Guha and other members of the Subaltern Studies collective. The "postcolonial" turn in Subaltern Studies, while contributing to its immense popularity within the realms of western academe, has also generated its share of critiques and disagreements. A number of scholars have questioned the premises, implications, as well as the results which the "postcolonial" turn has produced in "Subalternist" historical writings. These critiques of the Subaltern Studies parallel, though are not identical to, the sorts of questions being raised about postcolonial writing in the humanities, liberal arts and social sciences more generally

Why and how did the project move from studying subalterns to a study of "subalternity"? What does this shift mean for the scholarly and political agenda of Subaltern Studies? Has "postcoloniality" enhanced or attenuated the agenda of the Subalternists and historiography in general? Has "theory" overwhelmed "narrative" in the writing of history? Have critiques of the archives gone too far, or not far enough? These are some of the basic questions that the course hopes to explore. Through exploring the changing nature of the Subaltern Studies project, the course provides us an opportunity to evaluate the significance of "postcoloniality" in a specific historical and historiographical context.

Prerequisites

The course is open to graduate students from a variety of disciplines. A background in South Asian history or culture is not a pre-requisite. But given that much of the course does deal with historical and historiographical questions relating to South Asia, some understanding of South Asian history and culture will necessarily accompany our efforts to understand the debates surrounding "subalternity." Familiarity with current debates in cultural theory or social and cultural history, particularly as they relate to the colonial and post-colonial contexts, is desirable.

Readings

We cover a substantial amount of reading in this course. All required and recommended readings have been ordered at the NAU Bookstore. In addition to these, students will be required to read certain articles for assessing the historiographical debates concerning the “Subalternists.” These are available on electronic reserve at the Cline library.

Required Texts

Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak ed. *Selected Subaltern Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Ranajit Guha. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in India*. Durham: Duke University Press, reprint, 1999.

Ranajit Guha ed. *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986-1995*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Nicholas Dirks. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Dipesh Chakrabarty. *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton, and Jed Esty, eds. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Shahid Amin. *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Antoinette Burton *Dwelling in the Archive : Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India*. New York ; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2003.

Recommended (one from)

Partha Chatterjee. *A Princely Imposter? The Strange and Universal History of the Kumar of Bhawal*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Shail Mayaram, M. S. S. Pandian, and Ajay Skaria eds. *Subaltern Studies No. 12: Muslims, Dalits, and the Fabrications of History*. New Delhi: Permanent Black and Ravi Dayal Publisher, 2005.

William Dalrymple. *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857*. New York: Knopf, 2007. ISBN 1400043107

Amitav Ghosh. *In An Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveler's Tale*. New York: Vintage (reprint) 1994.

David Hardiman. *Histories for the Subordinated*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Assignments and Evaluation

In addition to regular attendance and participation, students will be required to write one formal paper, write six reviews of regular readings, and make at least one oral presentation to the class based on one of the additional readings indicated for the week.

Paper

The final paper for this class should be a substantial *historiographical review* between fifteen and twenty pages in length. For this paper, students may focus on either:

- a. The changing intellectual and/or political concerns of any one of the Subaltern Studies scholars. **OR**
- b. How particular historical themes (e.g. nationalism, ethnic ["communal"] conflict, gender relations, or the use of archives) are dealt with in the corpus of "Subalternist" writings. **OR**
- c. Evaluate the contributions, significance, and/or the problems associated with using some **SPECIFIC** contribution of the Subaltern Studies approach in the historiography of another region of the world (or the theoretical/empirical literature of another discipline) with which they are familiar.

This paper is **due December 10th**, and will count towards **40% of the course grade**. A typed proposal for this paper, outlining the topic as well as a preliminary bibliography, is **due by October 25**.

Regular Reviews

To ensure that students are well prepared for discussion, the course demands that students write a three page (double-spaced) review of SIX of the main readings between Weeks Two and Eleven (that is, September 6th through November 8th, inclusive). The review should provide a summary or overview of the theme of the week's readings, pose one *substantive* question relating to this theme, and provide an answer in outline form. Students should be prepared to elaborate on the outline orally in class. These will count towards **30% of the course grade**. I urge you to write more than six of these reviews, so that the best six can count toward your final grade. The reviews are due on the **FRIDAY BEFORE CLASS**, and **IN NO CASE WILL REVIEWS BE ACCEPTED AFTER CLASS DISCUSSION OF MATERIALS**.

