

## **ANTH 130I – Cultures of India**

The course is from June 26th, 2023, to July 28th, 2023. The class will be asynchronous.

**Instructor:** Prof. Annapurna Pandey

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### **Teaching Assistants:**

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### **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to modern Indian culture and society. India has gone through rapid and unimaginable changes since its independence in 1947. We will be using ethnographies, memoirs, films, and other literary sources to explore unity in the diversity that India is known for. We will focus on important markers of cultural identity such as religion, language, region, caste, food, clothing, as well as gender, and sexuality in modern India. In my lectures, I will provide a historical and cultural background of the diverse regions that make India unique. We will also discuss the drastic changes which are taking place, resulting in a lot of conflict and uncertainty about the future.

### **Textbooks for the Course:**

- Paz, Octavio (1998) *In Light of India*, Mariner Books
- Divakaruni, Chitra (2021). *The Last Queen*. HarperCollins.

The books are made available at the [Bay Tree Bookstore](#) at UCSC. There will also be limited and timed access to the books at the library online. The rest of the readings will be available on Canvas.

Students will also be required to rent films online, though some films are available through UCSC media lab subscription services (Netflix, amazon prime, etc), a subscription is not required for this course.

## Grading:

There will be multiple grading components in the course. Students will be graded for quizzes, midterms, and finals. There will also be grades for class participation and discussions.

- **Quizzes (20% of total grade):** every week will end with a quiz. These quizzes are meant to examine the students' understanding and grasp of the course texts. The quizzes will be multiple choice and have 20 questions each.
- **Midterm (30% of the total grade):** the midterm exam will require students to answer long and short essay questions based on the first portion of the class.
- **Final (30% of the total grade):** the final examination will require the students to answer questions based on the full syllabus of the course. Detailed requirements of the final exam, along with the grading rubrics, will be available on Canvas under the folder *Assignments*. The finals will be graded on a total of 30 points and amount to 30 percent of the final grade.
- **Discussion Threads (20% of total grade):** Students will be required to contribute to the discussion threads every week. The discussion threads will be maintained on the week's readings. All students are expected to contribute at least two questions on the week's readings and provide one answer to a question raised by another student.

## Course Schedule:

### Week 1: Why study India? Sultans and Mughals and Colonialism

#### *Lecture 1: The historical and cultural importance of India*

- Readings
  - Paz, Octavio. 1995. [\*In Light of India\*](#). pp. 3-71 (Nobel Prize for Literature Laureate Octavio Paz, who served as Mexico's ambassador to India, narrates his glimpses from the 6 years he spent in the country. The book, which he refers to as an essay rather than a memoir, attempts to describe how "a Mexican writer, at the end of the twentieth century, view(s) the immense reality of India" (32). This section gives an introduction and discusses the coexistence of Hinduism and Islam, which Paz describes as "the strictest and most extreme form of monotheism alongside the richest and most varied polytheism" (37).)
- Video (on Canvas)
  - Indian Culture Full Documentary (India is probably the most culturally diverse country in the world. India's languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, and customs differ from place to place. Four of the world's major religions- Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism- originated in India, and almost all the different religions are followed by the people in India. Perhaps the rich and deep history is why such a strong cultural diversity exists.)

#### *Lecture 2: The role of contemporary India in the World Order*

- Readings
  - [New Powers for Global Change? - India's Role in the Emerging World Order](#) (Dr. Ummu Salma Bawa analyzes India's foreign policy decisions post-Independence, and the nation's potential to reshape the contemporary world order.)
  - Brende, Borge. 2021. "[India's Roadmap for Success and Prosperity in the Post-COVID World.](#)" *World Economic Forum* (A brief analysis of the major initiatives in India to maintain its momentum in the post-COVID world.)
- Videos
  - [Left, Right & Centre | India's Major Role In New World Order](#) (A short discussion of the book *The World in Disorder and the Indian Imperative* that discusses where India's role in the new world order where the liberal international order is facing a moment of crisis. At this time, India has a major role to play as long as it sustains its commitment to constitutional democracy.)

*Lecture 3: The History and Background of a Pluri-ethnic Nation-State, Advent of Islam and Interreligious Dialogue*

- Readings
  - [Sufism](#) by John O. Voll, Kazuo Ohtsuka (This primer on Sufism explains, in brief, the main philosophical background of sufism, the basis of the faith, its mode of practice and transmission, and its relevance in the modern world.)
  - Taneja, Anand Vivek. "[Stones, Snakes and Saints: Remembering the Vanished Sacred Geographies of Delhi](#)" in *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi*. Stanford University Press (By describing the entanglements between ecology and theology in historic Delhi, Taneja complicates the modern divisions between human, natural and supernatural. These modern divisions were imposed over time on the city, beginning with the British administration. However, the entanglements persist recapturing what he refers to as "an older sense of the sacred in the contemporary city, though in radically reconfigured ways" (184).)
- Videos
  - Khwaja Mere Khwaja (Jodha Akbar) (This is a dramatized depiction of Emperor Akbar and whirling dervishes and a classic rendition of Sufi music.)
  - [Razia Sultan: The First and The Last Woman Ruler of Delhi Sultanate | Feminism In India](#) (At a time when Indian women are seen as victims that need to be rescued, this video narrates the story of Razia Sultan who ruled Delhi from 1246 to 1250, and was one of the very few female rulers ever in the history of Islamic civilizations around the world. Her story is a testament to the idea of female empowerment that existed in India almost 800 years ago.)

