



CSNF 350 Indian Cinema: In the Light of Nationalism, Caste and Woman

Dr. Gayatri Chatterjee
Spring 2009 Course Syllabus

Course Description:

This course on Indian Cinema involves more than one topic. The purpose is to introduce students to the history of cinema in India; help them gain comprehensive understanding of the same; and make them familiar with three crucial aspects: nation, caste and gender.

The emphasis will be to enhance the ability of students to see-understand-relate to the representation of these issues in Indian films; to see films as representation aided by a process of meaning making (and not mistake *representation* for *reality*).

The course will inform students of the many interrelations between the national history and cinema. It will go on to highlight how films today show the gradual failure of the nationalist project and how the films today are marked by the market and consumerism.

Learning Outcomes and/or Expected Student Competencies:

The purpose of this course is to develop capabilities of the students to such a level where they will be able:

- Understand the 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:

This course is very much interactive. Students will view different films, interpret and discuss the issues within them, meet with filmmakers and film industry personnel and visit institutions and studios. Active student participation is required. The course also involves attentive viewing of films and careful learning of interpretative skills.

Students will be evaluated by:

Attendance	10%
Leading class discussion	15%
Film Critiques	25%
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. Excused absences may only be approved by the Resident Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Students may not make up for unexcused absences, and will be given a grade of zero for any missed work.

Reading material:

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

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

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

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

Dwyer, Rachel (2001). *Pleasure and the Nation: The History of Politics and Consumption of Public Culture* Oxford University Press New York: New Delhi

Eck, Diana (1998). *Darśan: 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

Gupta, Dipankar (1993). *Social Stratification* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

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

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

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

Kaur Raminder & Sinha Ajay, eds. (2005). *Bollywood: Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens*. Sage Publication, New Delhi

Kumar, Radha (1998). *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990* New Delhi: Kali for Women

Prasad, Chandra Bhan (2008). "Markets and Manu: Economic Reforms and Its Impact on Caste in India" CASI Working Paper Series, Paper No. 08-02

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

Ramanujan, A. K. (1990). "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay" In *India through Hindu Categories*, McKim Marriott, ed., 41-58. New Delhi: Sage Publications

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.

****Additional readings may be added****

Course Syllabus:

1. Cinema Comes to India: Pre-Cinema and Early History **2 Hrs**
2. The Medium of Cinema: Simulacra and Representation; Narrative Structure and Meaning-Making **2 Hrs**
3. Screening of *Samar* at The National Film Archive of India (NFAI) **3 Hrs**
4. Icons and Events: Iconicity and Narrativity **2 hrs**
5. Screening of *Sant Tukaram* at NFAI or DVD (TBD) **3 Hrs**
6. Binary Construct: Masculine/Feminine and Good/Evil (with film clips) **2 Hrs**
7. Indian Studio System – A Historical Overview (with film clips) **2 Hrs**
8. Nation Formation and Cinema: Continuity & Discontinuity (with clips) **2 Hrs**
9. Screening of *Roja* DVD **3 Hrs**
10. The Indian Nation State: Arts Policies and Institutions **2 Hrs**
11. A visit to Film and Television Institute of India (FTII): **2 Hrs**
 - a. Screening of one student film, interaction with the filmmaker
 - b. Or with Umesh Kulkarni, an FTII alumnus
12. Indian Documentary Movement (with films and clips) **3 hrs**
13. Artisanry and Art, Social Realism and Art Cinema (with film clips) **2 Hrs**
14. Screening of *Pather Panchali* DVD **3 Hrs**
15. The Film Industry Today: Film Finance/Exhibition/Distribution (meeting a media analyst) **2 Hrs**
16. Popular Cinema: Entertainment / Escapism, Screening of *Om Shanti Om* **3 Hrs**
17. Religions Revivalism and Jingoism; Regressing from Nationalist Visions:

The Image of the Woman (with film clips)
18. Screening of Gandhi My Father with director Abbas Feroz Khan

2 Hrs
3 Hrs

