

# 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*

<http://www.fordham.edu/balsall/source/1354-ibnbattuta.asp>

Vasco da Gama, *Round Africa to India 1497-1498*

<http://www.fordham.edu/balsall/mod/1497degama.asp>

## 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:

Asin Das Gupta, "Indian Merchants and the Western Indian Ocean: The Early Seventeenth Century", *Modern Asian Studies*, 19(3), 1985

Edward Alpers, "Gujarat and the Trade of East Africa 1500-1800", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 9(1), 1976

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"

Sean Lokaisingh-Meighoo, "The Diasporic Mo(ve)ment: Indentureship and Indo-Caribbean Identity", pp. 12-17 available at:

<http://www.cibera.de/fulltext/5/5001/cerlac/papers/pdf/Lokaisingh.pdf>

Dashini Jeyathurai, "Labouring Bodies, Labouring Histories: The Malaysia-Indian Estate Girl", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 47(3), 2012

## **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:

Sana Aiyar, "Empire, Race and the Indians in Colonial Kenya's Contested Public Political Sphere", *Africa*, 81(1), 2012  
James Brennan, *Taija: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* chs 4 & 5

## **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  
Siva Naipaul, *North of South: An African Journey*, ch. 3 "Between Master and Slave", pp. 96-122

***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:

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

John Zavos, "Stamp it Out! Disciplining the Image of Hinduism in a Multicultural Milieu", *Contemporary South Asia* 16(3), 2008

### **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:

Claire Alexander and Brian Alleyne, "Framing Difference: Racial and Ethnic Studies in Twenty-first Century Britain", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, 4, 2002

Brian Keith Axel, "National Interruption: Diaspora Theory and Multiculturalism in the UK", *Cultural Dynamics*, 14, 3, 2002

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**