- [Delhi's Hidden Secret: The Mystery of Feroz Shah Kotla](#) | [The Quint](#) (A brief introduction of the practices and beliefs connected with Feroz Shah Kotla, which is believed to be inhabited by jinns that fulfill people's wishes.)
- **(optional)** Shatranj Ke Khiladi – Available on Amazon Prime – In 1856, two obsessed noblemen ignored everything while playing chess and fail to notice British rule extending into their Indian province.

*Lecture 4: What did the British colonization of India actually mean? What effects did colonialism have on peoples' lives?*

- Readings:
  - Banerjee Divakaruni, Chitra. 2021. *The Last Queen* – Prologue, Section 1 (Girl) and Section 2 (Bride) (Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni writes an account of the life of the last queen of Punjab, Maharani Jind Kaur. A commoner, and the daughter of the royal dog trainer, she became known as one of the most fearless women in nineteenth-century India. As a queen regent to her six-year-old son, she defied tradition and cast aside her veil to rule the kingdom and fight the British.)
- Videos (**Pick one**)
  - Ghare Baire by Satyajit Ray — available on <https://youtu.be/Uv46zM-Ih-g> — Bimala is happily married to a forward-thinking man who encourages her to educate herself. But their relationship is challenged when Sandip, a radical man, enters their lives.
  - Laagan — available on Netflix — During the British Raj, a farmer named Bhuvan accepts the challenge of Captain Andrew Russell to beat his team in a game of cricket and enable his village not to pay taxes for the next three years.
  - Gandhi by Richard Attenborough — available on Hulu — A lawyer, Mohandas Gandhi, returns to British India from South Africa. He begins a nationwide campaign of nonviolent resistance against British rule, pressuring Britain to liberate India.

## Quiz 1

## Discussion Post

## **Week 2: Religion, Social Change, and Gender**

*Lecture 1: Religion and Politics in pre-Independence India*

- Readings:
  - Flood, Gavin (August 24, 2009). [History of Hinduism](#). (This very short primer on the history of Hinduism provides a rough chronology of the development of the religion from its beginning, about two centuries BCE, to the contemporary times)

- [75 years after India's violent Partition, survivors can cross the border — virtually](#) (Highlighting the memories of the partition of India, and the pains of separation that are felt by people decades later, this article focuses on Project Dastaan, which is providing people with a tiny window to glimpse their past.)
- Banerjee Divakaruni, Chitra. 2021. *The Last Queen* – Section 3 (Queen), Section 4 (Rebel), and Epilogue (Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni writes an account of the life of the last queen of Punjab, Maharani Jind Kaur. A commoner, and the daughter of the royal dog trainer, she became known as one of the most fearless women in nineteenth-century India. As a queen regent to her six-year-old son, she defied tradition and cast aside her veil to rule the kingdom and fight the British.)
- **(optional)** Menon, Ritu and Kamala Bhasin. 1998. “[Honourably Dead: Permissible Violence Against Women](#).” In *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition*. Rutgers University Press
- **(optional)** Butalia, Urvashi. 1998. “[Memory](#).” In *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Penguin Books
- Videos:
  - Ramachandra Guha on the [Makers of Modern India](#) (Noted historian, Ramachandra Guha, analyzes the situation in India in 1947 when it won independence and the issues that faced the newly-formed nation. He then discusses the contributions of some important leaders that shaped the country, and prevented it from disintegrating into chaos.)
  - Train to Pakistan – available on Alexander Street through UCSC library (Based on a historical novel by Khushwant Singh, a Train to Pakistan is set in the fictional town of Mano Majra on the border of India and Pakistan. It brings to life the crisis that people battled with during the partition, and vividly portrays how neighbors turned against each other.)
  - **(optional)** [India at 75: Siblings separated by India-Pakistan partition long for reunion | WION](#)
  - **(optional)** [Survivors Oral History - India Partition 1947 Violence - Images, Videos, Testimonials](#)

## *Lecture 2: Religion and Politics in Contemporary India*

- Readings:
  - Tharoor, Shashi (2018). *Why I am a Hindu*. Aleph Book Company — Section 1 (My Hinduism) (This book was written as a response to the rise in right-wing Hindu nationalism in India after the election of Mr. Modi in 2014. Contrasting the Hindutva of the Indian right wing with the Hinduism he grew up with, in this section, Dr. Shashi Tharoor describes what Hinduism means to him.)
  - Vaishnav, Milan (2019) — *The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. — [Section 1 \(Religious](#)

[Nationalism and India's Future](#)) (Discussing the differences between secular nationalism and Hindu nationalism in India, Vaishnav examines what the reelection of Mr. Modi in 2019 could mean for the future of India and Indian secular tradition.)

