**HIST 323: Language, literature and power in South Asia**

Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Ananya Chakravarti

Office: ICC 620

Office hours: TR, 10:00-11:00 am or by appointment. Extra hours will be scheduled in weeks where major assignments are due.

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Lecture: TR, 11:00-12:15 Reiss 261A

**Course description**:

South Asia is historically one of the richest linguistic ecologies in the world, characterized by widespread multilingualism and contact and rich histories of literary and oral traditions spanning millennia. However, language, as a vehicle for community-building, self-expression and rule, is also deeply enmeshed in the history of power in the subcontinent. This course will explore the long history of language in South Asia, from the ancient to the present day. Topics will include the establishment of Sanskrit in classical India; the rise of vernacular literatures in medieval India; the role of Persian in court cultures; print culture and the question of language in the anti-colonial and nationalist movements and the creation of Hindi and Urdu after 1947; federal language policy and identity in postcolonial South Asia; subaltern oral cultures, particularly among tribal populations and language death; and the rise of English in modern South Asia. Students will also be introduced to a variety of the poetic and literary traditions of the region in historical context.

**Course goals**

This course will familiarize students with the basic modern colonial and post-colonial history of South Asia, relating to language and literary traditions, and introduce students to some of the major debates in the field. Students will also learn how to research and write an academic essay, using primary sources.

**Classroom etiquette**

Cellphones must be turned off upon entering the classroom. **If a cellphone goes off in the middle of class, a pop quiz will be given to the whole class.**

The use of laptops or any other electronic devices are strictly forbidden during class. (If you have disability-related needs requiring electronic aids for note-taking, please see the instructor.) Otherwise, all notes must be taken the old-fashioned way- with pen and paper.

**Students must bring a copy of class readings to all discussion sessions.**

**Attendance policy:**

Students must inform the instructor **during the first week of classes** about any planned absences during the course of the semester (for example, for religious observances or extra-curricular activities). Depending on the number of foreseeable absences, the student may be asked to withdraw from the course.

Students may miss one discussion session with no penalty. Each further absence will result in the loss of half a grade. More than four absences will result in automatic failure.

If students miss a discussion session for unavoidable medical or personal reasons, the absence may be excused by the instructor. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible and bring any relevant documentation (e.g. of illness) to the meeting. Even if absences are excused, students remain responsible for assigned work and will be provided with the opportunity to make up any missed work without penalty.

Students with documented and qualifying learning, physical and psychological disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC).  Students registered with the ARC must present the instructor with a letter from the ARC outlining the recommended accommodations at the beginning of the semester.

Resources are available for all students, including those not registered with ARC, when they experience overwhelming life events or academic pressures. For more information, please see: http://caps.georgetown.edu/

**Grading**:

*Participation* (25%):The success of this course will depend on students coming prepared to discussions sessions and participating actively in our shared conversation. Each week, beginning in the third week, two students will lead the discussion by presenting a succinct summary of the readings and raising questions for the group based on those readings. Furthermore, students will be expected to write a brief blog post (1-3 paragraphs) on the readings on our Blackboard discussion forum each week, focusing especially on the literary selections for that week. When given a prompt, the post must be a response to that prompt.

*Map quiz* (5%) *and basic timelines and terms quiz* (10%)

*Primary source analysis* (15%): Students must identify one primary sources that he/she will use as evidence for the final paper. These may be drawn from the primary sources provided in the syllabus or found elsewhere. In a 3-page paper, students must explain clearly the context of these sources, provide a brief summary of their contents and indicate how these sources are of relevance to the topic chosen for the final essay. The analyses may build upon the blog posts the student has posted on Blackboard.

*Annotated bibliography (15%)*: Students will be expected to turn in a 3 page annotated bibliography of their research readings in preparation of their final essay. The bibliography must include a minimum of five academic sources outside of required class readings. (This list may include selections from the optional readings provided in this syllabus. At least one reading must be a book-length monograph.) Annotations must make clear the central thesis of the work and should include a critical assessment of this thesis and the evidence provided in its support.

*Final essay* (30%): Students will be required to write a 10-12 page research paper (not including the bibliography) on one of the topics discussed in this class, to be decided in consultation with the instructor. It is strongly encouraged that students start researching their topics early in the course. All essays must be original and present a clear argument with supporting evidence. The paper must draw upon the annotated bibliography developed for the assignment listed above and must draw upon at least two primary sources.

Students are required to meet with the instructor in advance for approval of the topic early in the semester. Students are strongly encouraged to submit a detailed, written outline for the paper, indicating their thesis and the evidence used in its support, in advance of this meeting with the instructor.

*Optional*: In lieu of a research essay, students may submit a creative work (no more than 8 pages) with a shorter explanatory essay attached (5-6 pages), explaining the choices made by the student and the research evidence used in composing the creative piece. The piece may be a pastiche of any of the genres we have come across in our exploration of the literary pasts of South Asia or an original work of historical fiction. Students MUST receive prior approval for this option and discuss in depth their plan with the instructor.

Late submission will result in the loss of one grade for each day the assignment is late.

