Course Syllabus

Film has the ability to project powerful images of a society in ways conventional academic mediums cannot. This is particularly true in learning about India, which is home to the largest film industries in the world. This course explores images of Indian society that emerge through the medium of film. Our attention will be focused on the ways in which Indian society and history is depicted in film, critical social issues being explored through film; the depicted reality vs. the historical reality; and the powerful role of the Indian film industry in affecting social orientations and values.

Class format

Professor Weiss will open each class with a short lecture on the issues which are raised in the film to be screened for that day. We will then view the selected film, followed by a short break, and then extensive in-class discussion. Given the length of most Bollywood films, we will need to fast-forward through much of the song/dance and/or fighting sequences.

There will be assigned readings for each day which can be found either in the following required texts (available at the UO bookstore) or through hot-links from this class website. Please try to complete all readings before the day in which they will be discussed. Most recommended films are available at Vishnu India Imports (135 E. 29th Ave., Ph: 343-6932) or through Netflix. The required books are:

Requirements:  (percentage of final grade)

- Class participation (e.g., questions/responses that underscore efforts to understand and engage with course materials)  15%
- Two typed, 3-5 page double-spaced essays exploring cultural issues presented in any two films viewed. The essays should draw upon readings and class discussion as relevant and is due at the beginning of the class after the film is screened.  25% each
- 6-8 page paper (approx.), due on the last day of class. The paper is to explore any social issue which was raised in a segment of this course. You are to look at its social origin, and then focus on the way in which this issue is in flux in India today. There are a number of books recommended throughout the syllabus “for further reading.” These are good places to start researching your paper. You need to confirm the topic of your term paper by May 9th. While you can begin researching and writing the term paper at any time -- and submit it whenever you would like -- the absolute deadline for turning it in is Wednesday June 6th.

Course Outline

April 4  Introduction to the Course and to Indian Cinema/ Bollywood
Films  "Beginnings" The Story of India with Michael Wood  BBC/PBS, 2008 (1 hour)
Larger than Life: India's Bollywood Film Culture  Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2005 (57 minutes)

Required Readings
Guha, pp. 1-15
Luce, pp. 1-22, 23-62
Saari & Cattopadhyaya, pp. 3-20, 28-39

April 11  Revisiting Indian History and Society
Film  Jodhaa Akbar, directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, 2008 (213 minutes)

Recommended films
Ashoka the Great directed by Santosh Sivan, 2001
Devdas directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, 2002
Mirch Masala (Hot Spices) directed by Ketan Mehta, 1985

Required Readings
Ganti, pp. TBA
Luce, pp. 1-22
Saari & Cattopadhyaya, pp. 3-20, 28-39
April 18

**History from Within and Views of the 'Other': Partition and its Relevance today**

**Films**  
*Lagaan (Once Upon a Time in India)*, directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, produced by Aamir Khan Productions, 2001 (224 minutes)

**Recommended Films**  
*Gandhi* directed by Richard Attenborough, 1982  
*Garam Hava (Hot Winds)*, directed by M.S. Sathyu, 1973  
*Ghare Baire (The Home and the World)*, directed by Satyajit Ray, 1984  
*Lage Raho Munna Bhai* directed by Rajkumar Hirani, 2006  
*A Passage to India* directed by David Lean, 1984  
*The Rising: the Ballad of Mangal Pandey* directed by Ketan Mehta, 2005  
*Shakespeare Wallah* directed by James Ivory (U of O alumni!), 1965

**Required Readings**  
Ganti, pp. TBA  
Guha, pp. 19-40, 41-50  
Luce, pp. 23-62  
Saari & Cattopadhyaya, pp. 56-64, 122-131, 168-176

**For further reading**  
Khilnani, Sunil *The Idea of India* Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1997 (one of my favorites!)  
Lindley, Arthur “Raj as Romance/Raj as Parody: Lean’s and Foster’s Passage to India” *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 20, No. 1, 1992, pp. 61-66  

April 25

**Family Norms and Social Change**

**Film**  
*Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham (Sometimes There's Happiness, Sometimes Sadness)* directed by Yash Johar, 2001

