



Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani
Hyderabad Campus

SECOND SEMESTER 2023-2024

Course Handout Part II

09-01-2024

In addition to part I (General Handout for all courses appended to the time table) this portion gives further specific details regarding the course.

Course No. : HSS F378
Course Title : Cinemas of India: From Past to Present
Instructor-in-charge : Spandan Bhattacharya

Scope and Objectives of the course:

This course in response to the evolving world of filmmaking and film-viewing cultures of India will focus on the different aspects of Indian cinema from its beginning/early years to the present form. As the world's largest producer of films, Indian cinema's existence as a popular cultural form and a model which could not be affected by global influence of Hollywood has become iconic. In this context the course will first provide a background of India's socio-cultural framework and the industrial landscape from where early cinematic forms emerged in India and along with that this course will trace some specific genres, thematic concerns and different forms of Indian popular cinema.

The course will focus on the silent cinema of the early studio years, the coming of sound, the emergence of melodramatic mode of address, the auteurs and art house cinema in the post-independence period, star system, the corporatization of some film industries from India and the rise of Bollywood/ Tollywood as global media forms. Course readings will include historical and conceptual writings on different aspects of Indian cinema. The course combines analysis of textual form with an engagement with historical context and the materials that have been crucial to the production, distribution, reception and consumption of the film texts in India. And the course's understanding of film culture is one that is dispersed across other old and new media practices which include the print public sphere, televisual forms and numerous digital platforms.

Objectives:

The course aims to familiarize students with various modes and methods of studying Indian films while introduce the idea of filmic production and exhibition and their changing patterns across the Indian film history. The course combines analysis of textual forms of Indian cinema with an engagement with historical context and the materials that have been crucial to the production, distribution, reception and consumption of the text. After completion of the course the student should be able to identify terms and concepts critical cinematic concepts like film genre, stardom and figuration, melodramatic mode, filmic realism, art house and film auteurs with reference to Indian cinematic practice; examine politics of representation in national and regional cinemas from India and recognize some recent formations (indie films etc.) from contemporary Indian cinema.



Textbook:

1. Vasudevan, Ravi ed. *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*, Oxford University Press, 2000.
2. Duggal Vebhuti, Bindu Menon & Spandan Bhattacharya ed. *Film Studies: An Introduction*, Worldview, 2022.

Reference Books:

1. Prasad, Madhava M. *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
2. Gopalan, Lalitha. *Cinemas Dark and Slow in Digital India*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2020.

Course Plan:

Lecture No.	Learning objectives	Topics to be covered	Chapter in the Text Book
1	Comprehend course objectives and material	Course objectives, textbooks and reference books	Course Handout
2-4	Know about the emergence of cinematic medium and its development in India	Indian silent cinema, emergence of talkie, early film genres	Text book 2, Chapter 14; <i>A Very Old Machine: the Many Origins of the Cinema in India</i> (by Sudhir Mahadevan) Chapter 2
5-7	Understand the studio era of Indian cinema	Studio era (focus on Bombay Talkies, Prabhat and New Theatres)	“Prabhat Studios” (by Hrishikesh Ingle); “Bengal and a ‘National’ Cinema: New Theatres Ltd” (by Sharmistha Gooptu);



			“Regional” Cinema or Products of Bricolage? An Introduction to Malayalam Studio Film of the Early 1950s (by Jenson Joseph)
8-15	Post-independence Indian cinema (focus on film economy, modes of production, industrial infrastructure, genres and style)	Several regional cinemas from India	Text book 1, “Introduction” ; Selections from Reference Book 1; <i>Madras Studios: Narrative, Genre and Ideology in Tamil Cinema</i> , (by Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai) Chapter 3; <i>Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition</i> (by Bhaskar Sarkar) Chapter 3 “The “Bollywoodization” of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in

			a Global Arena” (by Ashis Rajadhyaksha)
16-18	Understand melodramatic mode of Indian popular cinema	Indian film melodrama	“Emotion, Subjectivity, and the Limits of Desire: Melodrama and Modernity in Bombay Cinema, 1940s - 50s.”(by Ira Bhaskar); Text Book 1 “Parasakthi: Life and times of a DMK film” (by MSS Pandian)
19-20	Discuss mythological film and its framework of Meaning	Mythology as a film genre	The Mythological Film and its Framework of Meaning: An Analysis of "Jai Santoshi Ma" (by Veena Das)
21-26	Understand figuration in Indian Cinema	Figurations and the politics of representations in cinemas of India	Selections from <i>Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City</i> (by Ranjani Mazumdar); Selections from <i>Figurations in Indian Films</i> (ed. by Meheli Sen and Anustup Basu)
27-30	Understand stardom and	Performativity and stardom	Selections



	performativity	in Indian cinemas	<p>from <i>Politics as Performance: A Social History of the Telugu Cinema</i>. (S.V. Srinivas.);</p> <p>“From Superman to <i>Shahenshah</i>: Stardom and the Transnational Corporeality of Hrithik Roshan” (by Nandana Bose)</p>
31-33	Discuss many origins of Art Cinema in India	Film societies and art cinema discourse in post-independence India	<p>Text Book 2 Chapter 23;</p> <p>Selections from <i>Our Films Their Films</i> (by Satyajit Ray)</p> <p>“Introduction: Critical returns” and “Early films: The novel and other horizons” in Moinak Biswas (Ed) <i>Apu and after: Revisiting Ray’s cinema</i>.</p>
34-37	Understand Indian New Wave as a film movement	Auteurs, movements and regional aspects in Indian New Wave	<p>Reference Book 1 “The Developmental Aesthetic”;</p>

			“The Indian New Wave” (by Ira Bhaskar)
38-40	Acquaint oneself with the transition of cinematic medium from celluloid to digital	Indian cinema in the age of streaming platforms, OTT releases and indie film circuit	Reference Book 2 Chapter 2 and 3; “Through the digital peephole: LSD and the grammar of transparency” (by Kuhu Tanveer)
41	Review and sum-up the course		----

Evaluation Scheme:

Component	Duration	Weightage (%)	Date & Time	Nature of Component
Assignments	TBA	30	TBA	Open Book
Mid semester Test	90 minutes	35	16/03 - 11.00 - 12.30PM	Closed Book
Comprehensive Exam	3 hours	35	18/05 AN	Closed Book

Chamber Consultation Hours: The timings for consultation meetings will be shared on CMS.

Notices: Notices concerning the course will be displayed on CMS or other online teaching platforms as notified.

Make-up Policy: Make-up exams and make-up assignments will be granted due to medical reasons if students have prior clearance from institute authorities and if students have informed the instructor beforehand. If a student has an extraordinary situation that does not allow him/her to appear/ for the examination/submit an assignment, the student is responsible for intimating the matter to the instructor at the earliest.

Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy: Academic honesty and integrity are to be maintained by all the students throughout the semester and no type of academic dishonesty is acceptable.

Spandan Bhattacharya
INSTRUCTOR-IN-CHARGE

