

ANTH 280 W: South Asia: Anthropological Perspectives

Class #5309 • Sec #04A1

Fall 2013 • Oxford College

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Class room: Seney 209

Meeting times: M,W—4:20 to 6:00

Office Hours: by appointment

Course description: This course is an introductory-level survey of contemporary South Asia. Our aim is to explore the lived experiences of class, caste, gender, religion and politics through contemporary issues and concerns. The course examines changes in South Asian cultures in relation to European colonization, national independence, and recent development issues. Drawing on a diversity of materials (including anthropological ethnography, short stories, novels, newspapers, and film) students will learn to question and critically examine popular assumptions and to appreciate the contemporary and complex character of South Asian lives. The comparative and critical nature of this course is particularly useful for understanding the complexities of academic writing as we question and analyze nationalism and ethnicity through images, discourses and cultural understandings of self and other.

We begin the class at present day India's Independence in 1947. This is, of course, a critical event in the construction of the present-day nation-state. We will then go backward, looking at ancient and colonial history leading up to Independence, and finally we will explore the place of culture, religion, politics and globalization in contemporary India. It is important to remember that India is an incredibly diverse place in terms of religion, class and caste, politics, material culture and gender ideology. We will talk about specific places, particular issues and historical moments, all of which must be understood on their own terms, within a context. It is very important to remember that few, if any of the issues we will study will be able to represent "India" as a whole.

Course Objectives:

- To learn to think anthropologically about "culture" as a concept and a way of understanding the world: to ask, in effect, about the *contexts* of people's lives that make things make sense to them, and in turn to question the context of one's *own* life that makes certain things seem "obvious" or "common sense".
- To become more familiar with the history and contemporary culture of South Asia through map recognition, film, folklore and ethnography
- To think deeply about one's own culture on a college campus and its relationship to knowledge production here and elsewhere
- To use writing as an analytical and deconstructive tool that will help you take apart and question different aspects of culture

The following required text books can be found in the bookstore:

- Chatterjee, Upamanyu. 2006. *English, August : an Indian story*. New York: New York Review Books.
- McLain, Karlene. 2009. *India's immortal comic books : gods, kings, and other heroes*. Bloomington [u.a.]: Indiana Univ. Press.
- Mines, Diane P, and Sarah Lamb. 2010. *Everyday life in South Asia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Roy, Beth. 1994. *Some trouble with cows making sense of social conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Reserve Readings

Reserve readings will be on electronic reserve and will appear with bibliographical references in your schedule of assignments and will be posted on blackboard.

Assignments and Grading

- 10% First Short Essay
- 15% Second Short Essay
- 15% Midterm
- 15x% Journal
- 15% Class participation
- 10% Rough draft of final project (includes outline) @ 10%
- 20% Final research paper/project

Class Participation:

As you can see from the percentages above, I take class participation VERY seriously. In nearly every classroom, and in anthropology *especially*, sharing your ideas of culture and your understandings of the readings are a critical part of the learning experience. If you have a question, it's likely that someone else does, also. Class participation includes attendance, timely completion of reading assignments (by the class in which the material is to be discussed), and regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussions. This class is based on a student-centered and active-learning approach because I think anthropology is a discipline best experienced through a combination of texts and practical engagement. I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and share their experiences with others. Your class participation will be graded on whether or not you demonstrate that you have actually read and engaged with the assigned readings. Questions regarding the readings are *highly encouraged* and are an excellent way of helping yourself and other students. You will also get participation points for making connections between readings that show you are actively engaging with the concepts and ideas expressed in class. Included in your class participation grade are journal entries, assigned leading of class discussions, and possible random **pop quizzes**. Quizzes are designed to encourage timely reading, and will be graded as follows: a – means that you have not demonstrated that you did the readings. ¶ means that it seems you have done the readings but perhaps not had much time to think about them. ¶+ means you have demonstrated that you did a careful reading of the assignment and have thought about their implications and connections to other readings. Class participation also includes attendance at Bollywood movie nights. There will be one per month and you are required to attend.

Attendance and being on time:

Though your attendance is part of your class-participation grade, it warrants a separate heading. One of the major premises of this class is that we are here to help one another learn. If you're not in class you can't participate in this critical experience. You get two free absences, no questions asked. But, if you miss more than two classes, you should be aware that your FINAL grade will suffer BY 1/3 A GRADE FOR EACH CLASS THAT YOU MISS AFTER YOUR SECOND ABSENCE. Absences are only excused if ALL absences (including the first two) are excused. If you are late to class more than three times it will be counted as an absence. Much of this class is focused on in-class discussion and activities that you will not be able to make up and will affect your grade. If *you* miss class, *everyone* suffers.

