**History 229: Traveling the World: South Asians in Diaspora**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30am-12:30pm

**History 229, Spring 2013**  
3 credits  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 4-5:15 pm  
Humanities Room 1221

**Description:**

Millions of South Asians left their home in the Indian subcontinent to travel the world across the Indian Ocean to Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia; across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean and Britain; and across the Pacific Ocean to Fiji and California. This course follows these Indian traders, political leaders, workers and pilgrims as they discovered the world beyond India. Starting with the movement of traders before the onset of colonial rule in the eighteenth century, you will learn about the impact of European colonialism in the routes traversed by merchants and religious pilgrims. You will study changes resulting from Portuguese and British rule in the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific oceans in the nineteenth century. Being colonial subjects of an empire over which the sun never set opened up the world to South Asians who traveled as indentured laborers, traders and political activists to British colonies in South and East Africa, Malaya, Burma and the Caribbean. In the twentieth century South Asians settled in the United States of America and the United Kingdom becoming a contemporary diaspora. The cultural, social, economic and political experiences of these sojourners and settlers reveals an exciting transnational perspective on the history of migration, diaspora, nationalism and colonialism in India, Africa, Asia, America and Britain. Through films, literature, and history this course introduces you to a history of the world as seen from the eyes of South Asians who travelled across it.

**Assignments:**

1) **One** 5-page (double spaced), paper on **any one** of the books listed at the end of the syllabus due on the date indicated.

2) **Three** 1,500-word (not exceeding 4 double-spaced pages) take-home exams (essays). Questions will be distributed in class on dates indicated in the syllabus and should be returned in class on the due dates.

3) **One** final group presentation based on research on South Asians in the World.

**Evaluation:**

Class participation and attendance: 10%  
Short paper: 25%  
Take-home exams/essays: 45%  
Group presentation: 20%
More than **two** unexplained absences taken without the instructor’s prior permission will result in a point deduction from the overall class grade. All medical claims must be accompanied by a doctor’s note. Please look over the due dates of assignments carefully for any potential conflict with other class commitments. You can request a change in the due-date by **1/31**. No extensions will be considered after this date with the exception of medical emergencies that must be supported with appropriate documentation.

**READINGS:**

All readings listed in the syllabus are **required** readings. Short articles and chapters are available on the learn@uw course website; primary sources accessible on the internet have been indicated as appropriate. Journal articles are can be accessed online through MadCat. Two books are available for purchase from the university book store or on amazon.com:

Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*
Mahmood Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee: Uganda Asians come to Britain*

Please check the course website for guidelines for the take-home exam essays, response papers, short paper and group presentations.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Week I**
22 January  Introduction
24 January  History as Travel: Beyond Nations

**Readings:**
Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*

Vasco da Gama, *Round Africa to India 1497-1498*
UNIT I THE INDIAN OCEAN

Week II
29 January Trade and Politics in the Indian Ocean: Before Colonialism
31 January Europeans in the Indian Ocean

Readings:
Sugata Bose, *Hundred Horizons*, 2

Week III
5 February South Asian Traders and Empire
7 February Faith in the Indian Ocean

Readings:
Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750-1947: Traders of Sindh from Bukhara to Panama*, Introduction & Ch 1 South Asian Merchant Networks
Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean*, ch 4

Week IV
12 February Discussion [First Take Home Exam Essay Question Distributed in Class]
14 February Documentary: Coolies - How Britain Reinvented Slavery
No readings: Work on Papers

UNIT II TRAVEL IN EMPIRE

Week V
19 February The System of Indentured Labor [Essay I due in Class]
21 February The Legacy of Indentured Labor
[Option I Short paper due in Class]

Readings:
Brij Lal, “Kunti’s Cry”
Week VI
26 February  Gandhi in South Africa (I): Lawyers, Traders and Laborers
28 February  No Class

Readings:
Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India*, Chs 1 - 3

Week VII
5 March  Gandhi in South Africa (II): The Making of a Mahatma
7 March  The Depression and the Second World War

Readings:
Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* chs 4 & 5
Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons* ch 5

Week VIII
12 March  South Asians in East Africa (I): Race and Politics
14 March  South Asians in East Africa (II): Independence and Africanization

Readings:

Week IX
19 March  Expulsion and Arrival
21 March  Discussion [Second take Home Essay Question Distributed in Class]

Readings:
Sana Aiyar, *Nation, Race and Politics across the Indian Ocean*, ch 5
Idi Amin expulsion speech, 1972

*Spring Break 23-31 March*
UNIT III CONTEMPORARY DIASPORAS

Week X
2 April Movie: Mississippi Masala [Essay II due in Class]
4 April Movie: Mississippi Masala (cont)
[Option II Short paper due in Class]

Readings:
Mahmood Mamdani, From Citizen to Refugee: Uganda Asians come to Britain (entire book)

Week XI
9 April South Asians in America (I)
11 April South Asians in America (II)

Readings:
United States vs Bhagat Singh Thind (1923)
Vijay Prasad, Karma of Brown Folk chs 2&3
Nico Slate, Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India, ch 3

Week XII
16 April South Asians in Multicultural Britain
18 April Movie: Bend it Like Beckham

Readings:

Week XIII
23 April Movie: Bend it Like Beckham (cont)
25 April Diaspora and its Discontents (I)
[Option III Short paper due in Class]

Readings:
Joel Stein, “My Own Private India” Time, June 2010
Week XIV
30 April Diaspora and its Discontents (II): Discussion
2 May Student Presentations

Readings:
Mohsin Hamid, The Reluctant Fundamentalist

Week XV
7 May Student Presentations
[Third Take Home Exam Essay Question Distributed in Class]
[Option IV Short paper due in Class]

9 May No Class: Work on Final Papers

***Final essays due on 14 May by 4pm***

Book Options for Short Essays
Option I (Unit I): Amitav Ghosh, In an Antique Land due on 21 February
Option II (Unit II), G.M.Vassanji, The Gunny Sack due on 4 April
Option III (Unit III), Jhumpa Lahiri, Unaccustomed Earth due on 25 April
Option IV (Unit III), Hanif Kureishi, My Son the Fanatic due on 7 May