COURSE DESCRIPTION

This capstone research seminar takes as its subject the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. This major event in the history of the modern world created two (later, three) separate nation-states in the Indian subcontinent and directly impacted the lives of well over 11 million people in 1947. This partition continues to play a large role in politics as an event that shapes the lives of almost a quarter of the world’s population even today.

Partition is also a fascinating study in historical interpretation, and has a great deal of room for new and inventive historical research. After studying different representations of the partition of the subcontinent in traditional historiography and film in the first half of the course, we move to the second and equally important component of this course. In the second half of the course, students will undertake an independent research exercise, related to the subject of the course, and write a final paper based on that original research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has two primary objectives. The focus of the first half of the course is to understand contending interpretations of India’s partition. Not only will we be reading a variety of different historical interpretations of the event, but taking advantage of a growing number of excellent films on the subject, we will also examine how this event is represented in various films. An important component of the first half of the course will be to see how cinematic and literary representations differ from other sorts of written narratives, and how the latter differ amongst themselves. The second major objective of this course is to have you learn how to undertake independent historical research and how to present that research in a form and with content acceptable to the historical profession.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Discussions are the lifeblood of a seminar. This is not a lecture class where you can expect to learn simply by reading and listening to the instructor. Rather, learning occurs through in-class discussions as much as from the readings/films and assignments. Recognizing that much of the subject matter of this course may be quite unfamiliar to many students, the first two weeks of the course have been given over to understanding historical background to India’s partition. There will be some lecturing involved during this period. However, after that, I fully expect that this course WILL be run as a seminar where students will take primary responsibility for knowledge-production in the classroom. To do that effectively, you must come prepared having done the week’s assigned readings and viewed the relevant films. To ensure you are ready to raise questions...
and discuss the material for the week, I will ask you to bring to class first, written discussion notes, and later questions as well as notes for discussions which will be evaluated and count toward a substantial part of your class grade.

In the second half of the semester, you will undertake independent research on a subject related to the theme of this course. All students will first submit a preliminary, and then a more detailed paper prospectus, describing their project, sources, their research questions, and a tentative thesis or hypothesis. The actual writing of the paper will go through a peer-review process before the final version of the paper is submitted.

**READINGS AND FILMS**

Two books have been ordered at the NAU Bookstore for this course.


In addition, there are a large number of articles either available on the internet, or available as electronic reserves (most of which I will try to link directly from the course webpage).

You are also required to closely analyze a number of films for this course. ALL the films required or recommended for this course will be made available through web-streaming BY USING THE BBLEARN PAGE FOR THIS COURSE. I will also try to have available for in-library use only in the Media Section of Cline Library. The films we will use in this class are:

- **Required**
  - *Gandhi* DVD 1695
  - *Jinnah* DVD 1290
  - *Earth* DVD 2231
  - *Division of Hearts* DVD 2330
  - *Silent Waters* DVD 2295
  - *Pinjar* DVD 1297

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

The primary requirement is that you attend all class meetings, and come to the meetings well prepared to discuss the films and the readings. I will not screen films in class, unless a particular section needs elaboration. It is your responsibility to come to class having already seen the film and done the readings we are to discuss on a particular day.

There are five different kinds of writing assignments required for this course.

1. **Discussion Questions and Notes**: To promote class discussions and ensure that everyone in the class is ready for discussion, I have asked you, on four different occasions, to prepare discussion notes, and on the last two occasions to provide your own questions too! The discussion is meant as a forum where you can present your own INFORMED opinion about the subject you study. It requires thinking independently about the subject. You will not find the ANSWERS for discussion questions in the class readings or films—only the EVIDENCE, that YOU have to use to formulate your OWN arguments about the subject. There are no RIGHT or WRONG answers to discussion questions, only more or less persuasive arguments. But, no argument can be persuasive unless it is
based on adequate factual, textual, filmic or literary evidence. So, DO take a position on the questions, differ with the assumptions of the questions even, but make your arguments with reference to SPECIFIC data, by deploying known and verifiable historical facts. Merely stating a personal opinion or a general feeling about an issue is not enough. Be as specific as possible about events, dates, personalities, and historical processes and cite page numbers of readings you refer to in your notes. Hold all members of the class to the same standards of historical debate.

