

History of Popular Bombay Cinema 1947 to Present – HIST 403

Class: King 325, 7 – 9pm Monday

Screenings: King 241, 7 – 10pm, Sundays

Professor Sarah Waheed

Counts towards Cinema Studies Major, GSFS Major, and History Major

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Cinema from India is one of the most popularly viewed in the world. Boasting thousands of films in dozens of languages, India's films have been watched by audiences in the Soviet Union, Middle East, Africa, South East Asia, and more recently, have been winning over audiences in the U.S. The cinema of India recently celebrated its centenary. As we shall see, India's cinema has been transnational and global from its inception. Surveying a century of Indian cinema is outside the scope of a semester long course. Our investigation will begin with the 'golden age' of Bombay's Hindi-Urdu language popular cinema of the 1940s/1950s and take us to the present.

Indian film history is a complex endeavor, given that analyses of popular cinema have long been undertaken by the state (i.e., in the form of censorship and regulation), cultural theorists and the literate elite (i.e., film critics, gossip columnists), as well as the West. We must be aware of the criteria we use to evaluate non-Western cinemas and popular cinemas, since such criteria are the product of specific political, class, and social contexts. This course suggests that we must take the "popular" seriously, and equips us with the vocabularies necessary for investigating the "popular" in non-Western cultural arenas. How, for instance, do we think about the differences and similarities between Hollywood and Indian cinema when we deploy terms like melodrama and realism, when we discuss gender and sexuality, consider class, assess genre, or encounter the term "Bollywood"? Rather than aiming for generalizations and simple binaries, this course encourages us to think about specific contexts and grounded analyses when we encounter film.

Since the cosmopolitan center of Bombay is home to the Hindi-Urdu film industry, the city continues to play a pivotal role in determining the world of Indian cinema. This course will be as much about the social and political history of the city of Bombay, as it is about the vicissitudes of the modern Indian nation-state. It will introduce students to: 1) Reading filmic narratives in terms of what they represent of collective desires, fantasies, and identities; and 2) Analyses which take seriously the fact of the films' materiality—their modes of circulation, distribution, and consumption and what these convey about the relationship between urban and global life-worlds. Cultural politics are as important as, and indeed intertwined with, the political economy of films. Films are fascinating lens through which to encounter the cultures, classes, regions, genders, religions, and politics of India, but they are also a way to understand change, and continuity over time, when assessing flows of capital, labor, crime, and migration. In the interest of its centrality to Hindi-Urdu cinema, we must not overlook the role of the city of Bombay (its many diverse peoples) in manufacturing national desires.

This course also encourages us to reflect on our own practices of spectatorship and the cultures which produce our tastes. Drawing on and in conversation with the readings, it will be important for us to develop a critical vocabulary for how we respond to the film screenings. How do we categorize or evaluate them? What registers of our pleasure, boredom, distaste, laughter, or appreciation do they awaken?

Seminar participants are not expected to have prior knowledge of Indian cinema, but will be expected to do a fair amount of course reading and independent research to orient themselves to current events in Indian politics, society, and culture.

Primary Course Objectives

To acquire an overview of Hindi-Urdu language Indian popular cinema and its modes of theorization

To assess non-Eurocentric modes of analyzing popular cinema produced and circulated outside the west

To consider seriously the relationship between the city of Bombay and Hindi-Urdu cinema from the mid-twentieth century to the present

To critically examine such apparently place-neutral terms as “subject,” “modernity,” “femininity,” “masculinity,” “sexuality,” “democracy” and “pleasure.”

