

HIST 259: Women in South Asia: Histories, Narratives and Representation

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Office Hours: Moodle Sign-up
Tuesdays: 10:00-11:30
Wednesdays: 3:15 – 5:05
Venue: LH 426
Class times: Mon & Wed: 1.50 - 3.00
Fri: 2.20 - 3.20

Course Description & Objectives

This seminar focuses on exploring gender as a category of analysis in the context of South Asia and considers how and why gender enriches our understanding of historical processes. This is not a survey course so if you do not have any prior knowledge of South Asia I encourage you to come and talk to me and I can direct you to some background reading. The objective of this course is to analyse the historical institutions, practices and traditions that define the position of women in India. We consider the various ways in which the trope of the Goddess has been used for and by Indian women in colonial and post-colonial India; the colonial state's supposed rescue of Indian women; the position and role of European women in colonial India; how women's bodies come to embody and signify community honour and become sites of communal contest. We explore the making of Mother India; the connection between nation, territory and the female form; and the ways in which women have been represented in history as well as Indian cinema.

Please note this is a discussion-based course. Therefore, students are required to lead discussions on specific topics. The class will be divided into groups and depending on your group number (G1, G2, ...) you will be responsible for leading the discussion on that particular day. Each group will be assigned one session where you will base your discussion on the readings assigned for that day. While the entire class is required to do these readings, the assigned group will be responsible for doing some background research, presenting the readings to the others in light of their research and posing discussion questions for the class.

Required Reading

Readings will be posted weekly on Moodle. You are expected to do the readings before class.

Note: All readings posted on Moodle are only intended for the use of this class. Please do not share them with people outside the Carleton Community so as not to breach copyright laws.

Required Films

Devi – 1960
Ghare Baire (The Home and the World) – 1984
Mother India -- 1957
Bandit Queen – 1994

Grading structure

Class participation:	20%
Group led class discussion (days will be assigned to groups): (each group will lead discussion once over the term)	10%
Response to film:	10%
Literature review assignment	45%
Annotated bibliography— (two sets 10 % each)	
Paper draft for peer review— (5%)	
Final paper (20%)	
Final group presentations (Week 9):	15%

Due dates and academic honesty

Papers are due on aforementioned dated via Moodle. Requests for extensions need to be made at least a day before the paper is due and will usually only granted because of medical concerns. It is imperative that all students follow the Carleton College policy of Academic Honesty which includes footnoting the sources of all ideas, quotations, and paraphrases. For citation format please refer to: <http://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/study/citations/>

Submission deadlines:

Film response paper:	Sun Jan 14 by noon on Moodle.
Annotated Bibliography Set 1:	Sat Feb 10 by noon on Moodle.
Annotated Bibliography Set 2:	Thurs Feb 22 by noon on Moodle.
Draft of final paper for peer review:	Thurs March 8 by noon – via email.
Final paper:	Mon March 12 by noon on Moodle.

Class participation

Please note that you are expected to have done the assigned readings before the class. You should be able to identify the main argument in the reading, comment on the ways in which the argument has been constructed and be able to come up with questions you would like to ask the author. So try and think along the following lines when assessing a reading: What is the main point of the reading? Can you summarize the argument in one sentence? Can you contextualize the argument? How is the argument substantiated? Is the evidence reliable? Can you identify any biases?

A substantial part of your grade is based on class participation which means actively taking part in class discussions, posing questions and responding to those posed by others. You will be required to carry out peer evaluations and will be given guidelines for how to do this.

Please ensure that by the end of week 3) you have all come individually to see me in my office hours. This is important as I need to get to know you all and assess your expectations of the

course. So please make sure you sign up for a meeting slot on my office hours sign-up sheet on Moodle.

When conducting research you must look beyond Google and Wikipedia. While you may use such sources as a starting point to begin your research you should never rely on them exclusively as they are not considered academic sources. Instead learn to find sources using the Carleton College library catalogue and other library resources such as specialized databases.

Carleton College Disability Policy

Carleton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodation must place documentation on file with the Coordinator of Disability Services who will then inform faculty about student accommodations. College policy is that faculty can and should wait for this notification before making course modifications for students.

WEEK 1

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH ASIA AND GENDER

Wed Jan 3: Introduction to the Course

Fri Jan 5: Gendered History & A Whirlwind Tour of the History of Modern India

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 28-50.