- Videos

- [On Hinduism & Hindutva](#) | India Today Conclave 2019 (Political leaders, Dr. Shashi Tharoor and Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, engage in a debate about what it means to be a Hindu, and about the differences between Hinduism and political Hindutva.)
- [Hindu-Muslim conflict in India](#) (This short news clip describes the background of the communal violence that occurred in the Indian state of Gujarat in 2002 under the Chief Ministership of current Prime Minister, Mr. Modi.)
- Films (**Pick 1**)
  - Bombay (1995) — available on Netflix – A Muslim woman and a Hindu man fall in love and elope to get married as their families object to their relationship. However, when they move to Mumbai, they end up facing the wrath of communal riots (Content warning: violence and gore)
  - Firaq (2008) – available on Prime Video– Following the violent 2002 riots in Gujarat, people who were victims, perpetrators, and silent observers during the chaos, find themselves deeply affected in a way that changes their lives forever.
  - Earth (1998) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6z2-EXkFfEY> (DVD also available at McHenry Library) – The story is set in Lahore (Pakistan). It's 1947, and the borderlines between India and Pakistan are being drawn. A young girl witnesses tragedy as her ayah (nanny) is caught between the love of two men and the rising tide of political and religious violence.
  - A Billion Colour Story (2016) – on Hindu Muslim relationship — (available on Netflix) — As Hari, the son of Imran and Parvi, sets out on a journey through India to make a film, he comes across incidents that change his life.
  - Shorgul (2016) – Available on Hulu and for rent on Prime Video – Local politician Chaudhary's son Raghu is friends with Zainab and secretly loves her. However, she is engaged to Saleem, whose cousin, Mustakeem, is against Zainab's and Raghu's friendship.
  - Dev (2004) – Available on Hulu and for rent on Prime Video – The friendship between Dev and Tej is tested, when they move to Bombay after law school, and find the place filled with a hatred for the Muslim community, which is being accused of terrorism and slowly wiped out. Both men try to put an end to these accusations, but their methods differ significantly.
  - Zakhm (1994) – Available for rent on YouTube, Prime Video, and Apple TV – Ajay (Ajay Devgan) and his wife, Sonia (Sonali Bendre), are unsure whether they should risk having a child in India in the midst of widespread turbulence. After Ajay's mother (Pooja Bhatt) is seriously injured by Muslim demonstrators, she tells him about her marriage to a Hindu, Raman Desai (Nagarjuna). As a Muslim, Ajay's

- mother was unable to marry Raman without pretending to be a Christian. Her dying wish is to be interred as a Muslim -- which draws the anger of Hindu nationalists.
- Parzania (2007) – Available on Hulu – Inspired by a true story, a Parsi couple attempts to find their son who tragically went missing in 2002 during the Gujarat riots which broke out after the Godhra train burning incident.

### *Lecture 3: Sexuality, Transgender Rights and Religion in India*

- Readings
  - Serena Nanda, Neither Man nor woman, [pp.1- 37](#) (In these three chapters, Nanda discusses alternative genders in the Indian society, specifically the *hijra* community. Using ethnographic accounts as well as stories from myths and history, she discusses their position as “neither men nor women,” their role in rituals and festivals, and the ritual emasculation procedures.)
  - [“10 Transgender People Who Are Breaking Barriers Across Fields”](#) *She the People* (23rd May, 2020) (This is a short introduction of ten transgender people who have challenged cultural norms and stereotypes, and become leading voices in their respective fields.)
  - Goel, Ina (2019). [India’s Third Gender Rises Again](#). SAPIENS (Beginning with scenes from India’s Kumbh Mela pilgrimage, Goel provides a brief background of the mythological and religious importance of the *hijra* community. She then explains how colonization brought in Victorian sexual mores that resulted in a campaign against the community, which is being challenged legally and socially in contemporary India.)
  - Morcom, Anna. 2017. [“The Cure is Worse Than the Disease:’ Mumbai Dance Bars and New Forms of Justice in the History of Female Public Performers in India.”](#) *Cultural and Social History*. 14(4) pp. 499-512 (Morcom examines how the ban on the dance by girls in beer bars in 2005 is a contemporary manifestation of the crackdown on erotic female and transgender performers by colonial and nationalist powers in the nineteenth century.)
  - **(optional)** Iyer, Usha. 2020. [“Introduction: A Corporeal History of Hindi Film Dance.”](#) In *Dancing Women: Choreographing Corporeal Histories of Hindi Cinema*. Oxford University Press
  - **(optional)** Annapurna Pandey: [“Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui’ Marks a Paradigm Shift in the Acceptance of Transgender Lives in Popular Culture”](#)
  - **(optional)** Annapurna Pandey: Desi Transgenders Find Solace, Encouragement, and Acceptance From Activists and Support Groups, <https://americankahani.com/lifestyle/desi-transgenders-find-solace-encouragement-and-acceptance-from-activists-and-support-groups>
- Videos
  - Al Jazeera (October 17, 2013). [India’s ‘third gender’: A marginalized social class](#) (This Al Jazeera report examines how the *hijras* went from being revered to being criminalized, and reflects on their lives today by speaking to activists in the community.)
  - Film (Pick one):



- Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' (2021) – available on Netflix – Abhishek Kapoor's unconventional love story is set in the hotbed of masculinity and essentially a case study of a man and a woman who are struggling inside the bodies that nature has allotted them.
- Badhaai Do (2022) – Available on Netflix – Instead of coming out to their families a gay man and a lesbian enter into a marriage of convenience to appease their parents. However, chaos soon ensues when the woman's girlfriend comes to live with the unlikely couple.
- Super Deluxe (2019) – Available on Netflix, and for rent on Youtube and Apple TV – An unfaithful wife, an angry boy, and a transgender woman must all face their demons on one fateful day in a city of contradictions.

