

Hist. 450: The Making of Modern South Asia (3 Credits)



(The agreement signed between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayewardene, on the deployment of Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka, 1987, which would finally lead to Gandhi's assassination in 1991 by a suicide bomber from the LTTE)

Instructor: Dr. Mou Banerjee

(Draft Syllabus, subject to changes at instructor's discretion)

Email: mbanerjee4@wisc.edu

Class Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9.30 – 10.45 AM, Humanities 1217.

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 fourth week of the semester – please set up a meeting through email.

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 Requirements:

1. This course is a historical introduction to the postcolonial history, political identity and political consciousness in the South Asian nation-states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Myanmar. We shall study the evolution of modern South Asia and the intricate relationship between the neighboring sovereign states that emerged out of the partition of colonial India in 1947 and their interactions with their immediate postcolonial neighbors, through close readings of primary sources and relevant historiographical and theoretical literature. Some of the ways to do this fruitfully is to compare the evolution of different political regimes in the regions of South Asia, and to pay attention to inter-Asian narratives of sectarian violence, terrorism and internecine war.

2. By exploring the interactions between India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Myanmar, from an India-centric point-of-view, we shall examine how such encounters and debates, in relation to the realities of postcolonial international political, ecological and economic relations, shaped a modern discourse on a nation and its perceived “Others”, the creation of categories of those who belong and those who do not in national narratives. This course will help students to understand the shifting regional dynamics by mapping the changing shape of geopolitics in this region that has the largest population, in numbers and density, in the world – close to 1.75 billion.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will have achieved the following course learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate a strong basis of knowledge of the history of inter-regional relations between South Asian countries.
- Demonstrate the ability to do historical research and analysis, including the use of primary sources.

Primary source documents freely accessible can be found here:

National Archives of India, Digitized Collection (NAI):

<https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/digitized-collections>

South Asia Open Archives, JStor

<https://www.jstor.org/site/saoa/>

Foreign Relations of the United States volumes (FRUS):

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>

CIA Records Search Tool (CREST):

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document-type/crest>

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. The main objective of the course is to help you think and write critically about the discourses of postcolonial nation formation and constructions of imagined communities, from the

perspective of civil wars, failures of diplomatic ties, and last, in sectarian violence against minority populations.

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.

Recommended Textbooks: The recommended background readings for the course are listed below.

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](#).

1. Ayesha Jalal. *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics*. Harvard UP, 2014.

2. Willem Van Schendel. *A History of Bangladesh*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 2009.

3. Holt, John Clifford. *The Sri Lanka Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke UP, 2011.

4. Barfield, Thomas J. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2010.

5. Topich, William J., and Leitich, Keith A. *The History of Myanmar*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2013.

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.

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% = 20%):

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.

In the last 15 minutes of every lecture, we will perform a debriefing exercise – I will ask a member of the class what they found to be the most compelling or instructive issue in their assigned readings, and we will have a short discussion of what you take away from the day’s class. Be prepared to answer if I call on you and engage in the discussion.

Be constructive, kind, collegial.

Written Assignments:

This class has one short review (15%), one Op-Ed (modelled on the NYT, the New Yorker, The Washington Post, The Guardian or The Atlantic, 20%), one larger final review paper (30%) and one group class presentation (15%). Groups will be created in the second week of class, and members of the group will select a particular week on which they want to present on the week’s readings.

Total Grade: $20+15+20+30+15 = 100\%$

The Reviews: One each 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. I am open to reading one draft for the short review and Op-Ed and allowing for rewrites, and up to 2 drafts of the longer final review. **You should have shown me a draft at least a week before deadline to allow for a re-write.**

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 21st of February.

2. **Op-Ed (20%)** – Write an Op-Ed on any issue that highlights the inter-regional socio-political complexity of South Asia, drawing on both present events and on the history of the last seventy years. This is original creative non-fiction, and you’re free to write what you want. 5 pages. Model your Op-ed on any of the major media-outlets mentioned above. You also can take the help of the wonderful website: <https://www.theopedproject.org/oped-basics>. Emailed to me by 11.59 PM on Friday the 20th of March.
3. **Combined Review (30%)** – 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? (6-8 pages, 3000-3500 words) Emailed to me by 11.59 PM on Sunday the 3rd of May 2020.

Class presentation (15%): Each group 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.

Assessment Rubric for Class Presentation

CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	F
Content 20 pts.	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.	Does not understand or address any topic.
Audience Engagement	Makes good use of the	Makes fair use of chosen	Makes some use of medium to	Makes little or any use of	Makes no real use of any

20 pts.	chosen medium to engage the audience's attention.	medium to engage audience attention.	engage audience attention.	medium, or does not attempt to engage audience attention.	medium. No audience engagement
Preparedness 10 pts.	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	Student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student did not seem at all prepared to present.	Student did not present.

