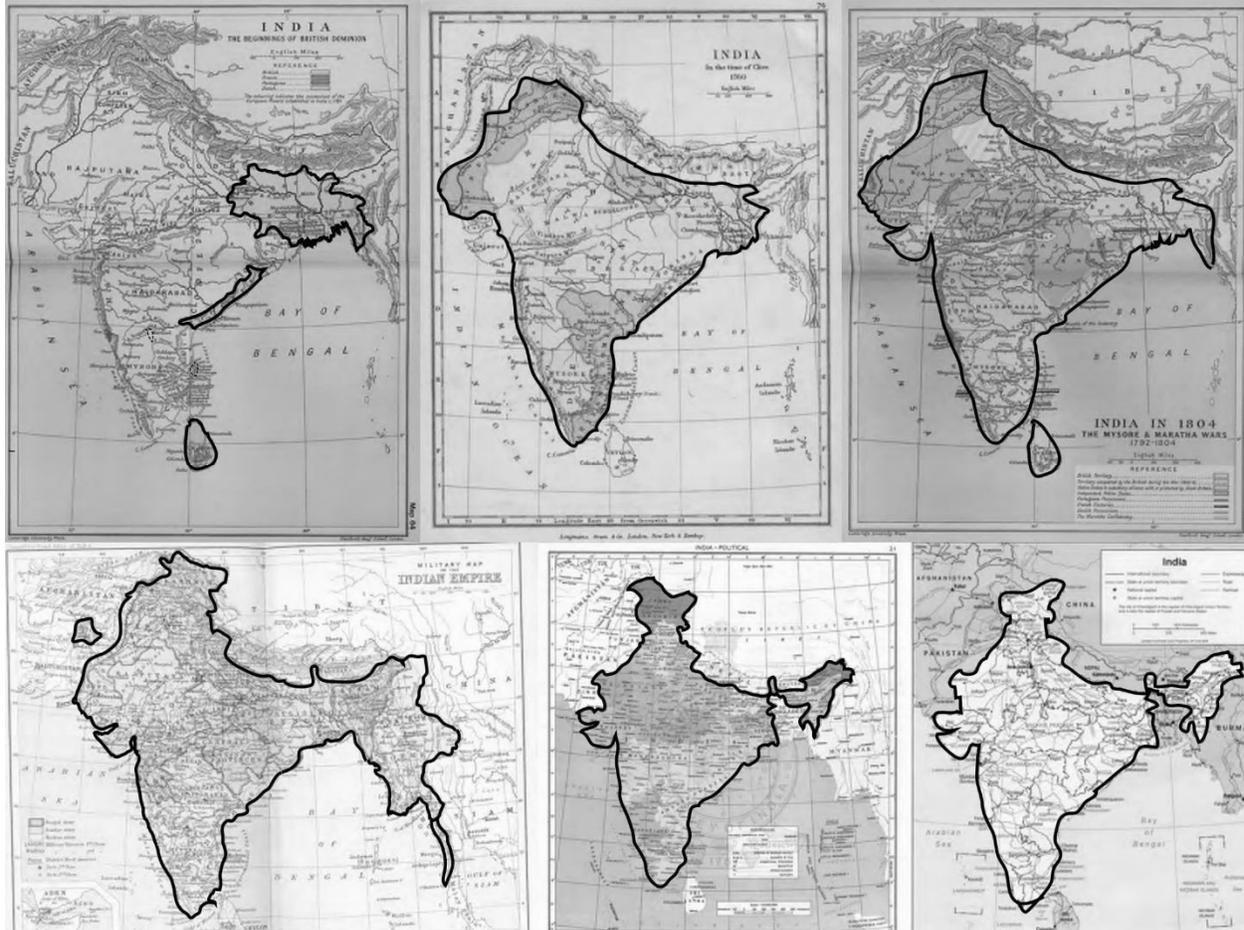


History 142: South Asia, Past and Present (3 credits).



Instructor: Dr. Mou Banerjee

Email: mbanerjee4@wisc.edu

Class Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00-9:15am, Ingraham 224.

Office hours: Mosse Humanities Building, Room 4115: Thursday 12.30 -2.00 pm and by email appointment. Students **are required to meet with me at least once** by the end of the third week of the semester.