#### *Lecture 4: Gender and the Law in India*

- Readings:
  - Annapurna Pandey: [Religion and Indian Diaspora](#) (While the goddess Lakshmi has found a place in the homes of non-Indian families in California, Prof. Pandey observes that these “practitioners of new age religions” have a lot more flexibility in terms of their veneration practices; a flexibility that is not available to Indian Americans. She argues that for Odia American women, the goddess symbolizes an agency and identity beyond that of a mother and wife, and that they use community networks to follow their traditions.)
  - Pathak, Zakia and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. 1989. “[Shahbano.](#)” *Signs*. Vol 14 No 3 pp. 558-582 (Using the landmark Shahbano case from the Indian Supreme Court, Pathak and Sunder Rajan examine the conflicts between secular law and personal religious laws. In doing so, they question how the figure of the “Muslim woman” is displaced onto several discourses.)
  - Annapurna Pandey, ‘[Micro Credit and Women: An Indian Experience](#)’ (In this chapter, Prof. Pandey examines the system of “nanofinance” adopted for widows and abandoned women in Odisha. These nanofinance programs are an alternative model for marginalized women who do not have access to microcredit schemes.)
  - “[A Vision for Empowerment: The Story of Ela Bhatt’s SEWA.](#)” *The Indian Express* (Nov 05th, 2022) (This short article describes the exemplary work of Ela Bhatt who, through her women-only trade union SEWA, built more than four dozen institutions to provide employment support to poor and marginalized women.)
  - **(optional)** Sunder Rajan, Rajeswari. 2004. “Rethinking Law and Violence: The Domestic Violence (Prevention) Bill in India, 2002.” *Gender and History*. Vol 16 No 3 pp. 769-793
  - **(optional)** International Policy Digest (15 January 2020). *The Position of Dalit Women in Indian Society*. Available at: <https://intpolicydigest.org/2020/01/15/the-position-of-dalit-women-in-indian-society/>
- Videos



- Films (pick one):
  - *Kamla and Raji: Working Women of Ahmedabad* (1990) — available through the university library
  - *Writing with Fire* (2021) nominated for Oscar 2022 – available on Kanopy through the university library – Directed by Sushmit Ghosh and Rintu Thomas. In a cluttered news landscape dominated by men, emerges India's only newspaper run by Dalit women. Chief Reporter Meera and her journalists break traditions, redefining what it means to be powerful.
  - *Pink* – available on Hulu and for rent on Prime Video, Youtube and Apple TV – A lawyer with wild mood swings helps three women sue the men who attacked them in order to clear their names from being implicated in a crime.
  - *Queen* – available on Netflix – Rani, a 24-year-old homely girl, decides to go on her honeymoon alone when her fiancé calls off the wedding. Traveling around Europe, she finds joy, makes friends, and gains new-found independence.
  - *Chak De India* – available on Prime Video and for rent on Youtube and Apple TV – After failing to score the winning goal, Kabir Khan (Shah Rukh Khan), Captain of the Men's Hockey Team is blamed for the team's loss and fired. Years later he is given a chance to salvage his reputation, when he is offered the position as coach of the Women's Hockey Team. One of his star players, Vidya (Vidya Malvade), is forced to convince her tradition-minded parents that she should be allowed to play as the team prepares for a big tournament in Australia.
  - *Bandit Queen* – available on Tubi for free and Prime Video – This lauded Indian drama focuses on the life of Phoolan Devi (Seema Biswas), a revered criminal who eventually went on to become a politician. The film details the hardships that Phoolan faced in her youth as a female member of a lower caste. Subject to sexual abuse at the hands of numerous men, Phoolan isn't treated with respect until she falls in with a gang led by Vikram Mallah (Nirmal Pandey). Later, Phoolan forms her own gang and gains a remarkable level of notoriety across India.
  - *Ankur* – Available on Prime Video – A married man seduces his servant but is unable to accept the responsibilities of her resulting pregnancy.
  - *Fandry* – Available for rent on Apple TV – *Fandry* is a moving and hard-hitting drama from first-time writer-director Nagraj Manjule, who introduces this screening. Set in contemporary times, the narrative tells the story of teenager Jabya and his family, who are Dalits.

## [Quiz 2](#)

## [Discussion Post](#)

### **Week 3: Tribes, Caste, and The State – The Making of Modern India**

## Lecture 1: Caste in India

- Readings:
  - Berg, Dag-Eric. 2020. “[The Karamchedu Killings and the Struggle to Uncover Untouchability](#).” In *Dynamics of Caste and Law: Dalits, Oppression and Constitutional Democracy in India*. Cambridge University Press (Focusing on the violent Karamchedu massacre, Berg examines how the event formed the basis of the modern Dalit movement in the south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. He also argues that the killings are indicative not only of caste oppression but also show how upward mobility in the Dalit community provokes a backlash from the dominant groups.)
  - Dudley Jenkins, Laura. 2002. “[Backward Muslims and Scheduled Caste Christians](#).” In *Identity and Identification in India: Defining the Disadvantaged*. Routledge (This chapter from Dudley Jenkins’ book focuses on the Muslim and Christian demands to be included under the official backward categories recognized by the Indian state. While challenging the notion of caste as an exclusively Hindu trait, this growing demand to be recognized as “backward” is an ironic outcome of reservation policies. Through an examination of these demands, Dudley Jenkins highlights how competing demands prevent the reification of state categories.)
  - Read **one** of the following articles:
    - Public Radio International (2019). [Caste in America \(Part 1\): Even with a Harvard pedigree, caste follows ‘like a shadow’](#) [7 mins]
    - Public Radio International (2019). [Caste in America \(Part 2\): Love conquers caste for this couple, but Indian marriage traditions continue in US](#) [11 mins]
    - Public Radio International (2019). [Caste in America \(Part 3\): The US isn’t safe from the trauma of caste bias](#) [6 mins]
- Videos:
  - Pistulya (2009) — available at <https://youtu.be/ovimYnrk07o> – The film is the story of a boy named Pistulya who hails from a Dalit family and studies in the local school. Pistulya endures his lot bravely. His determination to pursue education is undeterred and keeps him going & eventually, he prevails over his circumstances. (18 minutes)

