Course description

This course is an anthropological exploration of contemporary India: its social life and diverse cultures. India is home to more than a billion people, who look differently, speak different languages, practice different religions, and have distinct rituals, cuisines, and music. India is also one of the world's powers with global economic, political, and intellectual influence. Moreover, India also holds a prominent historical and cultural place in Asia: along with China, it has significantly contributed to diverse Asian traditions of knowledge—from philosophy and religion to medicine and technology. As a former British colony and a growing modern economy, India provides fascinating material to learn about colonialism, nation-building, and inter-Asian connections, including ties with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, and Hong Kong.

In this course you will learn about India's place in the world and the Asian region, developing an understanding of the country's diversity and complex social institutions such as family, community, caste, and class. We will discuss pressing issues and theoretical debates related to gender, sexuality, social movements, religious conflicts, public health, and labor, and how these issues have been shaped by colonialism, post-independence politics, and current transnational processes.

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Learning objectives

- to develop an understanding of India's diversity in terms of caste, class, religion, language, and other sociocultural divisions
- to gain basic knowledge of the history of Indian cultures from pre-historic times
- to understand the impact of India's colonial history on its modern society
- to distinguish various traditions of medicine, religion, technology, and art that originated in the Indian subcontinent
- to develop a critical understanding of the role of popular culture, political processes, and global economy in the lives of Indians in India and abroad
Course Format

The learning process will include in-depth reading, discussion sessions, documentaries, and a field trip. Note that some documentaries are not easily available online or the library, so it is your responsibility to come to class on the scheduled days or request notes from your classmates. Keep in mind that the assigned readings, class activities, and the field trip schedule may be adjusted in the course of the semester, so make sure to consult Blackboard regularly.

Learning material

The required text:

*Everyday Life in South Asia*-----referred to in the schedule as the **Reader**
Diane P. Mines and Sarah Lamb, eds. 2010 (Second Edition)
Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Make sure to purchase the hard copy or e-copy!

Additional books:

1. *The Modern Anthropology of India: Ethnography, Themes and Theory*----Referred to as the **MAI**
   Peter Berger, and Frank Heidemann, eds. Routledge, 2013.
2. *A Companion to the Anthropology of India*------Referred to as **Companion**
   Isabelle Clark-Decès, ed. John Wiley & Sons, 2011

You are welcome to buy these additional books, but it is not necessary because the assigned excerpts will be posted on Blackboard. Several other articles, newspaper pieces, and videos will be also available on Blackboard.

As MA students, you are expected to read both the required reading and recommended readings on the syllabus (optional for undergraduate students).

Assessment

**Discussion leading: 20% of the final grade**
You will be asked to lead a class discussion during a tutorial. The discussion leaders will be responsible for presenting a summary of the assigned readings, generating discussion questions, and providing examples to which the readings can be applied.

**Mid-term exam: 30 %**
This is an in-class multiple-choice exam that will cover main concepts and facts about India.

**Essay: 50%**

**Essay sketch (ungraded):** To assist you in starting thinking about your final essay in advance, you will be asked to submit a 400-500-word sketch of your topic, justifying its importance, research sources and procedures. I will provide substantial feedback for your sketch, so that you can develop an excellent final essay. This is an ungraded assignment but if you submit it late, points will be deducted from the final paper grade for each late day, i.e. from A to A-, from A- to B+ and so on.

**Final paper (graded):** This is a 2000-3000-word essay that addresses a topic related to any aspect of the contemporary Indian society and cultures. The essay will need to incorporate reading materials from the course and your original research on any aspect of Indian culture conducted in Hong Kong or online. The guidelines will be posted on Blackboard. Due December 11
Policies

Educational technology
This class relies on the use of Blackboard. All class communications, announcements, assignment guidelines, and homework submissions will be done through it. Note that it uses the email address assigned to you by the University, so it is your responsibility to have an electronic mail forwarded to your main email address.

Disability Services
If you need special accommodations or classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the University’s Wellness and Counselling Center (https://www2.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/disability/en-GB) no later than the third week of classes.

Technology and Cell Phones
Although I recognize the value of technology in learning, I also understand that it can be a major hindrance, when used inappropriately. Therefore, the use of laptops, tablets, e-readers, etc. is not permitted in class (unless it is necessary for class activities). Cell phones must be turned off, or on silent mode (NOT on vibrate) as to avoid distracting your peers. Browsing Facebook or any other website during the class distracts not only you, but also persons sitting next to you, and such conduct is disrespectful to me and your colleagues. Therefore, disruptions caused by phone calls, texting, emailing, or the use of any other communication technologies during a class will result in the reduction of your final grade. If you are expecting an important call, you should talk to me before the class.

Academic Integrity
The University has recently updated its policy on Academic Integrity and the penalties for plagiarism and cheating. You can find the information here: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_%282013-14%29/p06.htm Read it carefully: every student is expected to comply with the policy; otherwise, if you are suspected of violating these obligations you will be subject to the outlined sanctions. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask me or your TA about this!

Classroom Recording
To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, you may not record lectures, discussion and/or activities during the class or tutorials without my permission obtained in advance, and only solely for your own private use.