Assignments:

All papers and assignments must be turned in on time. Turning in a paper late causes significant problems both for me (in trying to keep track of individual papers and juggling assignments) and also for you, because you will then continue to be behind throughout the class. In addition, turning in late papers is unfair to those who completed their papers on time. It is up to my discretion whether I will accept a late paper. Generally, I will not. However, on those rare occasions when I do, the paper's grade

will fall by 1/3 grade for each day it is late (i.e. a B+ will become a B, or an A- will become a B+). Any paper turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be considered a day late.

Essays: Essay topics will be handed out at least a week prior to their due date. The final project assignment will be provided shortly after midterms.

Journals: Journals are daily/weekly recordings of connections you make between the class and the outside world. They can include literature, drawings, poetry, news articles, speeches, historical documents or current events. The journals will be graded based on creative use of outside resources, aesthetics, number of entries (necessary but not sufficient for an “A” journal would be a minimum of weekly entries), and thoughtful/insightful connections to class topics.

Exams: The midterm will consist of multiple choice and short answer as well as a map quiz. It will be held in class according to the schedule. There is no final exam in this class. There is, however, a final project due at the end of class. There is no final exam in this course.

Final Project: The final project will be a 7-10 page research paper of your own choosing. We will work together as a class to help one another choose appropriate topics, connect to the concepts we have learned in class, and on academic writing style.

Reading:

The reading in this class is heavy and you will be expected to keep up, participate and be an active member of class. This is a small class and not doing your readings will become quickly apparent. If you have trouble keeping up (or even if you do not) I suggest reading the short “How to Read” by Edward (listed below in the writing section). It is short and is likely to save you much time in the future. Please come to see me (the earlier the better) if you would like to talk over strategies for reading and keeping up in class, effective note taking (you should be taking notes on every reading) or how to recognize what is most important in your reading.

Computers, Cell Phones, and Other Electronic Devices:

Note taking in this class is critical, but you should not need to rely on a computer. My experience with computers in the classroom is that they provide more of distraction than assistance, and I ask that they remain put away during class time unless they are being used for presentation purposes or in group work. Cell phones should be off and packed away in the classroom. Leaving in the middle of class to have a phone conversation is not only obvious, but I (and the majority of your classmates) also consider it rude and unacceptable. The same goes for texting underneath the table during class. Other electronic devices should be turned off and put away unless they are being shared with the class in a presentation/demonstration context.

Written Work:

Academic Honor Code: Oxford College takes its responsibility for teaching and maintaining the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity very seriously. In keeping with this commitment, the college is intolerant of any academic misconduct and is especially concerned about cheating and plagiarism. You are each responsible for knowing and understanding the very high standards you are expected to uphold at Oxford College and to read and understand Oxford’s policy on plagiarism, which can be found here (plagiarism is Article 13:

http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/

All papers must include a full bibliography and in-text citations that include the author’s last name, date of publication and page number. For instance: (Durkheim 1984: 35). Papers turned in without citations

and a bibliography will lose 1/3 grade (An A- will become a B+, a B+ will become a B). Cite EVERYTHING. If you use anything from anywhere, CITE. If your best friend says something, CITE them. If you get an idea from something, CITE it and explain how that idea came from something else. CITE EVERYTHING. In anthropology, we question “common knowledge claims” by looking at cross cultural evidence. So even when you find something that seems to be “common knowledge,” in anthropology: CITE IT.

All writing assignments are subject to the following reading/writing criteria which can be found online on blackboard:

- 1) How to Read by Paul N. Edward**
- 2) The AAA Citation Guide (examples begin on page 7)**
- 3) Dr. DeNicola’s writing Rubric “How I Grade”**
- 4) “Chapter 1: Seeing” FROM *Writing Analytically* by Rosenwasser and Stephen**

The Small Print

Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.

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*One of the key benefits of a liberal arts education is the instructor’s ability to react to students’ needs, interests and abilities. In the spirit of providing you with an education that remains responsive to particular contexts, **this syllabus and schedule are subject to change.***

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Disabilities: *If you are a student with a documented disability on record and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class please make an appointment to see me in my office. If you need a note taker please see me immediately after class.*

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Religious Holidays: *If you must miss class for a religious holiday, please notify me, in writing, one week before class in order to be excused (assignments due on a particular day must still be turned in on or before the day specified).*