



The Alliance for Global Education, Pune Program: Spring 2012

CSNF 350: Nation, Caste and Gender through Films

Prof. Gayatri Chatterjee

Course Description:

This course on Indian Cinema introduces students to the different cinemas in India, helps them gain comprehensive understanding of the various narrative and visual modes and aids in the study of three crucial aspects: nation, gender and caste.

The emphasis will be to enhance the ability of students to see films as representation, identify the various processes of codification and meaning-making therein. The course will train students to do close readings of films and also to read against the grains.

The course will inform students of the many interrelations between national history and national cinema. It will highlight film representations of the early nationalist projects and of the Nehruvian goals for a modern India after independence—and of a sentiment that the nationalist project is a failed one. Finally, the course will see the rise of Bollywood and representation that is driven by the market and consumerism.

The course will introduce students to the various histories and theories of Feminist film theory, while showing the different ways women and women's issues are portrayed in Indian films.

The students will meet with one filmmaker and visit the Film & Television Institutions of India.

Learning Outcomes and/or Expected Student Competencies:

In the limited scope and period of the course, the aim will be to develop capabilities of the students to such a level where they will be able to:

- ❑ Understand the spread and scope of Indian Cinema
- ❑ Learn the skills to interpret Indian films
- ❑ Understand the reflection of Nation Gender and Caste in Indian films

Course Requirements / Evaluation:

The course involves attentive viewing of films and careful learning of interpretative skills. Students will view different films and film clips and discuss. They will be required to see films outside class hours.



The Alliance for Global Education, Pune Program: Spring 2012

Active student participation is required.

Students will be required to hand in two small papers and one semester end paper.

Students will be evaluated by:

- ❑ Attendance 10%
- ❑ Leading class discussion 15%
- ❑ First term paper 10%
- ❑ Second term paper 15 %
- ❑ Research paper 50%

Attendance requirements:

Class attendance is mandatory. As this is an intensive program, it is essential that students participate fully in coursework and all required academic activities. Only the Resident Director may approve excused absences and students are expected to make up any missed work.

Required Reading:

Benjamin, Walter (1955), "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," ed. Hannah Arendt in *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969, pp 217-51.

Chatterjee, Gayatri (2005) "Icons and Events," in *Bollyworld: Indian Popular Cinema Through Transnational Lense*. Sage Publication, New Delhi.

Chatterjee, Gayatri (2002), *Mother India* London: British Film Institute

Chatterjee, Partha (1997), Chapter Four, *The Nation and its Fragments*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Dirks, Nicholas (2001), "The Home and the Nation," in *Pleasure and the Nation*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Recommended Reading:

Chatterjee, Gayatri (1994), *Awara* New Delhi: Penguin India

Eck, Diana (1998), *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* Columbia University Press

Ghosh, Bishnupriya (1992), "Satyajit Ray.s Devi: Constructing a Third-World Feminist Critique," *Screen* 33, no. 2



The Alliance for Global Education, Pune Program: Spring 2012

Kabir, Nasreen Munni (2001), *Bollywood, The Indian Cinema Story* London: Channel 4 Books.

Kapoor, Poornima (1997), “Devdas: India's Emasculated Hero, Sado-Masochism and Colonialism” in *Jouvert* vol 7, issue 2 North Carolina University

Mishra, Vijay (2002), *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* New York: Routledge

Philip Lutgendorf, (December 2002) “A Superhit Goddess: Jai Santoshi Maa and Caste Hierarchy in Indian Films,” *Manushi* 131

Ray, Satyajit. (1976). *Our Films, Their Films* Bombay: Orient Longman

Ramanujan, A. K. (1990). “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay”

Thomas, Rosie (1985), “Indian Cinema: Pleasures and Popularity.” *Screen* 26:3-4, 116-131, 1995.

“Melodrama and the Negotiation of Morality in Mainstream Hindi Film.” In *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge, 157-82. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Vasudevan, Ravi, (2000) “Bombay and its Public,” in *Pleasure and the Nation*, pp. 186-211.

Von Stietencron, Heinrich (1995), *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Course Syllabus:

Following films should be viewed during this week: 1) *Kunku* 2) *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*

1) 23rd January, Monday:

Early film history; films of D. G. Phalke; The Orientalist Gaze; Indian cinema in the international forum; *Light of Asia* (1925) by Himangshu Roy

2) 25th January, Wednesday:

The inner vision; social reform and Indian cinema; *Kunku* (1937) by V. Shantaram; the Prabhat Studios



The Alliance for Global Education, Pune Program: Spring 2012

3) 30th January, Monday:

The making of the Nation; Self-rule and self-assessment; *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* (1979) by Satyajit Ray

Following films should be viewed during this week: 1) *Mashal* 2) *Charulata*

4) 1st February, Wednesday

How to read a film: *mise en scene* and narrative structure; *Pather Panchali* (1955) by Satyajit Ray

5) 6th February, Monday

The village and the city; the old and the new; *Mashal* (1984) by Yash Chopra;

Students will write their first term paper over the weekend.

Following films should be viewed during this week: 1) *Mother India* 2) *Roja*

6) 8th February, Wednesday

Questioning the independence of the nation and development; *Mother India* (1955) by Mehboob Khan.

7) 13th February, Monday

Nation in peril; films of Mani Ratnam

Following films should be viewed during this week: 1) *Mirch Masala* 2) *Mahanagar*

8) 15th February, Wednesday

Gender in India; Western Feminist Theory. Women as agent for change; *Mirch Masala* (1987) by Ketan Mehta.

9) 22nd February, Wednesday

Women and modernity *Mahanagar* (1964) by Satyajit Ray

Students write their second term paper

Following films should be viewed during the following weeks: 1) *Gulabi Talkies* 2) *Firaq*



The Alliance for Global Education, Pune Program: Spring 2012

3) *Chak De India* 4) Om Shanti Om

Students meet the professor individually and begin to plan for the final paper.

10) 24th February, Friday

A visit to Film & Television Institute of India.

11) 27th February, Monday

Representation of marginality—woman; religion; caste: *Gulabi Talkies* (2004) by Girish Kasarvalli.

12) 5th March, Monday

Caste: violence: Nation: *A Night of Prophecy* (2005) by Amar Kanwar.

13) 7th March, Wednesday

Meeting a filmmaker

14) 12th March, Monday, Friday:

Globalization and Bollywood

15) 14th March, Wednesday:

Final discussion on the final paper

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