

**THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF SOUTH ASIA STUDIES**  
**Interdisciplinary Studies of South Asia I**  
**JSISA 508 | Autumn 2012 | Tuesday 11:30am to 2:20pm | SMI 111**

**Professor Christian Lee Novetzke**

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**OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays, 10-11am**

**Course Synopsis:**

This course is intended to familiarize graduate students in South Asia studies and allied fields (especially history, as well as art history, anthropology, archeology, comparative literature, sociology, and history of religions) with some of the theoretical debates central to the study of South Asia. Our approach will be both critical and historical, a combination meant to portray the past of the discipline, as well as engage its recent deliberations. We will explore the fields of philology, comparative philosophy, missionary interaction, Orientalism, social evolution, and structuralism. We will also engage debates within postcolonial studies, subaltern studies, nationalism discourse, historiography, feminism, Marxism, modernity, and representation discourse.

**Requirements:**

A graduate seminar is a cooperative learning venture. Each student will be expected to participate fully in discussion. *Demonstrating in discussion that you have done the readings and engaging verbally in class with the subject of the class will constitute one third of your grade.*

In order to prepare for our weekly meetings, **you are required to post a critical reflection on the week's readings online by Sunday night before class.** Please put these postings, as text (not as attachments), on the course's "GoPost" site, and limit your postings to 750 words. The quality of engagement in these postings (as well as their timely existence) will account for *the second third of your grade.* The site is here: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/gopost/board/novetzke/29253/>

For your **final paper**, you will be required to write an encyclopedia entry on one of these topics: postcolonialism, orientalism, subaltern studies, caste in India, feminism in India, Marxism in India, philology and Indian Studies. If you would like to propose your own topic, feel free to contact me about your proposal. Your entry should be around 5000 words, not including a bibliography of around twenty citations. Please double space in 12-point font. *This paper will account for the last third of your grade.*

**Start your final papers early!** By session nine at the very latest, you should know your topic and have your paper underway. Papers, and all outstanding work, are due one week after the last day of class. If you would like to submit a completed and finished draft to me before the due date, I can take such a draft up to November 27<sup>th</sup>. You must deliver a hard copy of your paper to my mailbox

on the **fourth floor of Thomson Hall (not in the South Asia Office)** by 4pm on December 11, and you have to send an identical copy via email at the same time.

**I will not accept late work under any circumstances. Failing to finish the work for this class by December 11, 2012 means failing the class.**

### **Readings:**

Readings marked on the syllabus with an “[o]” are online at:

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/sharespaces/space/novetzke/1773>

**Required Texts:** I suggest you buy these books for this class, which you should do on your own (I have not ordered them from the bookstore). I will also have copies on reserve at the library, but they will be restricted to two-hour check out.

- Asher, Catherine B., and Cynthia Talbot. 2006. *India before Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dumont, Louis. 1980. *Homo hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Metcalf, Barbara Daly, and Thomas R. Metcalf. 2006. *A concise history of modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pollock, Sheldon I. 2006. *The language of the gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture, and power in premodern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Thapar, Romila. 1990. *A History of India, Vol. I*. Penguin.

# Syllabus

## Week One 9/25/12: Introduction to the course

- In Class: Nicholas B. Dirks, “South Asia Studies: Futures Past,” available at <http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/editedvolumes/3/9/>. [o]

## Historical Overview

## Week Two 10/2/12: The History of Ancient and Classical India

- *A History of India, Vol I.*, Romila Thapar, pgs 15-265.

## Week Three 10/9/12: Sultans, Mughals, and Marathas

- *India before Europe*, Talbot and Asher, entire.

## Week Four 10/16/12: The Company, Colonialism, and Modernity

- *A Concise History of Modern India*, Metcalfe, entire.

## Theoretical Paradigms

## Week Five 10/23/12: Sanskrit, Power, and Language in Classical India

- *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, Pollock, selections.

## Week Six 10/30/12: No Class

## Week Seven 11/6/12: Orientalism and Its Critique

- Said, *Orientalism*, Introduction, Chapter One, skim the rest.
- Ronald Inden, “Orientalist Constructions of India,” *Modern Asian Studies*. Vol. 20, Is.3:401-446. [o]
- Sheldon Pollock’s “Deep Orientalism?” (76-133). [o]
- Wendy Doniger, “Presidential Address: ‘I have Scinde’: Flogging a Dead (White Male Orientalist) Horse.” *Journal of Asian Studies*. 58:4 (1999): 940-960. [o]

## Week Eight 11/13/12: Paradigms of Caste

- Louis Dumont. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*, Introduction to Chapter 3 (pp. 1–91) and Chapter 7 (pp. 152–166).
  - If you want a bit of background about the work before reading it, see Khare, “Introduction,” (1-35) from *Caste, Hierarchy, and Individualism*.
- Dirks, “Homo Hierarchicus: The Origins of an Idea” [19-42] and “The Ethnographic State,” in *Castes of Mind*. [o]
- Selections from Khare, *Caste, Hierarchy, and Individualism* (2006): “Some Reflections on the Nature of Caste Hierarchy” by M. N. Srinivas (Chap. 5: 93-109);

“Continuous Hierarchies and Discrete Castes” by Dipankar Gupta (Chaps 7: 120-130); “An Immanent Critique of Caste” by P. Chatterjee (Chap 13: 169-176). [o]

### **Week Nine 11/20/12: History, Empire, and Historical Anthropology**

- Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, Forward by N. B. Dirks [ix-xvii], Introduction, Chapter Two “Command of Language...” [3-56]. [o]
- Cohn, “Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture,” in *Anthropologists among the Historians and Other Essays*. [136-171] [o]
- Dirks, “Coda” 303-316 from *Castes of Mind*. [o]
- Dirks, “History as a Sign of the Modern,” in *Public Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring, 1990. [o]
- Benedict Anderson, “Official Nationalism and Imperialism,” in *Imagined Communities*. [o]
- Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, “Whose Imagined Community?” and “Histories and Nations.” [3-13;95-115] [o]

### **Week Ten 11/27/12: Subaltern Studies**

- Ranajit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988. [o]
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In *Marxism & The Interpretation of Culture*. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds. London: Macmillan, 1988. pp. 271-313. [o]
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 1992. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?" *Representations*. (37): 1-26 [o]
- Gyan Prakash, “The Impossibility of Subaltern History,” in *Nepantla: Views from South*. 1:2 (2000), 287-294. [o]

### **Week Eleven 12/4/12: Postcolonialism and Gender**

- “Under Western Eyes,” Mohanty. [o]
- “Recasting Women: An Introduction,” and “Whatever Happened to the “Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past,” in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, Kumkum Sangari, Sudesh Vaid, eds. [o]
- “Introduction,” “Gender, Violence and Power: Rajasthani Stories of Shakti,” and “Others Voices, Other Rooms: The View from the Zenana,” in *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories*, Nita Kumar, ed. [o]
- Madhu Kishwar, “A Horror of ‘isms’: Why I do not call myself a feminist.” [o]

***Final Papers Due December 11 at 4pm via email and hardcopy in my campus mailbox (Thomson Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> floor)***