

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES OF SOUTH ASIA I: THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF SOUTH ASIA STUDIES

JSISA 508 | Winter 2017 | Tuesdays 1:30-4:20 | Thomson Hall 235

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OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 10:30am to noon

Course Synopsis:

This course is intended to familiarize graduate students in South Asia studies and allied fields (especially language and literature, history, 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 subjects such as philology, postcolonialism, Orientalism, social evolution, subaltern studies, nationalist discourse, religion, 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. We may use different in class or out of class exercises or projects to help facilitate discussion as needed. *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. For some of you, these documents may be useful when putting together papers, exam bibliographies, or certain sections of your writing work. 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/43422/>

For your **final paper**, please write an essay that reflects your own thinking on whatever subject(s) you choose; *you must present an argument.* This paper should not require research outside of the materials of the class. Rather than research, I would like this paper to be an opportunity for you to focus on your thinking and writing, and on the art of constructing an argument. In particular, I invite you to take up a subject germane to your graduate required work, such as a thesis, exam, or dissertation. Your essay should be around 5000 words. Please double space in 12-point font, 1 inch margins. The paper is due March 13. Send me the *exact same document* as an email attachment

(Word) and deliver as a hard copy in my mailbox on the 4th floor of Thomson Hall before the office closes at 4pm. *This paper will account for the last third of your grade.*

Start your final papers early! Papers, and all outstanding work, are due one week after the last day of class. If you would like to submit a finished and polished draft to me before the due date, I can take such a draft up to two weeks before the due date. 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 March 13**, and you have to send an *identical copy via email* at the same time.

I will not accept late work.

Etiquette: Please help me produce a lively, engaged, critical, and compassionate learning environment. Please do not use computers in class or other devices during class. Be here now.

Integrity: Given that this is a graduate-level course it should go without saying that you should know exactly what constitutes plagiarism and what does not, and if you do plagiarize, please leave graduate school. I will strictly enforce the University of Washington Student Conduct code, including the policy on plagiarism. For your reference, the entire code can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>.

Accommodations: Our learning environment should be inclusive, respectful, and accommodating to all reasonable needs. If you would like to request accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz Hall, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you require accommodations, please present the letter to me as soon as possible so that I can make necessary arrangements.

Syllabus: I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time and as needed to facilitate our collective learning.

Readings:

Readings marked on the syllabus with an “[o]” are online at: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/collectit/dropbox/novetzke/39209>

There is no physical course-pack for this course. I ask that you print these articles and extracts and bring them to class on the days we discuss them.

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.

We will read only one book in its entirety, and so I suggest you buy this book:

- David Ludden’s *India and South Asia: A Brief History*, Oneworld. **Second Edition, 2014.**

We will read some portions of these texts, but they would be worth owning as well:

- Dumont, Louis. 1980. *Homo hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications*. Chicago: University of Chicago 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.

Whatever you do to access and read the materials for the course, please keep in mind that you must bring to class either the readings or your notes on the readings, or both, in order to facilitate discussion and references back to the readings in discussion.

Syllabus

Week One 1/3/17: Introduction to the course

- In Class: Nicholas B. Dirks, “South Asia Studies: Futures Past,” will be handed out in class.

Week Two 1/10/17—History Survey

- David Ludden’s *India and South Asia: A Brief History*, entire.

Week Three 1/17/17: History, Historiography, and Historical Anthropology

- 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, “History as a Sign of the Modern,” in *Public Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring, 1990. [o]
- Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, “Histories and Nations.” [95-115] [o]

Week Four 1/24/17: Sanskrit, Power, and Language in Classical India

- *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, Pollock, Introduction: 1-38; Chapters 3 and 4: 115-188; Chapter 6: 223-258; Chapters 8, 9 and 10: 283-436; and Epilogue: 567-580. Note these readings have not been scanned and are not on catalyst. You should buy the book or read it on reserve.

Week Five 1/31/17: Orientalism and Its Critique

- Said, *Orientalism*, Introduction, Chapter One, skim the rest if you want. [o]
- 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 Six 2/7/17: The Caste Question

- Louis Dumont. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*, Introduction to Chapter 3 (pp. 1–91) and Chapter 7 (pp. 152–166).
 - Please note that this reading is not online. You should buy the book or read it on reserve.
 - 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 Seven 2/14/17: Postcolonialism and Gender

- “Under Western Eyes,” Mohanty. [o]
- Madhu Kishwar, “A Horror of ‘isms’: Why I do not call myself a feminist.” [o]
- Selections from *Routledge Handbook of Gender in South Asia*:
 - “Introduction” by Leela Fernandes (1-10);
 - “Gendered Nationalisms” by Mrinalini Sinha (13-27);
 - “Law, Sex Work and Activism in India,” by Prabha Kotiswaran (84-96);
 - “The Supreme Court of India and the Maintenance for Muslim Women,” by Vrinda Narain (97-114);
 - “Death and Family: Queer Archives of the Space Between,” by Naisargi Dave (160-172);
 - “Women’s Place-Making in Santosh Nagar,” by Ann Grodzins Gold (173-188);
 - “An Intersection of Marxism and Feminism among India’s Informal Workers,” by Rina Agarwala (220-233);
 - “A Feminist Commodity Chain Analysis of Rural Transformation in Contemporary India,” by Priti Ramamurthy (247-259);
 - “Dalit Women between Social and Analytical Alterity,” by Manuela Ciotti (305-317). [o]

Week Eight 2/21/17: No Class

Week Nine 2/28/17: Subaltern Studies and Marxism

- 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]
- Vivek Chibber, selections from *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013): “Postcolonial Theory and Subaltern Studies” (1-27) and “Subaltern Studies as Ideology” (284-296) [o]
- Vivek Chibber, “Interview: How Does the Subaltern Speak,” in *Jacobin* April, 2013 (Online): <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2013/04/how-does-the-subaltern-speak/>
- Vivek Chibber, “Revisiting Subaltern Studies” (March 1, 2014, *Economic and Political Weekly*) [o]

- Do a search on your own and pick one critical response to Chibber's book and present this in class to the rest of us.
 - For ideas see *The Debate on Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*, edited by Rosie Warren. Verso Books, 2016.

Week Ten 3/7/17: Students' Selection

- We will determine this week's reading during our meeting on 2/28/17, based on our collective interests and unresolved queries.

Final Papers Due March 13 at 4pm via email and hardcopy in my campus mailbox (Thomson Hall, 4th floor)