Oral Presentation

In addition, on November 15th, each student in the class will make an oral presentation of around ten minutes on any one of the recommended readings assigned for the course. For most part, the choices of readings for presentation will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis. The presentation should summarize the argument of the reading and relate it to previous course readings. As with any work in a graduate seminar, I will also expect your own analysis and evaluation of the reading you report upon in your presentation. I will expect you to bring in a written outline of your presentation, which you will submit to me at the end of the presentation. The oral presentation will count towards **10% of the course grade**.

Participation

Participation is key to any seminar experience. You are expected to come to class having read, thought about, and **READY TO DISCUSS** the readings assigned for each week of the seminar. Just because you have decided not to submit a written review for a particular week of class, **DOES NOT MEAN** that you are not obliged to read or be ready to discuss the readings for any week. **20% of the total grade** will be based on my subjective evaluation of the students' participation in the seminar. Absences from class **FOR ANY REASON**, will be penalized.

The grading scale will be as follows:

90% + = **A**; 80-89% = **B**; 70-79% = **C**; 60-69% = **D**; below 60% = **F**.

Provisional Course Schedule for 2007 (subject to modification)

August 30

Course Introduction.

September 6th

Subaltern Studies: INTRODUCTIONS

Readings

1. Ranajit Guha, "Preface" and "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India," *Selected Subaltern Studies* (henceforth *SSS*).
2. Ranajit Guha, *Subaltern Studies Reader* (henceforth *SSR*) "Introduction."
3. Edward Said, "Foreword," pp. v-x (*SSS*).
4. David Ludden, *Reading Subaltern Studies* (henceforth Ludden) "Introduction."
(ELECTRONIC RESERVE) <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/LuddenIntroduction.pdf>
5. Loomba et al. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* "Beyond What? An Introduction"

September 13

Writing the Subalterns

Readings

From *SSS*.

1. Ranajit Guha, "Prose of Counter Insurgency."
2. Gyanendra Pandey, "Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism."
3. Shahid Amin, "Gandhi as Mahatma."
4. Gyanendra Pandey, "Encounters and Calamities."

AND

5. David Hardiman, "Coming of the Devi" (*SSR*)

September 20 *Paradigmatic Subaltern Studies?*

Readings

Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in India*.

September 27 *Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Criticism*

Readings

1. Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia." **(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/OHanlonRecovering.pdf>

2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." (SSS)

3. Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism." *American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994). **(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/prakashpostcolonialAHA.pdf>

4. Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing About Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today." (SSR)

5. Ranajit Guha, "Chandra's Death" (SSR)

October 4 *Deconstructive Histories*

Reading

Nicholas Dirks. *Castes of Mind*.

October 11 *Provincializing Europe*

Reading

Dipesh Chakrabarty. *Provincializing Europe*.

October 18 *Postcolonialism and Beyond*

Readings

All from Loomba et. al. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*

1. Timothy Brennan, "The Economic Image-Function of the Periphery."

2. Peter Hulme, "Beyond the Straits: Postcolonial Allegories of the Globe"

3. Jean Comaroff, "The End of History, Again? Pursuing the Past in the Postcolony."

4. James Ferguson, "Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development."

5. Nivedita Menon, "Between the Burqa and the Beauty Parlor? Globalization, Cultural Nationalism, and Feminist Politics."

Optional

Sanjay Joshi, "Introduction" and "Conclusion: Reflections on a Fractured Modernity" from *Fractured Modernity*.

INTRODUCTION <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/mybookintro.pdf>

CONCLUSION <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/mybookconclusion.pdf>

October 25 *Globalizing Subaltern Studies/ Postcoloniality*

Readings

1. Sumit Sarkar, "The Decline of the Subaltern in *Subaltern Studies*"
(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

From Loomba et. al. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*

2. Florencia E. Mallon, "Pathways to Postcolonial Nationhood: The Democratization of Difference in Contemporary Latin America."
3. Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, "Traveling Multiculturalism: A Trinational Debate in Translation."
4. David Scott, "The Social Construction of Postcolonial Studies."
5. Frederick Cooper "Postcolonial Studies and the Study of History."
6. Neil Lazarus, "The Politics of Postcolonial Modernism."

Optional

Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Winter 1994): 328-56.

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/dirlikpocoaura.pdf>

PAPER PROPOSALS DUE

November 1 *Recuperating The PostColonial Turn*

Reading

Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory*.

November 8 *Beyond Subaltern Studies?*

Reading

Antoinette Burton *Dwelling in the Archive*

November 15 **Student Presentations (Recommended Readings)**

November 29 **Course Review and Paper Progress Discussion**

December 6 **No Class: Write your papers!**

FINAL PAPERS DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 10th by 3 pm to be delivered *IN HARD COPY* to my box in the main history office.