Required texts:

- Ranjani Mazumdar. *Bombay Cinema: Archive of a City*. University of Minnesota, 2007.
- Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City*. Vintage Departures, 2004
- Rachel Dwyer, *100 Bollywood Films* (BFI Screen Guides) [Paperback]

Resources for Final Paper:

- Tejaswini Ganti: *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* (Routledge Film Guidebooks) [Paperback]
- Tejaswani Ganti: *Producing Bollywood: Inside the Contemporary Hindi Film Industry*
- Ashish Rajadhyaksha (editor), Paul Willemen (Editor), *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema*
- Ravi Vasudevan, *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*, 2001
- M. Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction*. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Vinay Lal, Ashis Nandy, *Fingerprinting popular culture: the mythic and the iconic in Indian cinema*, 2007
- Rachel Dwyer, Christopher Pinney, *Pleasure and the nation: the history, politics, and consumption of public culture in India*, 2001
- Jerry Pinto, *Helen The Life and Times of an H-Bomb* [Paperback]
- Ashish Rajadhyaksha, *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid: From Bollywood to Emergency* Indiana University Press (October 16, 2009)
- Jyotika Virdi, *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*, Rutgers University Press, 2003
- Ashis Nandy, (Editor) *The Secret Politics of our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema* [Paperback]
- Jigna Desai, ed. *Bollywood Reader*

COURSE WEBSITE AND READINGS

You will find the syllabus and all the electronic readings for this course on Blackboard. Once you have accessed this course, you will find the readings in the section marked **Course**

Documents. You can purchase the books for this course from Amazon, Alibris, Powell's, or other online bookstores.

FILM SCREENINGS

Film screenings will be held every Sunday 7-10pm in King 241. The first film screening will be held on Sunday, February 16. You are required to attend all film screenings. Attendance will be taken. Occasionally, you will watch the films through digitized format, which will be available online, through youtube or Blackboard. Please refer to attached schedule of readings and films.

MODERN SOUTH ASIA TIMELINE:

For those of you unfamiliar with South Asian history, I urge you to use the following timeline as a frame with which you can follow along important historical dates/moments/events:

<http://dart.columbia.edu/southasia/timeline/>

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

You are expected to complete the reading assigned for each class by the day that it is listed on the syllabus. Completing the reading means that you have not only literally read the assignment, but that you have spent some time putting together your thoughts and questions about the readings, the subject, and how all of these relate to the themes of the course. The participation portion of your final grade will take in to account your attendance, preparation for, and active participation in class.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 25% Participation – Class Presentation and Weekly Written Assignments
- 25% Response Paper (5 pages)
- 25% Mid-Term Essay (7-10 pages)
- 25% Final Paper (10-15 pages)

WEEKLY FILM JOURNAL

Each student will be required to keep a film journal. The journal will record your thoughts and responses to the film screening for that week.

PAPERS

In addition to weekly written assignments, you will write 3 papers in this course. The response paper should include: A) a **summary** of the author's argument; B) what **you learned** from the readings; C) a **comparison / contrast** to another text on the syllabus; and D) a **conclusion**. Your response paper should attempt to analyze the film for that week along the secondary scholarship that has been assigned. Mid-term and final essays will be TBA and instructions will be handed out separately.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: Each week, one student will do a 15 minute presentation on one of the scholarly readings. For the presentation, you must be required to: A) **summarize** the author's argument; B) pose at least **2 major questions from the reading** for class discussion; C) choose a passage from the reading that you wish to discuss with the class.

ESSAYS

The due dates and questions for each of your papers appear in the schedule below, on the date that they are due. The format for the essays is that they should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font. You will be evaluated based on your grasp of the readings in this course. You must cite both primary and secondary sources within your essays. You can do so by using the citation guide posted on Blackboard.

IN-CLASS GUIDELINES: Please...

Switch off all cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices for the duration of the class. Print out the readings from Blackboard and bring them to class.