## Lecture 2: Tribes and Indian National Identity: Location of Exclusion and Marginality

- Readings:
  - Annapurna Pandey, [Kondhs’ Resistance Movement To Save Sacred Niyamgiri, Odisha](#) (This article examines the movement mobilized by the Kondh tribe against bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri hills. Prof. Pandey also describes the sacred relationship between the Kondhs and the Niyamgiri which prompted this movement.)
  - Annapurna Devi Pandey and Ann E. Kingsolver. “[Dead or Alive: Odishan and Appalachian Mountains as Partners in Activism](#).” (Comparing resistance movements in Odisha, India and the Appalachian region of the US, Dr. Pandey and Dr. Kingsolver

argue that the sacred importance of mountains has formed the basis of environmental justice organizing in both cases.)

- Middleton, Townsend. 2015. “[Becoming Tribal in Darjeeling: An Introduction to the Ethno-Contemporary](#).” In *The Demands of Recognition: State Anthropology and Ethno-Politics in Darjeeling*. Stanford University Press (In the introduction to his book, Dr. Middleton ethnographically describes the making of tribal identity in India, documenting the efforts of groups in Darjeeling to be recognized as “tribes” by the State.)
- Moodie, Megan. 2015. “[Conclusion: On Collective Aspiration](#).” In *We Were Adivasis: Aspiration in an Indian Scheduled Tribe*. University of Chicago Press (Prof. Moodie’s book describes the conditions of a tribe that has received recognition from the State, the Dhanka tribe. In the brief concluding chapter of her book, she reflects on the role of collective aspiration and its impact on our contemporary world.)
- Videos
  - [Story of a Sacred Mountain](#) [11 minutes]
  - Virginus Xaxa on [Tribals in India](#) [57 mins]
  - **(optional)** Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi (2003) -- available for free on Tubi and Plex, with Hulu subscription, and for rent on Prime Video -- Vikram is in love with Geeta, but she falls for Siddharth, who later joins the Naxal movement. The trio find themselves drawn into the turbulent political scenario of India in the 1970s.

### *Lecture 3: Gender and Family in Modern India*

- Readings
  - Serena Nanda, ‘[Arranging a Marriage in India](#)’ (In this short article, as Nanda closely engages with the process of arranging a marriage, she also grapples with her own ideas of modernity, oppression, individualism, and agency.)
  - A.M. Shah, “[Is the Joint Household Disintegrating?](#)” (Using statistics from the census, Shah examines the veracity of the claim that joint households are disintegrating in India, and are being replaced by nuclear families.)
  - Annapurna Pandey and Swarnamayee Tripathy, “[Exclusion of Widows and State Welfare Policies: Some Insights from Odisha](#)” (2022) (This article explores the lives and struggles of widows that face marginalization and destitution in India. Focusing on a shelter home funded by the government, it critically examines the State’s efforts in rehabilitating these women.)
  - Dalrymple, William. 2000. “[The City of Widows](#).” In *The Age of Kali: Indian Travels and Encounters*. (This short chapter from Dalrymple’s travelogue focuses on the the plight of widows in the town of Vrindavan, where they go – or are sent – to retire.)
  - Anupama Chopra, “[Bollywood Gets Real, Taking On the Modern Indian Marriage](#)”, New York Times, 2006 (Film critic Anupama Chopra discusses the turn in Bollywood where Hindi films are increasingly dealing with complex and modern family dynamics, tackling issues that were not acknowledged before, and telling increasingly real stories.)

- **(optional)** Basu, Srimati. 2015. “In Sanity and in Wealth: Diagnosing Conjuality and Kinship.” In *The Trouble with Marriage: Feminists Confront Law and Violence in India*. University of California Press
- Videos:
  - [Srimati Basu - Living with Legal Burden: Indian Men's Rights Activists](#) (Examining the activities and demands of the “men’s rights activists” in India, Srimati Basu highlights how the movement tries to simultaneously gain legal rights as well as disallow the functioning of the law. She argues that patriarchal power is enforced by these groups in a new way – by claiming vulnerability and marginalization.)
  - Films (Pick one):
    - Dadi’s Family (2019) — available at <https://vimeo.com/350587394> — Three generations of women in a village family in India.
    - Indian Matchmaking (2020) Available on Netflix. Feel free to watch a couple of episodes.
    - A Suitable Girl (2017) — available on for rent on Youtube — A Suitable Girl follows three young women in India struggling to maintain their identities and follow their dreams amid intense pressure to get married. Documenting the arranged marriage and matchmaking process in Verite over four years, the film examines the women's complex relationship with marriage, family, and culture.

#### *Lecture 4: Aging and Old Age Care*

- Readings:
  - Sarah Lamb “[Ways of Aging](#)” (Sarah Lamb explores the Indian understanding of modernity reflected in the increasing proliferation of old age homes. She examines how the older people grapple with these changes, by simultaneously critiquing and embracing them.)
  - Tilak, Srinivas. “[Growing Old](#)” in *Religion and Aging in the Indian Tradition*. pp. 51 – 80 (Tilak deeply examines various Hindu and Buddhist texts to analyze what religion says about the process of aging.)
  - Annapurna Devi Pandey, [Social Exclusion of the Elderly in India](#) pp. 231-251 (Engaging with the different forms of exclusion of the elderly in India, like social, medical, economic and gender-based exclusion, Prof. Pandey examines the effectiveness of State policies and programs for the elderly.)
- Videos
  - [Kashi Labh on Vimeo](#) (Kashi Labh is a sensory audiovisual ethnography of the distinctive politics-of-care staged by families while they anticipate and create the possibility of Moksha for their dying relative in Kashi, Varanasi. This research examines audiovisual ethnography as it facilitates a performative space that allowed me and my interlocutor Shiv to navigate the holy city and improvise different possibilities for his mother’s Moksha during his ten-day stay in Kashi.)