Credit Hours: This 3-credit course meets as a group for 3 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each lecture counts as 1.5 hours). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 6

hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this course.

Course Description:

The South Asian Subcontinent, site of one of oldest civilizations of the world, and home to one-fourth of the world's population, is a study in paradoxes. Culturally complex, religiously syncretic yet divisive, politically tumultuous, the subcontinent is a melting-pot of languages, ethnicities, heterogeneous political and social regimes, and widely disparate economic and ecological habitats. From being shaped by one of the greatest empires of the early-modern period - the Mughals; to being the most important imperial possession of Britain in the nineteenth century – the jewel in the crown; and ultimately providing a mosaic of postcolonial nations experimenting with democracy and authoritarianism in varied measures of success and tragedy, South Asia is both a world unto itself and a central node to wider global connections.

In this class then, our objectives are to analytically understand South Asia as a politically, economically, historically, and geo-strategically vital part of our early-modern and modern world. Beginning with a short but in-depth examination of early-modern South Asia from antiquity, with emphasis on the Mughal period from 1500-1757, we shall engage more fully with the shaping of the subcontinent into a complex colonial and then post-colonial territory through the influences and engagements with British imperial rule from 1757-2019.

We will think about the birth of two sovereign nation states, India and Pakistan, accompanied by bloody carnage, resulting in mass-movements of about 8 million people across shadowy and uncertain borders, in 1947, a tragedy that was repeated again in 1971 with the birth of Bangladesh, marred by genocidal violence. Such partitions were and are not one-time catastrophes, but ongoing events, shaping the lives of the billions of people who inhabit the geopolitical imaginaries of South Asia. We will also pay close attention to the ways in which the peoples of South Asia adapted, adopted and refashioned the notions of modern enlightenment and national belonging. We will see how India is not at all the mythic space of changeless tradition that it was characterized as, by Orientalist scholars past and present. Instead, we will discover a vibrant, engaged, vital and rapidly changing South Asian subcontinent.

Course Objectives:

1. The main objective of the course is to help you think and write critically about the South Asian subcontinent, the makings and multiple markers of colonial and postcolonial modernity, and the creation of political identities and the ideological discourses of political practice.
2. We will do this through close-reading and analysis of primary sources and secondary material, as well as through writing assignments. In the written assignments, we shall work on identifying and engaging with historical arguments through examination and contextualization of primary sources and through critiques of academic monographs or articles.

Required Textbook: The primary background reading for the course is the textbook by **Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political economy* (4th Ed.). New York: Routledge, 2017.** You can also consult the third edition of Thomas and Barbara Metcalf's *A Concise History of Modern India*. As background preparation, listen to Sunil Khilnani's excellent podcast on BBC, [India in 50 Lives](#).

Availability of required texts: All readings for the class will be posted on the course website at the beginning of the semester. You may choose to purchase the required reading textbook online. Readings may change at instructor discretion but will be announced and posted on the Canvas site a week in advance.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of:

Participation, Attendance, and Class Prep (5%+5%+10%):

Attendance and participation are mandatory. It is essential in a course of this nature to approach the course material and your classmates with respect and an academic mindset and attitude: much of the material we will cover, particularly that regarding religion, caste, and ethnicity in South Asia, is controversial and the subject of heated debate. Be constructive, kind, collegial.

For Class Prep – the students are required to create an open Google Document, to which all the members of class and the instructor will have access. Please take notes on the class lectures on this Google document – which should be a communitarian effort and which all members of the class are required to do. I shall check in once every two weeks to make sure you are engaged in active note-taking and discussion.

Written Assignments:

This class has a midterm (20%), three reviews (15+15+15 = 45%) and one class presentation (15%).

Midterm (20%) - We will have an in-class **mid-term exam on Thursday, October 17th**. You will answer 3 short questions out of 6 (each 5 points – 3-4 pages on the Blue books), and there will be a choice of 5 date/event identifications (each of 1 point – 4-5 sentences.) I will provide you some samples for the questions to practice which will be uploaded in advance to the Canvas site.

