

English 583: Special Topics in World Literature

“Imagining India: 20th Century Literature and Film”

MW 3:30-5:18, Denney Hall 206

Fall Quarter 2006

Dr. Pranav Jani

Assistant Professor, Department of English

Office Hours: M 9:45-11:15, T 10:30-12, and by appointment

462 Denney Hall, jani.4@osu.edu, 614-292-6965

<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/jani4/>

Course Description

Indians and non-Indians have long participated in imagining India, portraying it as everything from an exotic, spiritual paradise to model for peaceful protest and pluralistic democracy, to a hell on earth, filled with oppression and violence. In this course, we will examine how 20th century literature and film by and/or about Indians provided a basis for these representations, reimagining the subcontinent in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and religion in the process of serving the social and political interests of particular groups and classes. In the process, the course will delve beyond the Orientalist and nationalist representations of India that dominated the 20th century and introduce students to a multiplicity of perspectives.

Required Texts (available at SBX, 1806 N High St)

Mohandas Gandhi, *An Autobiography*.

Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*.

Rokeya Sakhawat Hosein, *Sultana's Dream*.

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*.

Nayantara Sahgal, *Rich Like Us*.

Course packet (CP) from Zip publishing (available at SBX)

Course Web Page(s) and Email:

Log on at www.carmen.osu.edu for

- Interactive Syllabus
- Dropbox for turning in papers
- Discussion threads for journal entries

Go to my personal webpage: <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/jani4/> for

- links to the broader literary and political context of class material
- links to world and alternative media

Note: Messages requiring a response from me should be sent to jani.4@osu.edu. Please keep the discussion on Carmen focused on themes and questions of general interest to the class.

Course Requirements

Class Participation	15%
Carmen (10 entries)	10%
Paper #1 (2-3 pages)	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Paper #2 (4-5 pages)	20%
Final Paper (6-7 pages)	25%

Grading

- **Class Participation:** Engaged, active participation in the class will be crucial to your grade. This includes, but is not limited to: arriving to class on time, bringing in the texts we're reading that day, being alert during lecture and discussion, raising questions and comments in the discussion period. Multiple absences, as described below, can detract from your participation grade.
- **Carmen:** To receive the full 10% of the grade, you must post at least 10, paragraph-length entries to the discussion threads on Carmen by the end of the term. These should consist of either close readings of texts or elaborations, with some textual support, of themes and discussions raised in class. At least 5 of these should initiate discussion of a topic; the rest can also respond to others' posts. Balancing original comments and responses, of course, will help develop online interaction.
- **Papers 1 and 2:** Papers will focus on your ability to closely analyze the representations of and narratives about India in particular texts, and to be able to compare various representations. They should **not** be mere summaries of texts or the ideas contained within them. Specific details on each assignment will be made available through Carmen.
- **Midterm Exam:** The midterm will be a take-home exam, featuring a series of essay questions that measure your reading comprehension and your grasp of the main themes and theoretical paradigms of the course.
- **Final Paper:** The specific assignment will be posted on Carmen at the start of the term. The paper will be a comparative, in-depth study of two or three texts that develops an interpretation of them with attention to critical, historical, and/or theoretical works. You are encouraged to meet with me to discuss the final paper, which is different from all the other writing assignments in the course, and to submit a proposal outlining your ideas and overall direction.

Course Policies

- 1) **Absences:** More than 2 absences from class will harm your participation grade, with a loss of 1/3 of a grade for each day lost. Emergencies should be reported to me as soon as possible, and may require documentation from the University.

- 2) Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. **There will be no exceptions to this rule. If you are stressed out and don't know how to write the paper, communicate with me *before* deciding to plagiarize, not after.**
- 3) Help with Disabilities: Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should meet with me, as early in the quarter as possible, to discuss your specific needs. Early communication will allow me to adjust the course according to your needs in terms of access to technology, course material, and office hours. If it makes sense, we can coordinate a plan with the Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, which offers services for students with documented disabilities. To contact the ODS, call 292-3307.
- 4) Use of Technology: I expect that your papers be in typed in 12-point font and double-spaced as a Microsoft Word document, and that you submit them to me via the Carmen dropbox. I also expect that you can be reached at your OSU email account for announcements that I may need to make in between class sessions, and to receive my comments on your papers. While I will make every effort to make the technology accessible, **it is your responsibility to get papers to me on time in the proper format.** This includes, but is not limited to, planning ahead so that you can account for technological problems that may occur in saving your document, transferring it to Carmen, etc. The logic behind my requirements is this: 12-point font and double spacing makes the document most legible for grading and reading, Microsoft Word—available to you at all campus computers—is the easiest format for uploading and downloading, and posting papers electronically on Carmen allows me to give you comments that are typed, legible, and much more thorough than if you were printing them out and handing them in.
- 5) The Jani Guarantee: On my part, I will do my best to return papers to you within a week after they are turned in, and never more than 10 days after the due date. I will type comments to your papers so that you don't have to read my terrible handwriting, and can actually use the comments to study and improve for the next time. Papers will be email back to you as attachments after they are graded. I will also be regularly available, during office hours but also on email, to discuss papers or class ideas and issues.