All written work for the course must be double-spaced, paginated, in 12-point Times New Roman type, with one-inch margins on all four sides, and with your name, name of the class and the date, single-spaced and in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. The title of the paper or assignment must be presented in bold 12-point font on the first page. Footnotes must be in 10-point font and single-spaced; do not use endnotes or in-line, parenthetical citations.

Please use the Chicago style for all citations: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>

**The penalty for plagiarism in this course will be an automatic grade of F. Please familiarize yourself with the provisions of the honor code.**

**Required books:**

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* (any edition)

**E-reserve (Blackboard)**:

Unless otherwise specified, all readings will be made available online.

**Readings**:

*1/12; 1/17: Listening to the sages*

Michael Witzel and Stephanie Jamison, “Vedic Hinduism,” sections I, II and IV

Bruce Lincoln, “How to read a religious text: reflections on some passages of the Chandogya Upanisad,” *History of Religions*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2006): 127-139

*Primary source:*

Chandogya Upanisad, chapters 1, 4.1-3

1/19; 1/24*:* *Sanskrit cosmopolis*

Sheldon Pollock, “The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300-1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology,” in *The Ideology and Status of Sanskrit*, ed. Jan E. M. Houben (Leiden: Brill, 1996): 197-249

David Ludden, *India and South Asia: A Short History* (London: OneWorld, 2013): 53-85

*Primary source*:

Extract from Dandin, *Kavyadarsa* (trans. S. Belvalkar)

1/26; 1/31: *Speaking locally*

Christian Novetzke, *The Quotidian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016):39-102, 114-127.

G. N. Devy, “Jnanadeva’s Agenda” in *The G N Devy Reader* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009): 49-59

*Primary Source:*Extract from Jnandeva, *Bhavarta Dipika*

2/2; 2/7*: The Sultan and the Sheikh*

Simon Digby, “The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan”

Richard Eaton, “Sufi folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam”

Muzaffar Alam, “The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan,” 131-158

*Primary source:*

Selections from Amir Khusrau

**MAP QUIZ**

2/9; 2/14*:* *Singing outside*

Excerpts from John Stratton Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices*

Karen Pechilis, “The Story of the Classical Tamil Woman Saint, , Karaikkal Ammaiyar: A Translation of her story from Cekkilar’s *Periya Puranam*,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2006): 171-184

*Primary source:*Selections of female *bhakti* poets

2/16; 2/21: *The Mughal court*

Audrey Truschke, *Culture of Encounters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016): 27-63 (166-202 *optional*) John Stratton Hawley, “Last seen with Akbar” in *Three Bhakti Voices,* 181-193

Muzaffar Alam, “The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan,” in Sheldon Pollock, ed., *Literary Cultures in History* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003): 159-189

*Primary sources:*Selections from Abu’l Fazal

Selections from Mir Taqi Mir

2/23; 2/28*: The language of command*

Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*

Vinay Dhadwadkar, “Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literature”

*Optional, but highly recommended:*

Sheldon Pollock, “Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj”

*Primary Source:*

Macaulay’s Minute on Education

William Jones, Third anniversary discourse for the Asiatic Society: <http://www.eliohs.unifi.it/testi/700/jones/Jones_Discourse_3.html>

**BASIC TIMELINES AND TERMS QUIZ**

3/2; 3/14*: Articulating the nation*

David Lelyveld, “The Fate of Hindustani: Colonial Knowledge and the Project of a National Language,” 189-214.

Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940* (Oxford University Press, 2002): 125-174 (optional); 309-383 (required)

3/16; 3/21*: The partition of language*

Alyssa Ayres, *Speaking like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

France Bhattacharya, “East Bengal: Between Islam and Regional Identity,” in Christopher Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (Anthem Press, 2002): 39-60.

*Primary Sources:*

Excerpts from Sadat Hasan Manto, Shamsur Rahman, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Amrita Pritam

3/23; 3/28*: How to speak in the postcolony*

Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 189-208

Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue* (Indiana University Press, 2009): 2-34, 68-99, 189-212

*Primary sources*

Selections of modern Telegu poems

3/30; 4/4: *Subaltern voices*

Philip Constable, “Early Dalit Literature and Culture in Late Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Western India,” *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 31, No. 2 (1997)

GN Devy, *A Nomad Called Thief: Reflections on Adivasi Silence*

*Primary Sources:*

Excerpts from Namdeo Dhasal, Meena Kandasamy, and GN Devy , ed., *Painted Worlds: An Anthology of Tribal Literature*

4/6; 4/11; 4/18*: English-Vinglish*

Aatish Taseer, “How English ruined Indian literature,” *New York Times*, March 19 2015: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/opinion/sunday/how-english-ruined-indian-literature.html?_r=0>

*Primary Source:*

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

**PRIMARY SOURCE DUE 4/6/2016**

4/20; 4/25; 4/27: *The death of language*

Sheldon Pollock, “The death of Sanskrit?”

G N Devy, *The Being of Bhasha*

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE 4/20/2017**

**FINAL PAPER DUE 5/5/2017**