**Recommended Films**  
*Amar, Akbar, Anthony* directed by Manmohan Desai, 1977  
*Baghban (The Gardener)* directed by Ravi Chopra, 2003  
*Billu Barber* directed by Priyadarshan, 2009  
*Bunty aur Babli* directed by Shaad Ali, 2005  
*Hum Tum (You and I)*, directed by Kunal Kohli 2004  
*Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna (Don't Say We Will Never Meet Again)* directed by Karan Johar, 2006  
*Salaam Namaste* directed by Siddharth Anand, 2005
Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic directed by Kunal Kohli, 2008

Required Readings
Ganti, TBA
Guha, TBA
Luce, pp. 63-104
Saari & Cattopadhyaya, pp. 65-71, 78-84, 154-161

May 2 India, Pakistan and Hindu-Muslim Conflict
Film Veer Zaara directed by Yash Chopra, Yashraj Studios, 2004

Recommended films
Bombay directed by Mani Ratnam, 1995
Fanaa directed by Kunal Kohli, 2006
Henna directed by Randhir Kapoor, 1991

Required Readings TBA and
Luce, pp. 105-142, 143-179, 218-256

For further reading
Varshney, Ashutosh Ethic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India Yale University Press, 2002

May 9 Gender Norms, Social Change . . . and Fantasy
Film Laaga Chunari Mein Daag (Journey of a Woman, or There Seems to be a Stain on her Shirt) directed by Pradeep Sarkar, 2007, 137 minutes

Recommended films
Lajja directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, 2001
Mirch Maala (Hot Spices) directed by Ketan Mehta, 1987

Required Readings TBA

For further reading
Carr, Marilyn, Martha Chen and Renana Jhabvala (eds.) Speaking Out: Women's Economic Empowerment in South Asia IT Publications, 1996
Derne, Steve Movies, Masculinity, and Modernity: An Ethnography of Men's Filmgoing in India Greenwood Press, 2000
Jeffery, Patricia and Amrita Basu (eds.) Appropriating Gender: Women’s Activism and Politicized Religion in South Asia Routledge, 1998
Manekar, Purnima Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: an Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India Duke University Press, 1999
Rao, Maithili “To Be a Woman” in Aruna Vasudev (ed.) Frames of Mind: Reflections on Indian
May 16  

**Social Pressure and the New Economy**

**Film** *Three Idiots* directed by Rajkumar Hirani, 2009 (170 minutes)

**Recommended films**
*Guru* directed by Mani Ratnam, 2007
*Salaam Bombay!* directed by Mira Nair, 1988

**Required Readings** TBA and
Luce, pp.180-217
Saari & Cattopadhyaya, pp. 103-122, 219-222

**For further reading**
Ayres, Alyssa and Philip Oldenburg (eds.) *India Briefing: Takeoff at Last?* M.E. Sharpe, 2005
Kumar, Shanti *Gandhi meets Primetime: Globalization and Nationalism in Indian Television* University of Illinois Press, 2006
Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre (HDC) *Human Development in South Asia: 2008:Technology and Human Development in South Asia* Oxford UP, 2009
Mendelsohn, Oliver and Marika Vicziany *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty, and the State in Modern India* Cambridge University Press, 1998
Rothermund, Dietmar *India: The Rise of an Asian Giant* Yale University Press, 2009

May 23  

**India's Changing Cities**

**Film** *Dhobi Ghat (Mumbai Dairies)* directed by Kiran Rao, 2010 (100 minutes)

**Recommended films**
*Life in a Metro* directed by Anurag Basu, 2007

**Required Readings** TBA and
Luce, pp. 295-327, 328-354
"Building the City: India's Urban Future"
List of the world's largest cities (#3 and #5 are in India, as are #s 33, 34, 44, and 45)

May 30  

**The Growing Fear of Terrorism**

**Film** *A Wednesday* directed by Neeraj Pandey, 2008 (104 minutes)

**Recommended films**
*Khamosh Pani (Silent Waters)* directed by Sabiha Sumar (Pakistan), 2003
*Khuda Kay Liye (In the Name of God)* directed by Shoaib Mansoor (Pakistan), 2007
*My Name is Khan* directed by Karan Johar, 2010

**Required Readings** TBA
June 6

**Bollywood!**

**Film** For our final class meeting, the class will have a choice to see what many consider to be a quintessential Bollywood film:

*Jab We Met (When We Met)*, directed by Imtiaz Ali, 2007

OR

*Om Shanti Om* directed by Farah Khan, 2007