- Films (**Pick one**)
  - Maska (2020) — available on Netflix — Determined to make it in showbiz, an aspiring actor considers turning his back on his family's café business.
  - Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi (2020) - available on Netflix, and for rent on Youtube - Ram Prasad ki Tehrvi is a family dramedy set in a middle-class north Indian family of 6 children. Upon the father's demise, a series of events unfold at the funeral, showing the family's interpersonal relationships. Balancing traditions, obligations & family finances, the widowed mother realizes the intricacies of her husband's philosophies of life and wants to inculcate & pass on those values to the world.
  - Sharmaji Namkeen (2022) - Available on Prime Video or for rent on Youtube and Apple TV – Sharmaji Namkeen is the story of a retired man. Brij Gopal Sharma (Rishi Kapoor and Paresh Rawal) works as an assistant manager at Madhuban Home Appliances in Delhi. His wife Suman passed away a few years ago, and he resides in a middle-class neighborhood with his elder son Sandeep Sharma.
  - Uunchai

### Mid-term

### Quiz 3

### Discussion Post

## **Week 4: Food Culture of India**

### *Lecture 1: Food/Well-Being in India*

- Readings:
  - Appadurai, Arjun. [Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia](#). *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Symbolism and Cognition (Aug. 1981), pp. 494-511 (Appadurai examines the power of food to evoke deep emotional responses, like belonging and nostalgia, and its capacity of social mediation.)
  - [Why India is a nation of foodies](#) - BBC News 21 June 2016 (This short article gives an overview of the importance of food in Indian families, religions, and celebrations.)
  - Ashish Nandy, "[The Changing Popular Culture of Indian Food: Preliminary Notes](#)" (Nandy discusses the rapidly changing politics of Indian food culture with the advent and increasing popularity of public dining and eating out.)
  - Ved, Sonal. 2021. "[Introduction](#)" in *Whose Samosa Is It Anyway?: The Story of Where 'Indian' Food Really Came From*. Penguin (This is the short introductory chapter of Sonal Ved's book that traces 4000 years of India's layered food history, that is a result of migration, conquest, exchange, and displacement.)

- **(optional)** Baviskar, Amita. 2012. “[Food and Agriculture.](#)” In Vasudha Dalmia and Rashmi Sadana (eds.) *Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture*. Cambridge University Press
- Videos (**Pick one**)
  - The Lunchbox (2013) — available on Starz — An unlikely mistake by a tiffin carrier service results in Ila's tiffin, which was made for her husband, being delivered to Saajan Fernandes. An unusual friendship soon develops between the two.
  - Stanley Ka Dabba (2011) — available on Hulu – Schoolboy Stanley does not carry lunch, which is noticed by a teacher who forces kids to share their food with him. He soon warns Stanley that he must get a lunch box if he wants to attend school.
  - The Great Indian Kitchen (2021) – available for rent on Apple TV – After marriage, a woman struggles to be the submissive wife that her husband and his family expect her to be; the story follows her journey, as she changes herself and, even more so, changes the household.
  - Ustad Hotel (2012) – available on Hulu – Feyze goes against his grandfather's wishes and is nearly disowned until they are able to look past their differences and form a tight bond.
  - Maacher Jhol (2017) – available for rent on Apple TV – A master chef returns to his home city of Kolkata for the first time in 13 years for a cooking challenge that will change his life forever.
  - Today’s Special (2009) – available on Tubi for free and for rent on Apple TV and Prime Video – An ambitious cook hopes to leave his home in New York and become a master chef in Paris. However, he is forced to put his dreams on hold when his estranged father has a heart attack.

## *Lecture 2: Food and Indian Society*

- Readings:
  - [Another forgotten food culture to the fore.](#) *Economic Times* – June 02, 2007 (Focusing on Odiya cuisine, Vikram Doctor briefly discusses the factors that bring certain cuisines into the limelight, while pushing others out of focus.)
  - [Vegetarianism in India has more to do with caste hierarchy than love for animals.](#) *The Scroll* April 06, 2017 (In this article, Waghmore counters the popular myth that India is a primarily vegetarian country.)
  - Taylor Sen, Colleen. 2014. “[The Food of the Indian Diaspora.](#)” In *Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India* (Looking at different regions of the world, and describing a few recipes, Taylor Sen examines how the Indian diaspora has evolved a distinctive cuisine by combining native dishes with local ingredients and influences.)
  - **(optional)** Jha, DN. 2009. “[Introduction](#)” in *The Myth of the Holy Cow*. Verso
- Videos:
  - [Truth Vs. Hype – the Myth of Beef Ban](#): In the course of a fortnight, two BJP-run states, Maharashtra and Haryana, toughened their anti-beef laws. This week, we take a hard look

at how these bans came into place, and the shifting goalposts used to justify them: one minute, arguing that the slaughter of cattle will do serious damage to Indian agriculture; the next minute, that even killing bullocks is offensive to Hindu sentiment, the third, that the ban will crack down on illegal and thriving beef trade. Are these claims based on truth or hype?

