

HISTORY 600: SOUTH ASIANS IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE: TRADE, LABOR, POLITICS

Professor: Sana Aiyar
aiyar@wisc.edu
Office: 5114 Mosse Humanities Building (Box 5015)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am-12pm

History 600, Spring 2011
White, Room 7121
Wednesdays 1:20-3:20pm

Course Description:

This research seminar explores the history of South Asians who migrated from the Indian subcontinent to different parts of the British empire over which “the sun never set” from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. They served in a variety of roles within the colonial economic structures of different British colonies as indentured laborers on plantations, contract labor in the construction of railways, and financiers and traders who facilitated the spread of colonial rule. During the first 10 weeks students will learn through weekly assigned readings and discussions about Indian traders in East Africa and Southeast Asia; Indian indentured laborers in Fiji, Mauritius and the Caribbean; Indian political activism and the making of a “mahatma” (Gandhi) in South Africa; armed anti-colonial resistance against British rule during the Second World War in India by the Indian National Army that recruited heavily from South Asian diasporic communities in Southeast Asia; African and Indian political collaboration in Kenya; and the post-colonial expulsion of South Asians from East Africa to Britain in the late 1960s-early 1970s. Students will be introduced to a range of historiographical works that shift away from histories of South Asia and colonialism that are anchored to territorial boundaries. They will be urged to think about the varied, comparative and connected transregional experience of colonial rule from the perspective of the South Asian diaspora across the British Empire. They will be expected to write one long 20 page research paper based on primary sources and secondary literature on a topic related to the course. Students will work towards this from early in the semester but especially after the pre-assigned readings have been discussed in class.

Assignments:

- 1) All students have to complete the work-sheet and map exercise handed out on 1/19 and bring them to class on 2/9
- 2) All students are required to attend the Library Workshop organized by the History Department for which you have to pre-register at:
http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/reg/catalog_course.aspx?groupcoursekey=31638.
The workshop is being offered on 1/25, 1/26 & 2/3 from 6pm-7:15

- 3) From Week II onwards students will be divided into teams of two to lead discussion, summarizing the week's readings, identify one primary source (in the library or online) relating to the week's topic and include an analysis on that source in their discussion. If appropriate, please bring copies of the primary source for your classmates to use. I can make copies of this if you send this to me by 11am on Wednesday before class. You can be creative about the kind of primary source you use: music, film, fiction and other cultural productions may be used for this exercise. Please consult Mary Rader (mrader@library.wisc.edu), South Asia bibliographer, Memorial Library for guidance locating primary sources for this exercise as well as your research paper. If you give her enough notice she can order primary sources located in other library across the US.
- 4) One paragraph research proposal identifying the final paper topic due in class on 3/9
- 5) Students are required to set up individual meetings with me (on 3/28 & 3/29) to discuss their research. Please come to this meeting having identified the primary sources you are planning to use.
- 6) Students will be paired up to present first drafts of their paper (10 minutes) and comment on another student's paper (5 minutes) on 4/20 & 4/27. Presentation schedule will be decided alphabetically (last names of presenter). First drafts should be received by me and the commentator by 5pm on 4/15
- 7) Final Papers due by 5pm on 5/9

Evaluation:

Attendance and active class participation: 20%

Worksheet & Map Exercise: 5%

Discussion Lead, Paper Presentation and Peer Commentary: 15%

Final Paper: 60%

Unexplained absences taken without the instructor's **prior** permission and failure to submit assignments on time will result in a deduction from the overall letter grade.

Readings:

Most required readings are available on the learn@uw course website. Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* is available for purchase at the university book store. Journal articles not on the course website can be downloaded online from MadCat. Please contact me at least 24hrs before class if you haven't been able to access the week's readings for any reason.

CLASS SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS

Week I 19 January

Introduction & Organization

Week II 26 January

Britain and the Indian Ocean

Michael Pearson, *Indian Ocean*, ch. 7

Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, Introduction & ch 1

Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 1

Week III 2 February

Trade and the South Asian Diaspora

Claude Markovitz, *The Global World of Indian Merchants*, Introduction, Conclusion, chs 1& 7

Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 3

Rajat Kanta Ray, "Asian Capital in the Age of European Expansion: The Rise of the Bazaar, 1800-1914", *Modern Asian Studies*, 29,(3) 1995

Week IV 9 February ****Work sheet and Map exercise due in class****

Indentured Labor: A New System of Slavery?

Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, chs 1&3

Marina Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers*, introduction & ch 1

Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (whole book)

Week V 16 February

From Indenture to Diaspora

Marina Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers*, ch 7

John Kelly, *A Politics of Virtue*, ch 2

Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire*, chs 6, 7 & post-script

Sunil Amrith, "Indians Overseas? Governing Tamil Migration to Malaya 1870-1941", in *Past and Present*, August, 2010

Week VI 23 February

Gandhi in South Africa: The Making of a Mahatma

M.A. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*

Available online: <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL034.PDF> (please ensure that you read the entire book from the preface to the conclusion pp. 1-277)

Week VII 2 March

Trade and Politics in Kenya

Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, ch 6

I.R.G. Spencer, "First Assault on Indian Ascendency: Indian Traders in the Kenya Reserves 1895-1929" *African Affairs*, 80(320), 1980

Frank Furedi, "The Development of Anti-Asian Opinion amongst Africans in Nakuru District, Kenya", *African Affairs*, 73(292), 1974

Sana Aiyar, "Empire, Race and the Indians in Colonial Kenya's Contested Public Political Sphere from 1919 to 1923", *AFRICA: The Journal of the International African Institute*, 81, (1), 2011

Week VIII 9 March ****One paragraph on proposed research for final paper due in class****

Expatriate Patriotism: Indian National Army

Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 5

Leonard Gordon, *Brothers against the Raj*, chs 9, 10 & 11

Week IX **No Class: Spring Break**

Week X 23 March

Expulsions and Exodus

Randall Hansen, "The Kenyan Asians, British Politics and the Commonwealth Immigration Acts, 1968" in *The Historical Journal*, 42(3), 1999

Mahmood Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee* [Selections]

Hugh Tinker, "A Forgotten Long March: The Indian Exodus from Burma, 1942", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 6(1), 1975

Ronald Aminzade, "The Politics of Race and Nation: Citizenship and Africanization in Tanganyika" in *Political Power and Social Theory*, 14, 2001

Week XI **No Class: Individual Meetings on 3/28 & 3/29. Students should come to this meeting having identified the primary sources they intend to use for their papers.**

Week XII 6 April

No Class: Work on Papers

Week XIII 13 April

No Class: Work on Papers

Send first draft to me and your selected commentator by 5pm on 4/15

Week XIV 20 April
Presentation and Commentary

Week XV 27 April
Presentation and Commentary

Week XVI 4 May
No Class: Work on Final Papers

Please complete the online student evaluation for this course

Final Papers due by 5pm on 5/9