Late Work and Absence
Late or incomplete assignments will be marked down: a grade will be subtracted for each late day. Class attendance is not required, but if you miss a quiz, there won’t be an opportunity for a make-up

Discussion Rules
We will be discussing many interesting, important and potentially controversial topics. I expect you to be polite and respectful of others’ opinions, limit your statements to academic (not emotional) arguments, and not use offensive language or judgmental statements.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Overall course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</td>
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# Weekly class schedule

## Week One. September 4. INDIA AND ITS CULTURES

**Required readings:**
- Modern Anthropology of India: *Introduction*, pp. 1-11

**Recommended readings:**
- Reader: *Introduction*, pp. 1-6

## Week Two. September 11. CURRY, CRICKET, AND COLONIALISM

**Required readings:**
- Philip Lutgendorf: *Making Tea in India: Chai, Capitalism, Culture*. Thesis Eleven, 113(1) 11–31

**Recommended readings:**

**Video clip in class:** excerpts from *Lagaan* and *Cricket Explained*

## Week Three. September 18. RELIGION, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE

**Required readings:**
- Joyce Flueckiger: *Vernacular Islam at a Healing Crossroads in Hyderabad*. Reader, pp. 290-308

**Recommended readings:**
- Reader. *Introduction to Part Four*

**Film in class:** The Roots of Love

## Week Four. September 25.

Public Holiday, no class; will be replaced later by a fieldtrip

## Week Five. October 2. CASTE AND CLASS

**Required readings:**
- Seven Prevalent Misconceptions about India's Caste System. Reader, pp. 153-155
- Sara Dickey: *Anjali's Alliance: Class Mobility in Urban India*. Reader, pp. 192-205
- Meredith McGuire: “How to Sit, How to Stand”: *Bodily Practice and the New Urban Middle Class.*
### Companion, Chapter 6

**Recommended readings:**
- *Reader. Introduction to Part Three*, pp. 145-152
- C. J. Fuller: *The Modern Transformation of an Old Elite: The Case of the Tamil Brahmins*. Companion, Chapter 4

**Film in class:** Inside a Lost African Tribe Still Living in India Today

### Week Six. October 9. NATION-MAKING

**Required readings:**
- Urvashi Butalia. *The Voices from the Partition*. Reader, pp. 314-327
- Ornit Shani: *The Politics of Communalism and Caste*. Companion, Chapter 16

**Recommended readings:**
- Tanka B. Subba and Jelle J. P. Wouters. *North-East India Ethnography and Politics of Identity*. The Modern Anthropology of India, Chapter 12.

**Video clip in class:** Kashmir: Inside a Friday Protest

### Week Seven. October 16. FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

**Required readings:**
- Susan Wadley: *One Straw from a Broom Cannot Sweep: The Ideology and Practice of the Joint Family in Rural North India*. Reader, pp. 14-25

**Recommended readings:**
- *Reader: Introduction to Part One*, pp. 9-13

**Film in Class:** Made in India by Rebecca Haimowitz & Vaishali Sinha (2010)

### Week Eight. October 23. YOUTH, AGE, AND CHANGING INDIA

**Required readings:**
- Craig Jeffery: *Great Expectations: Youth in Contemporary India*. Companion, Chapter 3.

**Recommended readings:**
- Cari Costanzo Kapur: *Rethinking Courtship, Marriage, and Divorce in an Indian Call Center*. Reader, pp. 50-61

**Film in class:** The World Before Her
### Week Nine. October 30. GENDER AND SEXUALITY

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**

- *Reader. Introduction to Part Two*, pp. 75-80

**Film:** Mardistan (Macholand)

### Week Ten. November 6. YOGA AND MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

**Essay sketch due today!**

**Required readings:**

- Joseph Alter: *Yoga, Modernity, and the Middle Class: Locating the Body in a World of Desire*. Companion, Chapter 8
- Smith, Frederick and Dagmar Wujastyk. 2005. Introduction to *Modern and Global Ayurveda: Pluralism and Paradigms* (pp. 1-28)

**Recommended readings:**

- William Sax. *Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh: Ritual Healing*. MAI, Chapter 17

### Week Eleven. November 13. TRANSNATIONALISM AND DIASPORA

**Required readings:**

- Smitha Radhakrishnan: *Examining the ‘Global’ Indian Middle Class: Gender and Culture in the Silicon Valley / Bangalore Circuit*. Reader, pp. 461-471

**Recommended readings:**

- *Reader: Introduction to Part Six*, pp. 399-405

**Film:** Cast in India by Natasha Raheja

### Week Twelve. November 20. BOLLYWOOD, MEDIA, AND ECONOMY

- Dwyer, Rachel 2010 *Bollywood’s India: Hindi cinema as a guide to modern India*. Asian Affairs vol. 41 issue 3
- Purnima Mankekar: *Dangerous Desires*. Reader, pp. 421-435

**Recommended readings:**

**Week Thirteen. November 27. GLOBAL CHALLENGES: PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Required readings:**
- Yaffa Truelove and Emma Mawdsley: *Discourses of Citizenship and Criminality in Clean, Green Delhi*. Companion, Chapter 22

**Recommended readings:**

Video clips from “Wastelands: The Story of Garbage” and “The Invisible Man”

**December 11 -- Final paper due today**
(hard copy and soft copy)