PART I: ORIENTATIONS

February 3, 2013 _____

Introductions, Themes, Problems, Terms and Definitions

- Goals of this Course
- Terms & Definitions: “Bollywood”, “Indian cinema”, “Hindi cinema”, “Bombay cinema”
- Centenary of Indian Cinema
- Overview of Indian film studies
- Syllabus Review
- Popular Film Clips

WEEK 2- “Glitter from Abroad”: Unthinking Euro-centrism in Study of Indian Cinema
February 10, 2014 _____

View at home: Two Documentaries on film actress and dancer Helen

“Helen: Queen of the *Nautch* Girls”¹ (1972): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54JISfTl1Dc> (23 min)

“Biography of Helen” (Hindi): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPadj7jtafs> (8 min) - Subtitles available on Blackboard

First 20 min *Achut Kanya Untouchable Girl* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iCjQRcAwxw>

2006 Interview with Helen: <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?230972>

Jigna Desai, “The Essential Bollywood” Chapter 1 (Bollywood Reader), pg. 1-17

Ravi Vasudevan, “Film Studies, New Cultural History, Experience of Modernity” (2809-2814)

¹ *nautch girl* – colonial era, English corruption of the Hindi-Urdu word ‘*naach-na*’, which means ‘to dance’; possibly derivative of the term *naach-ne-vaali* (dancing girl). During British colonial rule, the English categorized women entertainers into the category of ‘dancing girl’ and ‘prostitute’; fears of miscegenation between Indian women and British men led colonial officials to criminalize this class of women.

PART II: CITIZENSHIP & BELONGING IN NEHRU'S POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

WEEK 3- Partition 1947, Dividing India: Historical Memory and Gendered Violence February 17, 2014

REQUIRED: Screening: *Mahal* (1949) – *The Mansion* – KING 241 Sunday February 16, 7pm

Bhaskar Sarkar, *Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition*, Intro (p. 1-47)

Urvashi Butalia, “State and Gender: On Women's Agency during Partition”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 28, No. 17 (Apr. 24, 1993), p. 12-24

Bollywood fan blogposts on *Mahal*: <http://bollyviewer-oldisgold.blogspot.com/2010/11/mahal-1949-mystery-madness-and.html>
<http://www.filmigeek.com/2012/08/mahal-1949.html>

WEEK 4 - Bombay as metaphor of the nation: Vagabonds, Villains, and Vamps February 24, 2014

Screening: *Shree 420* (1952) – *Mr. 420* – Sunday, Feb 23, KING 241 – 7:00pm

View following film clips at home:

1. “Yeh Hai Bombay Meri Jaan” / “This is Bombay, My Dear”, *CID*, 1956
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6INOamqU7xs>
2. “Hai Apna Dil to Awara” / “This Heart is a Vagabond”, *Solva Saal* 1958
<http://mrandmrs55.com/2012/09/06/hai-apna-dil-to-awara-lyrics-and-translation-lets-learn-urdu-hindi/> [Be sure to read the lyrics!]

Gyan Prakash, “The Idea of Bombay” (p. 88-99)

Ashis Rajadhyaksha, “The Curious Case of Bombay’s Hindi Cinema: The Career of Indigenous ‘Exhibition’ Capital (p.1-24)

Rajadhyaksha and Willeman, *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema*, entry on Raj Kapoor

Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City* - “Personal Geography” (pg. 3-38)

*Sumita Chakravarty, “National Identity and Realist Aesthetic” (80-118)

IN CLASS: The Story of Jazz in India – African-American Musicians in Bombay:

<http://www.afropop.org/wp/8489/hip-deep-interview-naresh-fernandes-on-bombays-jazz-age/>

Rosie Thomas, "Sanctity and Scandal: The Mythologization of Mother India," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11:3 (1989): 11-30.

Sa'adat Hasan Manto, "Nargis" in *Stars From Another Sky* (1949-51) – p. ?-??

Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*, "The Texts of 'Mother India': 61-87.

WEEK 7: COSMOPOLITANISM, "URBAN CHIC" and GLOBAL FLOWS

March 17, 2014 _____

Screening: *Jewel Thief* (1967) – March 16, KING 241, 7:00pm

Clips to view at home: "Jaan Pehchaan Ho" from *Gumnaam* (1965)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnBbjc5hmho> (with subtitles, turn on CC)

"Jaan Pehchaan Ho" featured in Heineken commercial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJ30GCjPEjY>

"Yahoo – Chahe Koi Mujhe Junglee Kahay" ("So what if they call me wild") 1961

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFjj9L2FDEo> (with subtitles – starring Shammi Kapoor)