Sandeep Banerjee with Subho Basu, Stephen Christopher, Susan Snow Wadley, "A Brief History of South Asia," in *South Asia and the World* ed. Susan Wadley (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2014), pp. 22-65.

WEEK 2

MODULE 2: THE TROPE OF THE GODDESS

Mon Jan 8: Female Figures in Hindu Mythology: Gentle Goddesses and the Destructive Goddesses

Kinsley, David, *Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (University of California Press, 1988) – Chapters 3, 5, 7, & 8.

Wed Jan 10: Goddesses as Role Models

Wadley, Susan, "Women and the Hindu Tradition", *Signs* 3:1 (August 1977) , pp. 113-125.

Gross, Rita, "Is the Goddess a Feminist?" in *Is the Goddess a Feminist* (New York, 2000), pp. 104-112.

Movie screening: Devi (venue and place TBA)

Fri Jan 12: Discussion on Devi

WEEK 3

MODULE 3: LOCATING WOMEN IN HISTORY AND THE ARCHIVE – PRE-COLONIAL INDIA

Mon Jan 15: Locating Women in the Politics of Medieval India

Cynthia Talbot, “Rudrama-Devi, the Female King: Gender and Political Authority in Medieval India,” in David Schulman (ed.), *Syllables of Sky* (Delhi: OUP, 1995), pp. 391-430.

Wed Jan 17: Female Power: Pulling the Strings in Pre-Colonial India

Mrichucchanda Palit, “Powers Behind the Throne: Women in Early Mughal Politics,” in Mandakranta Bose (ed.), *Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval and Modern India* (New York: OUP, 2000), pp. 201-212.

Richard Barnett, “Embattled Begams: Women as Power Brokers in Early Modern India”, in Gavin R. G. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), pp. 521-536.

MODULE 4: DO INDIAN WOMEN NEED SAVING? SOCIAL REFORM IN BRITISH INDIA

Fri Jan 19: Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century – The Status of Women

Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (New York: CUP, 1996), pp. 10-63.
E. Storrow, *Our Indian Sisters* (London, c.1890), skim the entire book.

WEEK 4

Mon Jan 22: Problematizing the British Rescue of Widows I

Ashish Nandy, “Sati: A Nineteenth Century Tale of Women, Violence and Protest,” in *At the Edge of Psychology* (New Delhi, 1980), 1-31.

Wed Jan 24: CLASS CANCELLED

Fri Jan 26: Problematizing British Rescue of Widows II

Lata Mani, “Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India” in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* (New Delhi, 1989), 88-121.

WEEK 5

Mon Jan 29: Imperial Mothers? – GROUP 1 LEADS DISCUSSION

Antoinette Burton, “The White Woman’s Burden,” in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds.) *Western Women and Imperialism* (Bloomington, 1992), pp.137-157.

Barbara Ramusack, “Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, and Activists,” in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds.) *Western Women and Imperialism* (Bloomington, 1992), pp. 119-136.

MODULE 5: WOMEN & THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Wed Jan 31: Women’s Place in Nationalism

Sumit Sarkar, “The Women’s Question in Nineteenth Century Bengal” in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds.), *Women and Culture* (Bombay: SNDT University Research Center for Women’s Studies, 1994).

Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question,” in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds.), *Recasting Women* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), pp. 233-253.

Fri Feb 2: Gandhi and Women’s Empowerment

Suruchi Thapar, “Women as Activists: Women as Symbols: A Study of the Indian National Movement,” *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993), pp. 81-96.

Madhu Kishwar, “Gandhi on Women,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 20: 40 (Oct. 5, 1985), pp. 1691-1702.

Madhu Kishwar, “Gandhi on Women,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 20: 41 (Oct. 12, 1985), pp. 1753-1758.

WEEK 6

Mon Feb 5: MID-TERM BREAK

Wed Feb 7: Film screening_Mother India

Fri Feb 9: Film screening_Mother India

WEEK 7

Mon Feb 12: Women’s Participation in the Nationalist Movement – GROUP 2 LEADS DISCUSSION

Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert, *Women in the Indian National Movement* (New Delhi: Sage, 2006) chapters 3 & 4.

MODULE 6: MAPPING: THE BODY, THE NATION, & THE GODDESS

Wed Feb 14: Nation as Mother I – GROUP 3 LEADS DISCUSSION

Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess & the Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp.1-116.

Charu Gupta, “The Icon of Mother in Late Colonial North India,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 36:45 (2001), pp. 4291-4299.