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 unless cleared with instructor through email communication. 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 that 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. **Extension of the deadline for the final essay will not be allowed.**

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.

Readings:

Week 1: Introduction

1. "Strategic Passing: Why India Will Not Be Pakistan 2.0 in U.S. Asia Policy". Jayita Sarkar, Foreign Policy.com, March 6, 2015. Stable URL: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/06/strategic-passing-why-india-will-not-be-pakistan-2-0-in-u-s-asia-policy/>

2. “The Important Difference in the US-India and US-Pakistan Relationships”. Harsh Pant, *The Diplomat*, March 10 2016.
3. Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide*. London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 2016. Selections from chapter 4 “Implications for the Rohingyas (2008-2015)”.

Week 2: Aftermath of the “Tryst with Destiny”

1. Sugata Bose, ‘Nation, Reason and Religion: India’s Independence in International Perspective’ in Economic and Political Weekly, 1 August, 1998, pp. 2090-2097
2. Urvashi Butalia. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. New Delhi, India: Penguin Books India, 1998. “Women”, pgs.143-171, “Honour”, pgs., 193-235.
3. *Memories of madness: Stories of 1947*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2002. Selections from Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom’s Shade*, Sadat Hasan Manto, “Toba Tek Singh”, Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s poem “This is not that dawn”.

Week 3: Kashmir, The Roots of Conflict

1. Srinath Raghavan. *War and Peace in Modern India*. “Kashmir 1947-1948”, Pg. 101-148.
2. Sumantra Bose. *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2003. Chapter 1, “Origins of the Conflict” and Chapter 4, “Sovereignty in dispute”.

Week 4: Kashmir, Paradise Lost?

1. Sumantra Bose. *Transforming India: Challenges to the World's Largest Democracy*. 2013. Chapter 5.
2. Balraj Puri, Kashmir: Towards Insurgency, pp. 54-69
3. Basharat Peer, “Kashmir Unrest: A Letter to an Unknown Indian” and Mridu Rai, “Making A Part Inalienable: Folding Kashmir into India’s Imagination” in Sanjay Kak (ed.), Until My Freedom Has Come, pp.43-46, 250-278.
4. Agha Shaheed Ali. “The Country without a Post Office”, “I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight”, “From Amherst to Kashmir: Zainab’s Lament in Damascus”.

Week 5: The Language Movement and Nationalism in East Pakistan

1. Willem van Schendel. *A History of Bangladesh*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 2009. “The Pakistan Experiment and the Language Issue”. Pg. 107-120.

2. Eds. Meghna Guhathakurta and Schendel, Willem Van. *The Bangladesh Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham; London: Duke UP, 2013. Rounaq Jahan, “The Vernacular Elite” and Rehman Sobhan, “East and West Pakistan: Economic Divergence”. Pgs. 184-190.

Week 6: 1971: Genocide and the birth of Bangladesh

1. Willem van Schendel. *A History of Bangladesh*. Part IV “War and the Birth of Bangladesh”.
2. Rounaq Jahan. *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*. Dacca: Oxford UP; UP, 1973. Pgs. 185-204.
3. Gary Bass. *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*. First ed. 2013. “Mute and horrified witnesses” and “The Blood Telegram”.
4. Eds. Meghna Guhathakurta and Schendel, Willem Van. *The Bangladesh Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham; London: Duke UP, 2013. Basanti Guhathakurta, “The Jagannath College Concentration Camp”, pgs. 283-285.
5. Sharlach, L. (2000). “Rape as Genocide: Bangladesh, the Former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda.” *New Political Science*, 22(1), 89-102.

Week 7: India and Sri Lanka: Part 1

1. Gupta, Shekhar, et al. “28 Years after Rajiv Gandhi's Death, a Look Back at the LTTE-Lanka Nexus That Killed Him.” *The Print*, 21 May 2019, theprint.in/opinion/28-years-after-rajiv-gandhis-death-a-look-back-at-the-ltte-lanka-nexus-that-killed-him/238366/.
2. Samanth Subramanian. *This Divided Island: Stories from the Sri Lankan War*. London, Atlantic Books, 2015. Selections.
3. Thiranagama, Sharika. *In My Mother's House: Civil War in Sri Lanka*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Selections
4. Holt, John. *The Sri Lanka Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke UP, 2011. Selections from Part IV, “The Great Divide”, and “Neither Sinhala nor Tamil - On Being a South Asian in Sri Lanka”. Part V, *Political Epilogue*, in entirety.
5. The UN Report on the Sri Lankan Civil War. Stable URL: http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Sri_Lanka/The_Internal_Review_Panel_report_on_Sri_Lanka.pdf

Week 8: India and Sri Lanka: Part 2

1. Selections from ed. Pereira, Sharmini. *The Incomplete Thombu* by T. Shanaathanan. London: Raking Leaves, 2011. Print.