**Discussion notes that either do NOT have a clearly outlined thesis OR do not point to specific evidence to support the thesis WILL be penalized.**

**NOTES:** You need to prepare at least two to three pages of (single-spaced) TYPED notes for the discussion. Your notes should be in the form of short thesis-type ANSWERS to the questions posed to you, followed by EVIDENCE to support that answer. You may simply point to page and paragraph numbers of assigned texts and point to significant portions of the films when indicating the evidence. Discussion notes do not have to be formally written, and will be evaluated for content and not style. You may use abbreviations and write these up in "note form" as long as you address the questions below. **Bring TWO copies of your notes.** You will hand one copy to me, and use the other to participate in the discussion.

**QUESTIONS:** Once you have some experience of the discussion process, students in this seminar should be ready to put together their OWN list of **discussion** questions. I expect to see between four and six questions, all designed to encourage discussion of the major issues brought up by the films and the readings. I expect to see questions about competing interpretations of partition. At least one question should make a connection between the film and readings, where appropriate. Do look over the questions I have set up for the first two discussions. While you are free to frame your questions in any way you choose, keep in mind that I will be evaluating them on the extent to which they reveal a close reading and analysis of the films and readings. You are, of course, free to bring up queries, separately from the discussion questions. You MUST also bring in **notes** (two to three pages, similar to the notes in response to my questions) which indicate your own positions on the discussion questions and the evidence you use to support your positions. Submit the questions to me – hard copy in my box in the History office, or via email – **by noon of the day of class.** Bring two copies of your notes to class.

2. **Prospectus for Research Paper:** You must submit, by the dates mentioned in the syllabus, TWO versions of your prospectus for a research paper.

* The first draft (around two to four double spaced pages) must have the following sections:
  a. A **description** of your research project with historical background explaining its relevance and significance and setting it in its historical context. (Less than 1 page)
  b. Some reasons **why you think this is an important topic**, in the context of your preliminary readings on the topic, and in the context of the history of partition. (Less than one page)
  c. A **bibliography** (at least one to two page) which includes
    i. at least a few PRIMARY sources you will use for your research, and how you will get them (the point is that you should propose a RESEARCHABLE topic, one that has sources that you know about, and will be able to access).
    ii. FILM(S) if relevant to your topic, and
    iii. A list of SECONDARY works you will use to write your paper.
For the second version of the prospectus, which should be between five to ten double-spaced pages, I expect to see:

a. a clear, formal, articulation of your **RESEARCH QUESTION** and at least a preliminary **THESIS** you will put forward in your paper. (1 page, max.)

b. a clear justification for the significance of the topic in the context of the secondary readings on the topic. I need to have a sense you have mastered the secondary works in your topic by the time you submit this version. (2-4 pages)

c. An **annotated bibliography** of the primary sources you have read, seen, or called, and how they will, or how you expect them to contribute to your final paper. (2-4 pages)

Treat the second and final prospectus as your first outline of the final paper. This is the last occasion on which you will get formal feedback from me before the submission of your final paper, so try to make this as complete, as thorough, as possible. You must show me exactly HOW your proposed paper DIFFERS from or ADDS to the existing writing on the subject, and HOW each entry in your bibliography will support your paper’s thesis.

3. **Peer Review of Paper** You must carefully proofread, edit, and comment on a classmate’s paper, and provide at least one page of **constructive** feedback to your peers. Please try to provide the sort of feedback on peer papers you would find most helpful yourself. Be considerate of the effort they have put into the paper, and keep in mind that this is **neither** an opportunity to “trash” peer work, or to praise it. Rather, it’s an opportunity for everyone to help classmates write a substantially better paper than the version they have submitted. Do correct writing errors, but also try to offer more substantive comments on your classmates’ work.

4. **Research Paper** Your final assignment for this class is to produce a fifteen to eighteen page paper based on original research engaging with the theme of this course. The paper needs to be double spaced, using a 12 point font, and have one-inch margins around the text. **The paper must deal with some aspect of the history of partition of the Indian subcontinent.** It needs to use at least one set of primary sources and should ideally *(but not necessarily)* include a discussion of the representation of your topic in film and/or literature. I will be happy to discuss ideas about possible topics with you as soon as you are ready and will provide some possible themes during class discussions as well. I have a link from the course webpage called “**The Research Process**” that can help you through the process of choosing and researching your paper.

The paper will go through multiple stages, starting with two drafts of your paper prospectus (see above). I will give you feedback on both drafts of the prospectus. You will then submit the first draft of your paper to a classmate (selected by me) who will peer-review the paper (also see above). A final, revised, and polished version of the paper will be submitted to me by December 2\textsuperscript{nd}. I expect this paper to be of publishable quality. If it is so, then with your permission, I would like to publish it on the course website after you have made the changes I suggest.