The Reviews: One each on a on a painting (15%), on a historical film (not mythological) set in South Asia (15%) and a combined review (historical monograph paired with historical fiction – 15%). Citations are mandatory, and you should use the MLA or Chicago Manual of Style for citatory practices. I have a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism, so if you're unclear on any aspect of writing the paper, please schedule a meeting with me before submission, and we can have a discussion on your draft.

- 1. Film Review (15%)** – Choose a historical film (not a mythological/superhero film, say, for e.g., *Bahubali*) that depicts a particular historical period in India, and analyze the

narrative of the film in context of the historical period it describes. Reflect on the many ways in which historical facts are used to depict a particular understanding or POV, and think about the many ideological ways in which history can be interpreted. 4-5 pages, 1500-2000 words, cited and annotated clearly. Emailed to me by 11.59 PM on Friday the 27th of September.

2. **Painting Review (15%)** – Choose a painting, from the Mughal era to the present day, and write an analysis that should contain the following elements - (4-5 pages, i.e., 1500-2000 words at most) on the genre, historical provenance, the painter, the subject matter, and the historical scholarship (if any) on the painting. Clear, elegant language, depth of analysis and citations will be considered for the highest grade. Emailed to me on Friday, 1st November, by 11.59 PM.
3. **Combined Review (15%)** – Choose a work of historical fiction set in the South Asian subcontinent or containing elements that illuminate the history of the subcontinent, and pair it with a historical monograph that deals with a central concern of your fiction choice, to make a nuanced argument about the many ways in which the historical past provides a rich tapestry and a polyphony of voices to illuminate contemporary concerns. Concentrate on the oft-repeated adage – “The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there.” Is it really the case? (4-5 pages, 1500-2500 words) Emailed to me by 11.59 PM on Friday the 6th of December.

Class presentation (15%): Each of you will be required to give one oral presentation in the regular course of the semester. At the beginning of the semester, you are going to be assigned a particular week for presentation, at the discretion of the instructor. The presentation will be on that week’s readings and should be about 10 minutes long with another 10 minutes for discussion. You will summarize the texts, their main arguments and then critically evaluate the strength of the argument. You will also be required to engage with your fellow students’ comments and questions.

The History Lab: If you wish to improve your chances of writing an excellent paper, you are strongly encouraged to consider visiting The History Lab.

Grade Cutoffs:

92-100% A

87-91.9% AB

82-86.9% B

77-81.9% BC

72-76.9% C

67-71.9% D

0-66.9% F

Absences:

Over the course of the semester, you are allowed up to two absences, for any reason, without penalty. Every additional absence will result in a three-point deduction from your overall final grade. **Rare** exceptions to this policy will be made at the professor's discretion in cases of health or family emergency or due to religious observances. Absences due to routine schedule conflicts (job interviews, exams in others classes, etc.) or minor illness will not result in additional excused absences beyond the two already allotted.

If you are late to class, it is your responsibility to make sure at the end of that day's class that you are counted as present for the day. Excessive lateness will also count as absences at the instructor's discretion. If I am late for class, please wait for fifteen minutes, unless you are informed otherwise.

Late Policy: Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Late assignments without prior notification to the instructor will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each day's delay.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Calendar of Topics and Assignments:

Week 1:

Thursday: **Introduction**

Week 2: Unravelling India's Heritage: Ashoka to Somanatha

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.1-3

Tuesday: Nayanjot Lahiri, *Ashoka in Ancient India*, Epilogue

Thursday: Mahmud of Ghazni, Sources of Indian Tradition Vol. 1, p. 437-446.

Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History*, pp. 1-17.

Week 3: The Mughal Empire: State, Economy and Society

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.4

Tuesday: Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, pp. 273-293

Thursday: Excerpts from K. Asif's *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960). Class discussion on film.

Week of 4: India Between Empires: Decline or Decentralization?

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.5

Tuesday: C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, ch.1

Thursday: Short excerpt of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Bajirao Mastani* (2016) and discussion of the power vacuum left behind after the death of the last Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb.

Friday, 27th September: Email submission of Film Review, by 11.59 PM.