Rajadhyaksha and Willeman, entry on Dev Anand

Rajadhyaksha and Willeman, entry on Shammi Kapoor

Richard Allen, "To Catch a Jewel Thief: Hitchcock and Indian Modernity" (p. 215-241)

David Novak, "Cosmopolitanism, Remediation, and the Ghostworld of Bollywood" (p. 40-72)

"The Elvis of India: Realities of a Rock Star" <http://mrandmrs55.com/2013/09/04/>

*Corey Creekmur, "Picturizing American Cinema: Hindi Film Songs and the last days of genre" from *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music*, eds. Pamela Robertson Wojcik and Arthur Knight (Durham: Duke UP, 2001): 375-406.

*****MIDTERM ESSAY DUE – March 19*****

*****SPRING BREAK*****

WEEK 8: THE NATION'S "OTHER": Muslim Socials and the Courtesan Archetype

March 31, 2013

Screening: *Umrao Jaan Ada*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3JwIRye_Ie

Clip 1: *Pakeezah* (1972)

Lyrics: <http://mrandmrs55.com/2013/04/12/inhi-logon-ne-lyrics-and-translation-lets-learn-urdu-hindi/> Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWi2yyIOBE0>

Clip 2: "Sharma Ke Yeh Kyon Sab" ("Why Are They All Shy?") - *Chaudvin Ka Chand* (1960)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUlnQXtF72k>

Clip 3: Ahein Na Bhare "We did not sigh" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT-qjmc6eQY>

Clip 4: Ishq, Ishq "Love, Love" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3O0cRwkans>

Clip 5: Nigah e Naaz "Proud Gazes" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XvZwAsqRug>

Top Ten Muslim Characters in Bollywood

<http://www.musliminstitute.org/critical-muslim/issues/05-love-and-death/top-ten-muslim-characters-bollywood-rachel-dwyer>

Veena Oldenburg, "Lifestyle as Resistance: The Courtesans of Lucknow, India" (p. 259-287)

Mukul Kesavan, "Urdu, Awadh, and the *Tawaif*: Islamicate Roots of Hindi Cinema" in *Forging Identities: Gender, Community, and the State in India* (Z Hasan) 1994 (p. 245-257)

Saleem Kidwai, "The Singing Ladies Find a Voice" <http://www.india-seminar.com/2004/540/540%20saleem%20kidwai.htm>

PART II: 1970s: INDIRA GANDHI'S INDIA & THE ERA OF POPULISM

WEEK 9: LAND, LAW, and THE INDIAN STATE: Emerging Masculinities

April 7, 2014

Screening: *Sholay* ("Flames") (1975): Sun, April 6th – 7:00-10:00 PM, King 241

Ranajit Guha, "Prose of Counterinsurgency," excerpt from Guha ed. *Subaltern Studies II*

Koushik Naberjea, "'Fight Club': Aesthetics, Hybridization and the Construction of Rogue Masculinities in *Sholay* and *Deewar*" from *Bollyworld* (p.163-186)

Priya Jha, Lyrical Nationalism: Gender, Friendship, and Excess in 1970s Hindi Cinema, *The Velvet Light Trap*, Number 51, Spring 2003 (p. 43-53)

Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, Chapter Six

*Anupama Chopra, *Sholay: The Making of a Classic* (selections) [PN1993.5.I4 C46 2001](#)

WEEK 10: URBAN DEVELOPMENT and “THE ANGRY YOUNG MAN”

April 14, 2014 _____

Film Screening: Deewar (The Wall) (1975) – April 13th, KING 241, 7:00pm
View at home:
Zanjeer – fight scene <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHShZOA19ws>
Rangeela (Colorful) (1998) - available via Blackboard (Film clips of *Roti, Kapda, Makaan*)

Ranjani Majumdar, *Bombay Cinema: The Archive of a City*, Introduction, Chapter 1-3

Rosie Thomas, “Melodrama and the Negotiation of Morality in Mainstream Hindi Film,” in *Consuming Modernity*