**EVALUATION AND GRADES**

Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two sets of Discussion Notes (total)</td>
<td>15 points (5 for first, 10 for second)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two sets of Discussion Questions and Notes (total)</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Prospectus (preliminary)</td>
<td>05 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper Prospectus (final)</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Review 05 points
Final Paper 30 points
Participation 10 points
(includes regular attendance and quality of in-class participation)

TOTAL FOR COURSE 100 points
The grading scale for the course will be as follows:
90+ = A; 80 - 89= B; 70-79= C; 60-69= D; below 60= F.

COURSE POLICIES
I expect regular class attendance of course, which is particularly critical for a seminar class that
meets once a week. Given that we only have around eight or nine substantive class meetings for
this course, missing even one class will have serious learning consequences. More than one
absence from class, unless it is for documentable reasons or other reasons allowed for by
University policy, will result in a penalty of 3 points deducted from your participation points.
More than three absences from scheduled class meetings, unless allowed for by University policy, will automatically result in a failing grade. If you miss a class, whatever your reasons for
doing so, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to arrange to meet or call a classmate and find out what
happened in that class. PLEASE NOTE: I do not give extensions on paper deadlines or other
assignment deadlines, except in cases allowed for by University Policy. I do not offer the option of
an incomplete or “IP” at the end of the course, unless warranted by exceptional emergency
situations.

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will result in failing the
course. Please consult the section on “Academic Integrity” in the link to NAU Policy Statements
at the top of this syllabus for further details. IT IS THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO
FAMILIARIZE HERSELF/HIMSELF WITH THESE MATTERS AS DEFINED BY THE
UNIVERSITY.

PROVISIONAL COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO MODIFICATIONS)
September 02: Introductions
Objective
1. Course and Seminar Participants’ Introductions
2. Introductory Lecture, Questions, and Discussion on Historical Background.

For Future Assignments
1. Start reading Metcalf and Metcalf ASAP, even if you DO have some background on
South Asian history.
2. ON YOUR OWN TIME (as homework) make sure you see the following films over
next two weeks. Gandhi (DVD 1695); Jinnah (DVD 1290).

September 09: Historical Background
Objective
1. To understand the historical developments from the decline of the Mughal Empire to the
period to the beginnings of the nationalist movements against British Imperialism, roughly,
1700-1930.
2. In particular, to focus on themes which better help us understand the events and processes which contributed to the eventual partition of the Indian subcontinent.

Readings
1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapters One through Five
2. Look over Outlines 1 through 4 on the course web page.

Discussion Assignment 1: Bring Notes for the following Discussion Questions: (please read the requirements under the Assignments section of the syllabus, above. You will need to have seen the films and done the readings above to be able to write decent notes on the following questions)

* Was politics in pre-British times organized around religious categories? Were Hindu and Muslim important categories in politics of the times?
* What sort of categories would you say were the salient ones in politics in the subcontinent before the establishing of British rule?
* Why did religious identity become salient for Indians living in British India? What role did colonial policies play in making these more salient for politics in colonial India?
* What class of Indians were most concerned with questions of religious identity in British India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Why? (class here refers to socio-economic standing)
* What alternative bases of political solidarities do you think were possible for Indians living in British India in the 1920s and 1930s?
* What questions might we be asking of the material you have read if Partition were NOT the focus of our course?

September 16: Film and the Politics of South Asian History Leading to Partition

Objective
1. To get a good sense of the historical events which led up to the partition of the subcontinent, in particular the “high politics” of India’s partition.
2. To begin to understand that this is a history which can be, and almost always is, narrated from very different points of views and to try and evaluate the merits and demerits of these different positions.
3. To be able to understand the strengths and limitations of different styles of historical narrative, in particular the difference between academic prose and cinematic representations.

Films to be discussed
Gandhi, Jinnah.

Readings
1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapters Five and Six
3. Robert A. Rosenstone, “History in Images History in Words: Reflecting on the Possibility

4. Read Outline #5 carefully.

Discussion Assignment 2: Bring Notes for the following **Discussion Questions**: (please read the requirements under the Assignments section of the syllabus, above)

* Whom can we blame for partition? Why? Should we?
* When did the partition of India become inevitable? For whom?
* To what extent are the films reliable sources of history? Why or why not?
* How and What do the films tell you about partition which is not in the history books? That is, what do they ADD to your knowledge about partition of the subcontinent?
* Why are films able to tell such a different story from the one found in books and articles?
* Is there one film that does a better job than others in accounting for or helping to understand partition? Why?
* What tentative conclusions may we draw about the relationships between film and history from this comparison?

