

ISSUES IN SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES:
**A REGION AND THE DISCIPLINES, OR HOW IS A PLACE
PRODUCED AND KNOWN?**

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Course Meets: Thursdays 2-4, Trinity College Room 22

This reading-intensive seminar serves two purposes: 1) to introduce students to a range of disciplinary perspectives on the region of South Asia, and 2) to critically examine the formation of disciplinary knowledge around the concepts of area and region. We will focus in particular on the ways in which colonialism, anti-colonial nationalisms, and postcolonial imperial formations have shaped disciplinary categories and institutions, always mediating interpretations of South Asia's past, present, and future. Although units have been organized roughly around disciplinary nodes, certain themes such as gender, postcolonial modernity, ethnicity/community, nationalism, and the political economy of representation will cut across our readings and discussions.

Students are expected to come to class having read all of the readings and having noted questions they would like to pose to the class concerning the readings. In addition, one group of students will be responsible for posting a set of questions online by noon on the Wednesday prior to our meeting, to which another group will have prepared responses to be presented in class. Responses may take the form of further questioning, including a questioning of the premises of the original set of questions posted the day before. I will go over this system in class.

As a final project, students will be asked to write a 15 page original research paper in which they engage with the history of their own disciplinary formation in relation to the area, with the aim of refining their research project. Or, students may opt to write a formal research proposal. All papers topics must be discussed beforehand with the instructor during office hours.

Readings with an asterisk (*) are available online through the university library system. All other readings, with the exception of the novel by Amitav Ghosh, will be made available in pdf form by the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 7 Introduction

Jan. 14 Area Studies and Empire in Europe, North America, and South Asia

- *Pletsch, Carl. 1981. "The Three Worlds, or the Division of Social Science Labor" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23(4): 565-590.
- *Said, Edward. 1985. "Orientalism Reconsidered." *Cultural Critique*, 1:89-107.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1991. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Mohanty, Russo & Torres, eds. Pp. 51-80. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.
- *Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 1992. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?" *Representations* 37:1-26.

Jan. 21 History

- Thapar, Romila. 2002. "Society and Historical Consciousness: The Itihasa-Purana Tradition." In *History and Beyond*. Pp. 137-173. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Guha, Ranajit. 1988. "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" and "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency" in *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Ranajit Guha & Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds. Pp. 37-84. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Narayana Rao, V., D. Shulman and S. Subrahmanyam. 2001. "Introduction: A Palette of Histories" in *Textures of Time*. Pp. 1-23. Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Nandy, Ashis. 2003. "History's Forgotten Doubles" in *The Romance of the State*. Pp. 83-109. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Jan. 28 Language and Literature

- *Pollock, Sheldon. 2000. "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History." *Public Culture* 12(3): 591-621.
- Cohn, Bernard. 1996. "Command of Language and Language of Command." In *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*. Pp. 16-56. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Viswanathan, Gauri. 1989. "The Beginnings of English Literary Study in British India." In *Masks of Conquest*. Pp. 23-44. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. 1994. "Indian Literature: Notes Toward the Definition of a Category." In *In Theory*. Pp. 243-288. New York: Verso.

Feb. 4 Anthropology and Sociology

- *Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. "Theory in Anthropology: Center and Periphery." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 28(2): 356-361.
- Srinivas, M.N. 2002. "The Dominant Caste in Rampura" and "A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization" In *Collected Essays*. Pp. 74-92, 200-220. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- *Barth, Fredrik. 1959. "Segmentary Opposition and the Theory of Games: A Study of Pathan Organization." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 89(1): 5-21;
- Dumont, Louis. 1980. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. Pp. 1-22, 33-64.. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- *Dirks, Nicholas. 1992. "Castes of Mind" *Representations* 37: 56-78.