### *Lecture 3: Traditional Health Systems*

- Readings
  - Sieler, Roman. 2015. "[Introduction](#)" in *Lethal Spots, Vital Secrets: Medicine and Martial Arts in South India*. Oxford University Press (This chapter introduces *varmakallai* – meaning, the art of the vital spots – that is found mainly in South India. The art includes both martial and healing practices that are highly secretive. In the book, Sieler examines why these practices are shrouded in secrecy, and explores how medicines and combat can be compatible with each other.)
  - Schmidt Stiedenroth, Kira. 2020. "[Unani Medicine and Muslims in India](#)" in *Unani Medicine in the Making: Practices and Representations in 21st Century India*. Amsterdam University Press (Focusing on the connection between Unani medicine and the Muslim community in India, Schmidt Stiedenroth explores the idea of medical communalism.)
  - Alter, Joseph. 1999. "[Heaps of Health, Metaphysical Fitness: Ayurveda and the Ontology of Good Health in Medical Anthropology](#)." *Current Anthropology* Vol 40 No S1 pp. S43-S66 (Using Ayurveda, Alter explores a very different way of looking at health, which is concerned with overall fitness rather than focusing on illness or disease.)
  - **(optional)** Alter, Joseph. 2006. "[Yoga and Fetishism: Reflections on Marxist Social Theory](#)." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12 pp. 763-783

### *Lecture 4: Language and Literature*

- Readings
  - Chughtai, Ismat. 2015. "[Ismat Chughtai on why eroticism in modern literature is necessary](#)." *Scroll* (May 11, 2015) (A translated extract from the Urdu book of renowned author Ismat Chughtai, discussing eroticism in contemporary literature and why it is essential.)
  - "[India – The Land of Many Tongues](#)" *The Hindu*
  - Singh, Kushwant. 1976. "[Modern Indian Literature](#)." *India International Center Quarterly* Vol 3 No 2 pp 123-142 (This is a part of the address about modern Indian literature given by reputed author Khushwant Singh the Council of Cultural Studies, India International Center.)
  - Jhumpa Lahiri – Interpreter of Maladies (choose a story)



- Videos (Pick 1):
  - English Vinglish (2012) – Available on Prime Video and on YouTube, Apple TV, and Sling TV for rent – A housewife and caterer, Shashi, is usually mocked by her family for not knowing English. Her attempt to learn the language helps her rediscover herself and reassert her value as a mother and a wife.
  - Manto (2018) – Available on Netflix – In the 1940s, Indo-Pakistani writer Saadat Hasan Manto's artistic choices are challenged by censors.
  - Mirza Ghalib (1954) – Available on Prime Video – Mirza Ghalib was the preeminent Indian Urdu and Persian poet during the last years of the Mughal Empire.

## Quiz 4

## Discussion Post

### **WEEK 5: Films in India and What is Happening in India today?**

#### *Lecture 1: Indian Films and Society*

- Readings
  - Hutchinson, Pamela. “[The birth of India's film industry: how the movies came to Mumbai.](#)” *The Guardian* (Published during the centenary celebration of Indian cinema, this short article provides a historical overview of the evolution of films and filmmaking in the country.)
  - Arora, Poonam. 1995. “[“Imperilling the Prestige of the White Woman’: Colonial Anxiety and Film Censorship in British India.](#)” *Visual Anthropology Review* 11, no. 2 (Fall): 36-50. (Focusing on the last 50 years of the British colonization of India, Arora examines how films challenged the existing power dynamics and structures of the period, leading to regulation and censorship.)
  - “[When the Hindu Right Came for Bollywood](#)” *The New Yorker* October 10, 2022 (This article explores how the rise of BJP and Mr. Modi in India has affected the film industry and its actors, targeting both the content of films as well as the personal lives of the actors.)
  - **(optional)** Farrell, Gerry. 1993. “[The Early Days of the Gramophone Industry in India: Historical, Social and Musical Perspectives.](#)” *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 2 (1): 31-53.
- Videos: **(Pick one)**
  - Luck By Chance (2009) — available on Netflix and Prime Video, and for rent on YouTube and Apple TV— An aspiring actor, Vikram, wishes to make it big in Bollywood. He gets a chance to play the male lead in a film, but it affects his relationship with his girlfriend, Sona, who is a struggling actress.

- Om Shanti Om (2007) — available on Netflix and for rent on Prime Video, Youtube, and Apple TV — Om, a junior film artist, is smitten by Shantipriya, a renowned actress, but is killed while trying to save her from a fire accident. Thirty years later, he is reborn and sets out to avenge her death.
- Bombay Talkies (2013) — Available on Netflix and for rent on YouTube, Prime Video, and Apple TV – An anthology of four short stories that describe how films have an influence on the lives of people from various strata of society.
- Filmistaan (2013) – Available on Hulu – An assistant director fantasizes about becoming a star, so he goes with an American crew to remote areas in Rajasthan to work on a documentary.
- Dirty Picture (2011) – Available on Netflix – A girl runs away from her village hoping to become a movie star but struggles with life in the murky male-dominated world of cinema.
- Bhumika (1977) – Available on Prime Video – A poor girl learns music from her courtesan grandmother and breaks into the burgeoning show business industry of 1930s Bombay.
- Kaamyaab (2018) – Available on Netflix – An actor rethinks his planned retirement after realizing he is on the cusp of completing his 500th film.
- Bollywood Calling (2001) – Available on Hulu, and for free on Tubi and Plex – A film producer in India hopes to create a box-office smash by casting a faded American movie star in his next project.