**September 23: Research Class**

**Objective**

To learn techniques of historical research.

To acquire familiarity with resources in Cline Library and in the use of Inter Library Loans.

**Reading**

1. Carefully look over the webpage created for this class by the good folks at Cline Library  
[http://azhin.org/c.php?g=122580](http://azhin.org/c.php?g=122580)

2. Also do look at Research Links section from the course web page, particularly, the sections on, **“RESEARCH PROCESS”** and **“RESEARCH GUIDELINES and Sources.”**

**September 30: Understanding Partition: Film focus *Earth***

**Objective**

1. To understand how the events of 1947 have been represented in historical and popular prose, and contrast these with representations in the film.
2. To understand how these events had differential impacts across class/caste, age, and gender divides.
3. To seek to question the representations of partition violence in both film and historical literature.
4. To explore the relationship between violence and collective identities during events leading up to 1947.

**Film to be discussed**

Deepa Mehta’s *Earth*. 
**Reading**


**Strongly Recommended**


**Assignment**

Bring TWO COPIES of the **first draft of your research prospectus**, with a topic and some basic sources drawn from film, literature and conventional historiography that you might use to write the paper. *This should be about three to four pages, double-spaced.*

**October 7: Partition from Above and Below** : Film focus *Division of Hearts*

**Objective**

1. To understand the impact of partition on the lives of ordinary folks in the South Asian region.
2. To understand the very different concerns which animate personal/local narratives of partition and nationalist narratives of the event.
3. To understand how the personal and local get folded into nationalist narratives.
4. To discuss how and why it may be important to untangle the personal and local from the nationalist.
5. To understand how a documentary film approach to partition differs from that of a feature film.

**Reading**


**Film to be discussed**

*Division of Hearts*

**Discussion Assignment #3:** **Discussion Questions and Notes To be provided by YOU!** (Focus on readings and films for the last two classes, but bring in issues from earlier classes as well) Please read the requirements under the Assignments section of the syllabus, above. Your questions should compare representations of partition in *traditional historiography and film*. Your questions should seek to provoke discussions that help
evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different ways of understanding of the past offered by
i. different interpretations of partition by historians, and
ii. the difference between films and historiography for an understanding the event.

October 14: **Different Stories: Film focus Pinjar**

Objective
1. To understand and be in a position to critique traditional historiography on India’s partition.
2. Relating today’s readings to what we have seen and read so far, to seek to evaluate the strengths and limitations of both film and traditional historical narrative in being able to recount people’s experiences.
3. To question how can we tell the story of partition differently, in more inclusive and more complex ways. What sort of strategies of collecting information, thinking, writing or attention to different social groups do we need in order to change our perceptions about these days of momentous social change?

Reading

Recommended

Film to be discussed
**Pinjar**

Assignment
**FINAL Research Paper Prospectus DUE**

October 21: **NO CLASS, INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH ME TO DISCUSS RESEARCH PROSPECTUS. Sign Up Sheet to be Provided in Advance.**

October 28: **Gendering Partition: Film Focus Silent Waters**

Objective
1. To understand the experience of partition as being highly gendered, for women and men.
2. To understand, in particular, some women’s experience of partition and what this tells us about ideas of the nation animating the politics of partition.
3. To compare and contrast the written versus the cinematic representations of women’s
victimization and agency during and after the events of 1947.

Readings

3. TBA

Film to be discussed
Silent Waters

Discussion Assignment # 4 Discussion Questions and Notes To be provided by YOU, with questions centrally addressing the following theme: what does adding a gendered perspective to the history of partition, and a focus on the lives of ordinary people, add to our understanding of those times. Remember to draw on texts AND films for your questions and your notes.

November 4: No Class Meeting: Work on your paper

November 11: NO Class meeting, BUT you MUST make arrangements to turn in the first draft of your paper to the classmate who has been assigned to peer review your paper.

November 18: Peer Review of Paper
Objective
Provide helpful feedback to your peers in class on the first draft of their papers.
Reading
Peer papers.

November 25: No Class, work on your paper.

December 2: LAST CLASS
Objective
Turn in final paper at beginning of class.

The final paper should be part of a portfolio that includes your Peer Reviewed DRAFT PAPER, and both PROSPECTUSES (prospectii?) that include my comments.

Discuss and evaluate the learning process and outcomes.