

Cultures & Contexts: India - V55.0516

Spring 2011/TR 11:00-12:15 PM

Professor: Tejaswini Ganti
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the history, culture, society, and politics of modern India. Home to one billion people, eight major religions, twenty official languages (with hundreds of dialects), histories spanning several millenia, and a tremendous variety of customs, traditions, and ways of life, India is almost iconic for its diversity. We examine the challenges posed by such diversity as well as how this diversity has been understood, represented, and managed, both historically and contemporarily. Topics to be covered include caste, gender, social identity, social inequality, religion, religious nationalism, colonialism, anticolonial nationalism, nation-building, violence, and popular culture.

REQUIREMENTS

I. Exams: 45%

Both exams will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions.

II. Assignments – 35% consisting of 3 short papers ranging from 2-8 pages

III. Recitations – 20% - Attendance is mandatory

COURSE MATERIALS

Chatterjee, Gayatri

2002 *Mother India*. BFI Film Classics.

Eck, Diana

1998 *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. Columbia U.P.

Ganti, Tejaswini

2004 *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema*. Routledge.

Narayan, Kirin.

1989 *Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching*. Pennsylvania.

- **There will also be a series of readings available for you to read/download/print from the course's Blackboard site, these will be marked with a B on the syllabus**

COURSE TOPICS:

- The politics of representation
- Social Organization: caste and class
- Popular Hinduism
- Hindu Nationalism
- The politics of history
- Colonialism
- Anti-colonial nationalism
- Partition of the subcontinent
- Postcolonial nationalism and nation-building
- Kashmir conflict

- Popular culture – specifically popular Hindi cinema, aka “Bollywood”