2. Palme d'Or award winning "Dheepan", directed by Jacques Audiard, 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7VZoE4vB2s>
3. Selvadurai, Shyam. *Write to Reconcile: An Anthology*. First ed. 2013. "Nayomi Munaweera: One House: Meditations on Home, Return and Breaking Silence."
4. "The Defeated: Sri Lanka's Tamils pick up the pieces after the war". *Caravan Magazine*, 1 February 2012. Stable URL: <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/reportage/defeated>

Week 9: The Problem of Afghanistan

1. Roy, Arundhati. "The Algebra of Infinite Justice." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 29 Sept. 2001, www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/29/september11.afghanistan.
2. Nojumi, Neamatollah. *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave, 2002. "Afghanistan in the International System".
2. Dalrymple, William. *A Deadly Triangle*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.
4. "The 'India Question' in Afghanistan." *Lawfare*, 31 Oct. 2019, www.lawfareblog.com/india-question-afghanistan.
5. Marc Foster, "The Kite Runner", motion picture based on Khaled Hosseini's novel of the same name. 2007. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsK8gurEsxE>

Week 10: Myanmar and a continuing Genocide

1. Syeda Naushin Parnini, Mohammad Redzuan Othman, and Amer Saifude Ghazali. "The Rohingya Refugee Crisis and Bangladesh-Myanmar Relations." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. March 2013, 22: 133-146.
2. Thant Myint-U. *Where China Meets India: Burma and the New Crossroads of Asia*. 1st American ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. Selections from Part III, "The Edge of Hindustan", and "Forgotten Partitions".
3. Beech, Hannah, and Adam Dean. "How Myanmar Covered Up Ethnic Cleansing." *The New York Times*, 15 Oct. 2019, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/15/world/asia/myanmar-ethnic-cleansing.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article.
4. Al Jazeera. "Who Are the Rohingya?" Myanmar | *Al Jazeera*, 18 Apr. 2018, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html.

Week 11: China and the shadows of empire in the Indian Ocean

1. Srinath Raghavan. *War and Peace in Modern India*. Chapters 7 and 8.
2. Brewster, David. "Murky Waters, Dangerous Currents: India, Pakistan, China and the Coming Nuclearization of the Indian Ocean." *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 11.2 (2015). 7
3. Smith, Paul J. "The Tilting Triangle: Geopolitics of the China–India–Pakistan Relationship." *Comparative Strategy* 32.4 (2013): 313-30.
4. Pink, Ross Michael. "Water Rights in China and India: A Human Security Perspective." *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 43.2 (2016): 19-35.

Week 12: China and USA, a New Equation.

1. Meltzer, Joshua P. "China's One Belt One Road Initiative: A View from the United States." *Brookings*, 28 June 2017, www.brookings.edu/research/chinas-one-belt-one-road-initiative-a-view-from-the-united-states/.
2. "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative." *Council on Foreign Relations*, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative.

Week 13: Hauntings of the Past

Ghosts of colonial pasts.

1. India's Citizenship Amendment Act, 11 December 2019:
<http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2019/214646.pdf?fbclid=IwAR311L5IOerUqJQr43yLA4XVMPKeN-sejqe5jezjO3-jcP3YwpmOI1Pe9D8>
2. Assam Accord, 15 August 1985:
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IN_850815_Assam%20Accord.pdf

Films to be watched by students as prep work:

1. "Where have you hidden my new moon crescent?" – Iffat Fatima.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZK_J96O6gQ
2. "Haider" – Vishal Bharadwaj. <https://www.netflix.com/title/70303432>
3. Chotiner, Isaac. "India's Citizenship Emergency," *New Yorker*, 18 December 2019.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/indias-citizenship-emergency>

Week 14: Meaning and Memory in the Present Day

1. Waheed, Mirza. "India's Crackdown in Kashmir: Is This the World's First Mass Blinding?" *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 8 Nov. 2016, www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/08/india-crackdown-in-kashmir-is-this-worlds-first-mass-blinding.
2. Jayal, Niraja Gopal. "Citizenship Amendment Act: 'Principle of Discrimination Based on Faith Will Be Difficult to Limit'." *The Indian Express*, 24 Dec. 2019, indianexpress.com/article/explained/indian-constitution-citizenship-amendment-act-modi-govt-6181761/
3. Singh, Amrita. "In Assam's NRC, a near-Impossible Trial Followed by Inhuman and Indefinite Detention." *In Assam's NRC, a near-Impossible Trial Followed by Inhuman and Indefinite Detention*, 19 Dec. 2018, caravanmagazine.in/policy/assam-nrc-near-impossible-trial-inhuman-indefinite-detention.
4. Kashmir: Memories of Colonial Unknowing. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=905d3055675049f593290428102ea55f>