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:**
- 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*
- 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]
- 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=54JISfTl1De
(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


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-vaaali (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)


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-awaara-lyrics-and-translation-let's-learn-urdu-hindi/ [Be sure to read the lyrics!]

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


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/
WEEK 5: Social Films and the Hindi-Urdu Film Song: Case Study Guru Dutt
March 3, 2014

Screening: *Pyasa* (1957) – *The Thirsty One* – March 2, KING 241, 7:00pm
View at home:

“Sun Zalima” – “Listen, O Cruel One” from *Aar Paar* (1958)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Mr0FleE0rY (subtitles)

“Ae Lo Mein Hari Piya” – “Oh, I’ve lost to you, beloved” from *Aar Paar* (1958)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X5xKceLWWw&feature=endscreen&NR=1 (subtitles)

“Babujee Dheere Chalna” – “Mister, Walk Slowly” from *Aar Paar* (1958)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY970dSUMZo (subtitles)

“Mohabbat Karlo” – “Go ahead, Fall in Love” from *Aar Paar* (1958)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1BsXULR1-U (subtitles turn cc on)


View Documentary on Guru Dutt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0eINgooDCk


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WEEK 6 -NATION AS MOTHER: Gender, Village, and Developmental Modernity
March 10, 2014

Screening: *Mother India* (1957): March 9, KING 241, 7:00pm


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**WEEK 7: COSMOPOLITANISM, “URBAN CHIC” and GLOBAL FLOWS**

March 17, 2014

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**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)

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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)


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***************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_1E

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 5: Nigah e Naaz “Proud Gazes” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XvZwAsqRug

Top Ten Muslim Characters in Bollywood

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)


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


**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=RHShZOAl9ws](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHShZOAl9ws)*
*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*


**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”


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

**WEEK 12: TERRORISTS AND TERRORISM**

April 28, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening: <em>Dil Se</em> (1998) – <em>(From the Heart)</em> – Sunday April 27, KING 241, 7:00pm 158min</th>
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<tr>
<td>Film Clips: <em>Roja</em> fight scene: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSeMrRIE8h0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSeMrRIE8h0</a></td>
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<td><em>Fanaa</em> (2006) - <em>(Annihilation)</em>: clips</td>
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Daisy Rockwell, “From the Department of Unfinished Business”

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”


Gyan Pandey, “Can a Muslim be Indian?”

**WEEK 13: CRIME REDUX: Bombay, the Urban Underworld, and Transnational Flows**

May 5, 2014

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<th>Screening: <em>Company</em> (2008) – King 241, May 4th -- 7:00pm</th>
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<tr>
<td>Suketu Mehta, <em>Maximum City</em>, relevant chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ranjani Majumdar, select chapters</td>
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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”


FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 15

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