COURSE OUTLINE (check Carmen or my webpage for updates)

Introduction

- W 9.20 How Do *You* Imagine India?
Minal Hajratwala, "Colonization" (CP)
Amita Vasudeva, "Can You Talk Mexican?" (CP)

Orientalism and Imperialism

- M 9.25 Definitions of Orientalism and Imperialism
Edward Said, from *Orientalism* (CP), or see
<http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Orientalism.html> and
<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/pol111.html>
Wes Cecil, Pranav Jani, Stacy Takacs, "India Is(n't): (Mis)representations of India in the US Media" (CP)
- W 9.27 Colonial Representations
Film clips: George Stevens, *Gunga Din*
Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (CP)
Pears Soap advertisement, "The White Man's Burden" (CP)
Kipling, "Gunga Din" (CP)
Sixto Lopez and Thomas T. Patterson, "The Filipinos Will Not 'Take up the White Man's Burden'" (CP)
- F 9.29 Screening of Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (details TBA)
Please see Gandhi on your own if you cannot make this screening.
- M 10.2 Contemporary Representations
Film clips: Steven Spielberg, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*
Student Presentations: Media representations of India/Indians

Gandhi and Nationalism

- W 10.4 Nations and Imagined Communities
Mohandas Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pages 1-100
Benedict Anderson, from *Imagined Communities* (CP), or
<http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/anderson.htm>
*Pranav Jani and Mytheli Sreenivas, "Anticolonial Struggle in South Asia" (CP)
- M 10.9 Comparing *Gandhi* and *An Autobiography*
Gandhi, *An Autobiography* (100 pages of your selection)
*Salman Rushdie, "Attenborough's Gandhi" (handout)

Memory and Identity

- W 10.11 Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*
- Th 10.12 **DUE: Paper #1 (2-3 pages) in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**
- M 10.16 Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*
*Ian Almond, "Postcolonial Melancholy: An Examination of Sadness in *The Shadow Lines*" (CP)

- W 10.18 Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*
Nagesh Rao, "Cosmopolitanism, Class, and Gender in *The Shadow Lines*"
(CP)

Women and the Nation

- M 10.23 Challenging Gender Norms
Rokeya Hosein, *Sultana's Dream*
- W 10.25 Colonialism, Nationalism and Patriarchy
Film: Ketan Mehta, *Mirch-Masala*
- M 10.30 Being an 'Indian Woman'
Film: Gurinder Chada, *Bhaji on the Beach*
- W 11.1 The Politics of Representation
Student Presentations: Media representations of Indian women
- Th 11.2 **Due: Midterm Exam in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

Class and the Nation

- M 11.6 The Indian Emergency
Nayantara Sahgal, *Rich Like Us*
- W 11.8 Elites and "Subalterns"
Sahgal, *Rich Like Us*
*Gayatri Spivak, from "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (handout)
- Th 11.9 **DUE: PAPER #2 (4-5 pages), in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**
- M 11.13 Globalization and India
Film: PBS, *1-800-India*
Paul Davies, From *What's This India Business?* (handout)

Communalism

- W 11.15 The Rise of Hindutva
Film: Anand Patwardhan, *Ram Ke Nam*
- M 11.20 Bombay 1993
Film: Maniratnam, *Bombay*

The View from Below

- W 11.22 Big Things and Small Things
Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*
- M 11.27 Velutha and Ammu
Roy, *The God of Small Things*
- W 11.29 Utopia/Dystopia
Roy, *The God of Small Things*
*Roy, "The End of Imagination" (CP)
*Research Unit on Political Economy, "Why the US Promotes India's Great Power Ambitions": <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0306rupe.htm>
- M 12.4 **DUE: Final Paper (6-7 pages), in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**