Meera Sehgal, “Mothering the Nation: Maternalist Frames in the Hindu Nationalist Movement in India” *Women of the Right: Comparisons and Interplay Across Borders* ed. Kathleen M. Blee and Sandra McGee Deutsch (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012): 192- 207.

Fri Feb 16: Nation as Mother II

Brigitte Schulze, “The Cinematic ‘Discovery of India’: Mehboob’s Re-Invention of the Nation in Mother India,” *Social Scientist*, 30: 9/10 (Sep. - Oct., 2002), pp. 72-87.

WEEK 8

MODULE 7: THE BODY AS SITE OF CONTESTATION

Mon Feb 19: The Vivisection of Mother India I – GROUP 4 LEADS DISCUSSION

Urvashi Butalia, “The Other Side of Silence,” *Manoa* 19: 1, Crossing Over: Partition Literature from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Summer, 2007), pp. 41+43-53.

Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998), pp. 31-64.

Pipa Virdee, “Dreams, Memories and Legacies: Partitioning India” in: Routledge Handbook of Contemporary India, ed. Knut Jacobsen, Routledge, 2015.

Wed Feb 21: The Vivisection of Mother India II

Urvashi Butalia, “Muslims and Hindus Men and Women: Communal Stereotypes and the Partition of India,” in Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (eds.), *Women and Right-Wing Movements* (Delhi: Zed Books, 1995), pp. 58-81.

Urvashi Butalia, “Community State and Gender: On Women’s Agency During Partition”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28: 17 (Apr. 24, 1993), pp. WS12-WS21+WS24.

Sadat Hasan Manto, Short story “Khol Do” translated by Aatish Taseer:
http://thedrawbridge.org.uk/issue_13/her_body_beyond_pain/

MODULE 8: WOMEN'S AGENCY AS PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE

Fri Feb 23: Arming the Goddess for the Nation – GROUP 5 LEADS DISCUSSION

Meera Sehgal, "Defending the Nation: Militarism, Women's Empowerment and the Hindu Right" in *Border Politics: Social Movements, Collective Identities and Globalization* ed. Nancy A. Naples (New York: NYU Press, 2015): 60-94.

Paola Bacchetta, "All Our Goddesses are Armed: Religion, Resistance, and Revenge in the Life of a Militant Hindu Nationalist Woman" *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 25, no. 4 (1993): 38-52.

Amrita Basu, "Feminism Inverted: The Gendered Imagery of Hindu Nationalism" *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 25 no. 4 (1993): 25-37.

WEEK 9

Mon Feb 26: Conflict and Violence: Women as Actors

Rita Manchanda, "Where are the Women in South Asian Conflicts?" in Rita Manchanda (ed.), *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency* (New Delhi: SAGE, 2001), pp. 9-41.

Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake, "Ambivalent Empowerment: The Tragedy of Tamil Women in Conflict," in Rita Manchanda (ed.), *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency* (New Delhi: SAGE, 2001), pp. 102-130.

Radhika Coomaraswamy, "Tiger Women and the Question of Women's Emancipation," *Pravada* 4: 9 (1997).

Miranda Alison, "Cogs in the Wheel? Women in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam," *Civil Wars* 6:4 (2003), pp. 37-54.

Wed Feb 28: Presentations

Fri March 2: Presentations

WEEK 10

MODULE 9: POWER OF DISCOURSE; POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION – WOMEN IN CINEMA/GODDESS IN LIFE

Mon March 5: The 'Third World Woman' and the Politics of Representation

Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (eds.), *Third World*

Women and the Politics of Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 51-80.

Wed March 7: Phulan Devi – The Bandit Queen

Sarah Caldwell, “Subverting the Fierce Goddess: Phoolan Devi and the Politics of Vengeance,” in Jacqueline Suthren Hirst and Lynn Thomas (eds.) *Playing for Real: Hindu Role Models, Religion, and Gender* (New Delhi: OUP, 2004), pp. 161-178.

Fri March 9: “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

Leela Fernandes “Reading India's Bandit Queen: A Trans/national Feminist Perspective on the Discrepancies of Representation,” *Signs* 25: 1 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 123-152.

Arundhati Roy, “The Great Indian Rape Trick”.

Karen Gabriel, “Reading Rape: Sexual Difference, Representational Excess and Narrative Containment” in Manju Jain (ed.) *Narratives in Indian Cinema* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2009), pp. 145-166.