Geeta Ramanathan, “Women in Cinema: Missing Angle” <http://www.frontline.in/arts-and-culture/cinema/missing-angle/article5185806.ece?homepage=true>

PART III: 1990s to PRESENT: BOLLYWOOD

WEEK 11: NEW MIDDLE CLASS: Liberalization, Consumption, & Rise of Hindutva **April 21, 2014** _____

Screening: Hum Aap ke hain Koun! (Who am I to You) (1994) – April 20th, KING 241, 7pm
 Film Clips: *Dilwale Dulhania Leyjaynge* (1996) - TBA
 Film Clips: *Dil Dechuke Sanam* (1998) - TBA
 Film Clips: *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* - TBA

Nivedita Menon, Aditya Nigam, “Politics of Hindutva and the Minorities” (p.36-60)

Sheena Malhotra and Tavishi Alagh, “Dreaming the Nation: Domestic Dramas in Hindi Films post-1990”

Ashish Rajadhyaksha, “The ‘Bollywoodization’ of Indian cinema: cultural nationalism in a global arena”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* Volume 4, Issue 1, 2003 (pg. 25-39)

M.K. Raghavendra, “Changing Values” <http://www.frontline.in/arts-and-culture/cinema/changing-values/article5486405.ece?ref=sliderNews>

Rachel Dwyer “The Rise of the Middle Classes of Bombay” *All You Want is Money, All You Need is Love*, London; New York: Cassell, 2000

*Patricia Uberoi, “Imagining the Family: An Ethnography of Viewing *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...?*”, in Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney (eds), *Pleasure and the Nation* (New Delhi: OUP, 2001), pp. 309-351.

WEEK 12: TERRORISTS AND TERRORISM

April 28, 2014

Screening: *Dil Se* (1998) – (*From the Heart*) – Sunday April 27, KING 241, 7:00pm 158min
Film Clips:

Roja fight scene: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSeMrRIE8h0>

Fanaa (2006) - (*Annihilation*): clips

Daisy Rockwell, “From the Department of Unfinished Business”

http://www.chapatimystery.com/archives/stardust/from_the_department_of_unfinished_business.html

Nivedita Menon, Aditya Nigam, “When was the Nation?” in *Power and Contestation: India Since 1989* (p.135-167)

Tejaswini Naranjana, “Integrating Whose Nation: Tourists and Terrorists in ‘*Roja*’”

Mahmood Mamdani, “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim”

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/sj6/mamdaniGOODMUSLIMBADMUSLIM.pdf>

Pankaj Mishra, “Kashmir: The Unending War,” *New York Review of Books*. Vol. 47, No. 16. October 19, 2000

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/oct/19/kashmir-the-unending-war/>

Gyan Pandey, “Can a Muslim be Indian?”

WEEK 13: CRIME REDUX: Bombay, the Urban Underworld, and Transnational Flows May 5, 2014

Screening: *Company* (2008) – King 241, May 4th -- 7:00pm

Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City*, relevant chapters

Ranjani Majumdar, select chapters

Tejaswini Ganti, *Producing Bollywood: Inside the Contemporary Hindi Film Industry*, Chapter 2, “From Slumdogs to Millionaires: The Gentrification of Hindi Cinema”; 4, “A Day in the Life of a Hindi Film Set”

OPTIONAL WEEK: WOMEN IN BOMBAY CINEMA: REVISITED

May 12, 2014

Screening: *Dedh Ishqiya* (2014) Love One and a Half Times: King 241, Sun May 11th, 7:00pm

Ismat Chughtai, *Lihaaf* - “The Quilt”

Ismat Chughtai, “Excerpts from the *Lihaaf* Trial”

Ismat Chughtai, “From Bombay to Bhopal”

*Geeta Ramanathan, “Women in Cinema: Missing Angle” <http://www.frontline.in/arts-and-culture/cinema/missing-angle/article5185806.ece?homepage=true>

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 15

FINAL FILM SCREENING – New Cinema – *Kahani* (The Story) - TBA