

English 583: Special Topics in World Literature
“Imagining India in Literature and Film”

MW 9:30-11:18, Denney Hall 238
Spring 2008

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Hours: M 3:30-5:30 and W 3:30-4:30
<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 a model for peaceful protest and pluralistic democracy, to a hell on earth, filled with oppression and violence. In this course, we will examine how literature and film by and/or about Indians have 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 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 Hosen, *Sultana's Dream*.
Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*.
Nayantara Sahgal, *Rich Like Us*

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	20%
Carmen (10 entries)	10%
Paper #1 (2-3 pages)	15%
Paper #2 (5-6 pages)	25%
Final Exam	30%

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:** 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.
- **Due Dates and Comments:** You will notice that there are two date for each paper. All papers turned in by the first, official due date will received my full attention, with typed and careful comments to improve your writing. If you would prefer to have more time on the papers, for whatever reason, you can take the "No Comments" option and turn the paper in by the second due date. You will then receive simply a letter grade. You do not need to ask for special permission to take the "No Comments" option, and there is no penalty involved. On the flip side, there are no ad-hoc extensions: I will accept papers beyond the second due date only in exceptional situations.
- **Final Exam:** The final 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.

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 by email for announcements that I may need to make in between class sessions. 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.

COURSE OUTLINE

Check Carmen for updates

Asterisk = supplementary reading

Orientalism and Nationalism

M 3/24 How Do *You* Imagine India?
 Pranav Jani, "Snapshots of Indian Postcoloniality" (slideshow)

W 3/26 Colonial-Era Representations
 George Stevens, *Gunga Din* (clips, in class)
 Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (handout)
 Sixto Lopez, "The Filipinos Will Never Take up the 'White Man's Burden'" (handout)
 Pears Soap advertisement (handout)
 Kipling, "Gunga Din" (Carmen), or

<http://www.bartleby.com/103/48.html>

M 3/31 Contemporary Western Representations
Steven Spielberg, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (clips, in class)
Danny Leiner, *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* (clips, in class)
Wes Cecil, Pranav Jani, Stacy Takacs, “India Is(n’t): (Mis)representations of India in the US Media” (C)
*Edward Said, from *Orientalism* (C)

W 4/2 Postcolonial Representations
Subhash Ghai, *Pardes* vs. Ashotosh Gowarikar, *Swades* (clips, in class)
Mira Nair’s *Mississippi Masala* vs Nair’s *The Namesake* (clips, in class)
Pankaj Mishra, “The Myth of the New India” (C)

Representations of Gandhi

M 4/7 Mohandas Gandhi, *Gandhi: An Autobiography*
Benedict Anderson, from *Imagined Communities* (C), or
<http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/anderson.htm>
*Meneejeh Moradian and David Whitehouse, “Gandhi and the Politics of Nonviolence” (C)

W 4/9 Richard Attenborough, *Gandhi* (clips, in class)
Salman Rushdie, “Attenborough’s Gandhi” (C)
*Pranav Jani and Mytheli Sreenivas, “Anticolonialism and Resistance: South Asia” (C)

F 4/11 **DUE: PAPER #1 (2-3 pages), MS Word document in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

M 4/14 OPEN DATE: Continue discussion about Gandhi's autobiography and Attenborough's *Gandhi*

Partition, Violence, Memory

W 4/16 Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (Part I: “Going Away”)

M 4/21 Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (Part II: “Coming Home”)
*Nagesh Rao, “Cosmopolitanism, Class, and Gender in *The Shadow Lines*” (C)

Women and the Nation

W 4/23 Rokeya Hosen, *Sultana’s Dream* – read main text first, then additional items
*Uma Narayan, “Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and “Death by Culture” (C)

M 4/28 Mahasweta Devi, “Draupadi” (C)

*Gayatri Spivak, translator's introduction to "Draupadi" (C)

W 4/30 Nayantara Sahgal, *Rich Like Us*

M 5/5 Sahgal, *Rich Like Us*

South Asians in the US

T 5/6 Sharat Raju and Valerie Kaur, *Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath* (6pm, location TBA)

W 5/7 **Guest Speaker: Valerie Kaur**

F 5/9 **DUE: PAPER #2 (5-6 pages), MS Word document in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

M 5/12 Nisha Ganatra, *Chutney Popcorn*

PAPER #2 DUE DATE, "No Comments" Option (5pm)

W 5/14 **Guest Speaker: Sunaina Maira**

Sunaina Maira, "Henna and Hip Hop" (C)

Speaking Truth to History

M 5/19 Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

W 5/21 Roy, *The God of Small Things*

M 5/26 **NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY**

W 5/28 Roy, *The God of Small Things*

*Roy, "Confronting Empire" (C)

T 6/3 **Final Exam (Take Home), MS Word documents in Carmen dropbox by 10a**