Week 5: The Transition to Colonialism: the late 18th Century

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.6

Tuesday: Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, chs.2 and 3

Thursday: Excerpts and discussion of Bharat Ek Khoj: The Company Bahadur and William Dalrymple, *The East India Company: The original corporate raiders*.

Week 5: The First Century of British Rule, 1757 to 1857: State and Economy.

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.7

Tuesday: Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, ch.4

Thursday: Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire*, pp. 12-32.

Week 6: Company Raj and Indian Society, 1757 to 1857

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.8

Tuesday: Raja Ram Mohan Roy, “Petitions and Addresses on the Practice of Suttee (1818–1831)” Pgs. 369-373 and Jules Verne, “Fogg Rescues a Sati”, from Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow. *Archives of Empire. Vol.1*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003. Excerpts from *Around the World in 80 Days* (1989).

Thursday: Lata Mani, “Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India.” *Cultural Critique*. No. 7, *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse II* (Autumn, 1987), pp. 119-156. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/1354153>

Week 7: Rebellion, Collaboration and the Transition to Crown Raj

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.9

Tuesday: Gautam Bhadra, ‘Four Rebels of 1857’ in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, pp. 129-175. Excerpts from Satyajit Ray’s *The Chess Players* (1977).

Thursday, October 17th: Mid-term Exam.

Week 8: High Noon of Colonialism, 1858 to 1914: State and Political Economy

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.10

Tuesday: Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* – selections and Sayyid Ahmed Khan, “The Indian National Congress as a Danger and a Folly,” *Sources of Indian Traditions*, Vol. 2, p. 216-224.

Thursday: Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: The Making of Indian Poverty*, Chapter 10.

Week 9: A Nation in Making? Swadeshi Nationalism - 1858 to 1914

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.11.

Tuesday: Bose & Jalal (eds.), *Nationalism, Democracy and Development*, ch.4

Thursday: Sugata Bose ‘Nation as Mother’ in Bose & Jalal (eds.), *Nationalism, Democracy and Development*, pp. 50-75.

Excerpts from Satyajit Ray’s *Home and the World* (1984). Class Discussion.

Friday, 1st November: Email Submission of Painting Review, by 11.59 PM.

Week 10: Colonialism Under Siege: State and Political Economy During and After World War I

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.12

Tuesday: Bose & Jalal (eds.), *Nationalism, Democracy and Development*, ch.3

Thursday: Indian Soldiers in WWI. Shrabani Basu, *For King and another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, “Introduction.”

Week 11: Gandhian Nationalism and Radical Social Politics: Enigma and Reality in the 1920s

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.13.

Tuesday: Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory*, pp. 1-6, Jawaharlal Nehru, *Towards Freedom*, pp. 59-64 and Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent*, pp. 54-70.

Thursday: Excerpts from Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982) and selections from Mahatma Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Part V. Class discussion.

Week 12: 1930s, The Depression Decade: Society, Economy and Politics

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.14.

Tuesday: Amartya Sen, "Poverty and Famines"

Thursday: Famine in Bengal (Pathe) and excerpts from Satyajit Ray's The Distant Thunder (1973). Class discussion on paintings and etchings by Chittaprosad and Zainul Abedin of the Bengal Famine.

Week 13: World War II and its Aftermath: Economic Crisis and Political Confrontation

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.15

Tuesday: C.A. Bayly and T.N. Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945*, pgs. 282-291, 321-327, 356-359.

Thursday: Thanksgiving Break.

Week 14: Partition

Textbook: Bose & Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, ch.16-17.

Tuesday: Selections from Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, Sadat Hasan Manto, "Toba Tek Singh", excerpts from Chandraprakash Dwivedi's *Pinjar* (2003), Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poem "This is not that dawn".

Thursday: Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, excerpts. Discussion.

Friday, 6th December: Emailed submission of Combined Review by 11.59 PM.

Week 15: 1947 - Meaning and Memory in the Present Day

Tuesday: Kashmir (article 370), Assam (NRC), and the ghosts of colonial pasts.

Films to be watched by students as prepwork:

1. "Where have you hidden my new moon crescent?" – Iffat Fatima.
 2. "Haider" – Vishal Bharadwaj
- Articles to Read – Uploaded to Canvas.

END OF FALL SEMESTER 2019