## *Lecture 2: Bollywood films and Indian Diaspora: Reflection on the Society*

### ● Readings

- Murty, Madhavi. 2022. “[Love in New Times](#)” in *Stories that Bind: Political Economy and Culture in New India*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press (In this chapter, Prof. Murty examines how contemporary Hindi cinema portrays the male as intricately involved in the neoliberal systems, and adrift and incomplete. This incomplete male is then redeemed by love and the feminine ideal.)
- Tejaswini Ganti. 2012. “[No Longer a Frivolous Singing and Dancing Nation of Movie-Makers: The Hindi Film Industry and its Quest for Global Distinction.](#)” *Visual Anthropology* 25(4) pp. 340-365 (Contrasting the usual association between neoliberalism and branding, Ganti examines how neoliberal economic ideals have actually led Bollywood filmmakers to view cultural distinctiveness as alienating and limiting, rather than as a branding asset.)
- Rajadhyaksha, Ashish (2010). [The 'Bollywoodization' of the Indian cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena](#). *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4(1). (Examining the financing, funding, and distribution of Hindi films in India, Rajadhyaksha explores how Bollywood and Indian film industry are used synonymously around the world.)

- **(optional)** Athique, Adrian. 2012. “[Addressing the Nonresident: Soft Power, Bollywood, and the Diasporic Audience.](#)” in Anjali Gera Roy (ed.) *The Magic of Bollywood: At Home and Abroad*. SAGE Publications
- Videos (**Pick one**)
  - The Namesake (2007) — available for rent on Youtube, Apple TV, Vudu, and Prime Video — Ashima and Ashoke, immigrant Bengali parents, try to adjust to life in America, while Gogol, their son, tries to find his identity and choose between the two worlds.
  - Bend it Like Beckham (2002) — Available on HBO Max, Hulu, Roku, and Prime Video, and for rent on YouTube and Apple TV – A girl bends the rules, to reach her goal, in professional soccer. But her traditional parents refuse even to consider it and want her to hang up her football boots, find a nice boy and learn to cook.
  - Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaenge (1995) – Available on Prime Video, and for rent on YouTube and Apple TV – Raj and Simran meet on a trip to Europe. After some initial misadventures, they fall in love. The battle begins to win over two traditional families.
  - Swades (2004) – Available on Netflix, and for rent on YouTube and Apple TV – Mohan Bhargava is a successful NRI (non-resident Indian) working at the technological forefront of NASA in the USA. Driven by nostalgia, he returns to his roots to find the nanny who raised him in his homeland, intending to bring her back to America. His journey leads him into the rural heart of India, to the village of Charanpur, and sets him on both an outward and inner quest to find where he truly belongs.

### *Lecture 3: Some Contemporary Issues*

- Readings
  - [India's poorest 'fear hunger may kill us before coronavirus'](#) *BBC News* (25th March 2020) (India was put in lockdown to halt the spread of the coronavirus outbreak. People were told to stay indoors, but for many daily-wage earners, this was not an option.)
  - [India Activists Arrest: Is this a Political Witchhunt?](#) *BBC News* (29th August 2018) (This article gives an overview of different instances where activists were targeted and arrested by the government.)
  - [India Rounds Up Critics Under Shadow of Virus Crisis, Activists Say.](#) *New York Times* (19th July 2020) (This article explains the mechanisms used by the govt to target individuals who criticize them.)

### *Lecture 4: The Way Forward*

- Readings:
  - [Ramachandra Guha: At 75, India is free – but its citizens are still fighting for many rights.](#) *Scroll* (14th August 2022) (Noted historian Ramachandra Guha reflects on India’s current conditions and situation 75 years after independence.)

- [‘I Don’t Like Modi’s India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited’: Romila Thapar](#) *The Wire* (10th August 2022) (Historian Romila Thapar was 15 when India won independence. In this interview, she reflects on the journey of the nation in these 75 years, the work of the first Prime Minister, and reflects on how history will view the tenure of Mr. Modi.)
- [The importance of being Jean Dreze](#) *Business Standard News* (14th June 2013) (This brief article gives an overview of the work done by Dr. Jean Dreze.)
- [Damn the dams: An interview with Medha Patkar](#) (This is an interview with renowned activist Medha Patkar whose struggle against dam projects that threatened the right to life and livelihood for the people of India’s Narmada valley has grown into one of the world’s largest non-violent social movements.)
- [Amartya Sen’s Hopes and Fears for Indian Democracy](#) *The New Yorker* (6th October 2019) (In this interview, Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen reflects on the experience of the partition of India, the nation’s journey over these years, and the current regime.)
- [Soni Sori and Bela Bhatia: Human Rights Crusaders for Tribals and Women in Conflict-ridden Bastar](#) *News Click* (9th March 2022) (This article highlights the work of two brave women, Soni Sori and Bela Bhatia, who work in the conflict-ridden Bastar region of Chhattisgarh in India.)
- [Amte’s menagerie that once had 10 leopards](#) *The Hindu* (18th February 2017) (This short article describes doctor and activist Prakash Amte’s Animal Ark: an “orphanage and rescue shelter” for wild animals of the Dandakaranya forest.)
- Videos:
  - [Abhijit Banerjee](#) (The official Nobel Prize interview of 2019 Laureate in Economic Sciences, Abhijit Banerjee)

## Quiz 5

## Discussion Post

## **Finals Week**

### Final exam/research paper

\*\*\*Final Note: This syllabus may be revised as the course goes on to accommodate guest speakers as well as current news articles among other readings. Students are responsible for noting such changes and keeping track of events and readings in the current syllabus\*\*\*