Feb. 11 Religion and the Secular

- *Van der Veer, Peter. 1999. "Hindus: A Superior Race." *Nations and Nationalism*, 5(3): 419-430.
- Queen, Christopher. 1994. "Ambedkar, Modernity and the Hermeneutics of Buddhist Liberation." In *Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism, and Social Change*. Narain & Ahir, eds. Pp. 99-122. Delhi: B.R. Publishing.
- *Mandair, Arvind. 2006. "The Politics of Nonduality: Reassessing the Work of Transcendence in Modern Sikh Theology." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 74(3): 646-673.
- Nandy, Ashis. 1990. "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance." In *Mirrors of Violence*, Veena Das, ed. Pp. 69-93. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Amin, Shahid. 2002. "On Retelling the Muslim Conquest of North India." In *History and the Present*. Chatterjee & Ghosh, ed. London: Anthem Press.

Feb. 18 READING WEEK – NO CLASS

Feb. 25 Nation, State, and "Community"

- Tejani, Shabnum. 2007. "Reflections on the Category of Secularism in India." *The Crisis of Secularism in India*. Needham & Sundar Rajan, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. "Who's Imagined Community?" In *Nation and Its Fragments*. Pp. 3-13. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Das, Veena. 1999. "Communities as Political Actors: The Question of Cultural Rights." In *Gender and Politics in India*, Nivedita Menon, ed pp. 441-471. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Wickramasinghe, Nira. 2006. "Citizens, Communities, Rights, Constitutions, 1947-2000." In *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History of Contested Identities*. London: C. Hurst and Co.

*Jaffrelot, Christophe. 2002. "India and Pakistan: Interpreting the Divergence of Two Political Trajectories." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 15(2): 251-267.

March 4 The Production of Space and Economy

*Ludden, David . 2002. "Spectres of Agrarian Territory in Southern India." *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 39(2&3): 233-257.

Birla, Ritu. 2008. *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India*. Pp. 20-27, 144-172. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

*Goswami, Manu. 1998. "From *Swadeshi* to *Swaraj*: Nation, Economy, and Territory in Colonial South Asia, 1870 to 1907." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(4): 609-636.

Hariss-White, Barbara. 2003. "Space and Synergy." In *India Working: Essays on Society and Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Chakravarty, Paula. 2006. "White-Collar Nationalisms." *Social Semiotics*, 16(1): 39-55.

March 11 Nature, Time, and the fate of "Development"

Gupta, Akhil. 1998. "Agrarian Populism and the Development of a Modern Nation." In *Postcolonial Developments*. Pp. 33-105. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Banerjee, Pratima. 2002. "Re-Presenting Pasts: Santals in 19th Century Bengal." In *History and the Present*. Chatterjee & Ghosh, ed. London: Anthem Press.

*Baviskar, Amita. 1997. "Tribal Politics and Discourses of Environmentalism" *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 31(2): 195-223.

*Rahman, Aminur. 1999. "Micro-Initiatives for Equitable and Sustainable Development: Who Pays?" *World Development*, 27(1): 67-82.

March 18 Urban Life

*Metcalf, Thomas. 1984. "Architecture and the Representation of Empire: India, 1860-1910." *Representations*, 6:37-65

*Nair, Janaki. 2002. "Past Perfect: Architecture and Public Life in Bangalore." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61(4): 1205-1236.

Tarlo, Emma. 2000. "Paper Truths: The Emergency and Slum Clearance through Forgotten Files." In *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*. Fuller & Benei, eds. New Delhi: Social Science Press.

Mazumdar, Ranjini. 2007. "Gangland Bombay." In *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

March 25 South Asia Global, Part One

Ghosh, Amitav. 2008. *Sea of Poppies*. New York: Penguin Books.

April 1 South Asia Global, Part Two

*Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Public Culture*, 2(2): 1-24.

Liechty, Mark. 2003. "Modernity, Time and Place: Youth Culture in Kathmandu." In *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture in a New Consumer Society*. Pp. 232-246. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

*Asad, Talal. 1990. "Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair." *Politics and Society*, 18(4): 455-480.

*Rajadhyaksha, Ashis. 2003. "The 'Bollywoodization' of Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4(1): 25-39.

*Appadurai, Arjun. 2000. "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination." *Public Culture*, 12(1): 1-19.

April 15 PAPERS DUE