

HISTORY 600

SOUTH ASIANS IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE: TRADE, LABOR, POLITICS, LITERATURE

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30pm

History 600, Fall 2011
Humanities, Room 5255
Thursdays 11:00am-1:00pm

Course Description:

This research seminar explores the history of South Asians who migrated from the Indian subcontinent to different parts of the British empire over which “the sun never set” from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. They served in a variety of roles within the colonial economic structures of different British colonies as indentured laborers on plantations, contract labor in the construction of railways, and financiers and traders who facilitated the spread of colonial rule. During the first 10 weeks students will learn through weekly assigned readings and discussions about Indian traders in East Africa and Southeast Asia; Indian indentured laborers in Fiji, Mauritius and the Caribbean; Indian political activism and the making of a “mahatma” (Gandhi) in South Africa; African and Indian political collaboration in Kenya; and the post-colonial expulsion of South Asians from East Africa to Britain in the late 1960s-early1970s. Students will be introduced to a range of historiographical works that shift away from histories of South Asia and colonialism that are anchored to territorial boundaries. They will also read two works of postcolonial fiction, an important genre of literature, relating to the themes of identity, colonialism, migration and multiculturalism. Through the assigned readings students will be urged to think about the varied, comparative and connected transregional experience of colonial rule from the perspective of the South Asian diaspora across the British Empire. They are expected to write one long 20 page research paper based on primary sources and secondary literature on a topic related to the course. Students will work towards this from early in the semester but especially after the pre-assigned readings have been discussed in class.

Please Note: The history department reserves the right to collect information, including copies of papers, for the purposes of assessing and improving this course and the major

Assignments:

- 1) All students are required to attend the Library Workshop organized by the History Department for which you have to pre-register at:
http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/reg/catalog_course.aspx?groupcoursekey=31638
The workshop is being offered on September 20, 22, 26 & 28 from 6pm to 7:30pm
- 2) From Week III onwards students will write a 3-page (double spaced) response paper on the assigned source. Please refer to the response paper guidelines on the course website for this exercise.
- 3) From Week III onwards students will be divided into teams of two to lead discussion on the week's topic and present their analysis of the assigned primary source. They will circulate *two* discussion questions that should be emailed to me by **noon** on the Wednesday before class.
- 4) One-page research proposals identifying the final paper topic and possible primary sources are due in class on 10/27
- 5) Students are required to set up individual meetings with me (on November 7, 8 & 9) to discuss their research. Please bring the final primary sources you are planning to use to this meeting.
- 6) Students will be paired up to present first drafts of their paper (10 minutes) and comment on another student's paper (5 minutes) on December 1 & 8. First drafts should be received by me and the commentator by 5pm on 11/28
- 7) Final Papers due by 5pm on 12/15

Evaluation:

Attendance and active class participation: 15%

Response papers: 15%

Discussion Lead, Paper Presentation and Peer Commentary: 10%

Final Paper: 60%

Unexplained absences taken without the instructor's **prior** permission and failure to submit assignments on time will result in a deduction from the overall letter grade.

Readings:

Most required readings are available on the learn@uw course website. Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* and David Dabydeen, *The Intended* are available for purchase at the university book store. Journal articles not on the course website can be downloaded online from MadCat. Please contact me at least 24hrs before class if you haven't been able to access the week's readings for any reason.

CLASS SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS

Week I, 8 September INTRODUCTION & ORGANIZATION

Week II, 15 September BRITAIN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 1 and conclusion
Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, Introduction
Sunil Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia*, pp. 18-38
Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, ch. 1

Week III, 22 September TRADE, INDENTURE AND THE MAKING OF A DIASPORA

Claude Markovitz, *The Global World of Indian Merchants*, ch 1
Rajat Kanta Ray, "Asian Capital in the Age of European Expansion: The Rise of the Bazaar, 1800-1914", *Modern Asian Studies*, 29, (3) 1995
Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 3
Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers*, ch 1

Source for Response Paper: Extracts from Anti-Slavery Reporter, 20 October 1841 (from British and Foreign Anti Slavery Society Papers: Emigration from India: The Export of Coolies, and Other Labourers, to Mauritius)

Week IV, 29 September LITERATURE AND THE DIASPORA (I) INDENTURED LABOR: A NEW SYSTEM OF SLAVERY?

Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (entire book)

Source for Response Paper: Marina Carter, "Indians and the Colonial Diaspora" in K. Kesavapany, A. Mani and P. Ramasamy (eds) *Rising India and Indian Communities in East Asia*

Week V, 6 October IDENTITY AND CULTURE IN A DIASPORIC MILIEU

Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire*, pp. 150-154 and ch, 7
Brij Lal, "Odyssey of Indenture: Fragmentation and Reconstitution in the Indian Diaspora", *Diaspora*, 5(2), 1996,
Prabhu Mohapatra, "Following Custom?": Representations of Community among Indian Immigrant Labour in the West Indies, 1880-1920", *International Review of Social History*, 51(4), 2004
Sunil Amrith, "Indians Overseas? Governing Tamil Migration to Malaya 1870-1941", in *Past and Present*, August, 2010

Source for Response Paper: V.S. Naipaul, *Literary Occasions: Essays*, "East Indian", pp.35-44

Week VI, 13 October

DIASPORIC POLITICS (I): GANDHI AND GHADAR

Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* chs 1, 2, 3 & 5
Maia Ramnath, "Two Revolutions: The Ghadar Movement and India's Radical Diaspora, 1913-1918", *Radical History Review*, 92, Spring 2005

Source for Response Paper: M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha in Africa chs 1, 2, 3 & 6 available at:
<http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL034.PDF>

Week VII, 20 October

DIASPORIC POLITICS (II): KENYA AND AFRICAN PARAMOUNTCY

Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, ch 6
I.R.G. Spencer, "First Assault on Indian Ascendancy: Indian Traders in the Kenya Reserves 1895-1929" *African Affairs*, 80(320), 1980
Michael Twaddle, "Z.K. Sentongo and the Indian Question in East Africa", *History in Africa*, (24), 1997
Sana Aiyar, "Empire, Race and the Indians in Colonial Kenya's Contested Public Political Sphere from 1919 to 1923", *AFRICA: The Journal of the International African Institute*, 81, (1), 2011

Source for Response Paper: Ngugui wa Thiong'o, *Weep Not Child*, pp. 7- 9; *Sekanyolya* supplement 1 July 1921; and Resolutions of East African Association, 10 July 1921 (from Harry Thuku, Autobiography, document V)

Week VIII, 27 October

EXPULSION AND ARRIVAL

****One page on proposed research for final paper due in class****

Hugh Tinker, "Indians in Southeast Asia: Imperial Auxiliaries" in Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach and Steven Vertovec (eds) *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity*
Paul Theroux, "Hating the Asians", *Transition*, (75/76), Anniversary Issue 1997, pp.60-73
Mahoomad Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee: Uganda Asians Come to Britain*, pp1-69; 105-114
Mahmood Mamdani, "The Uganda Expulsion: Twenty Years Africa", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 265, 1993
Barnor Hesse (ed) *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, 'Transruptions'*, pp. 1-15 & pp. 96-102

Source for Response Paper: Siva Naipaul, *North of South: An African Journey*, ch. 3 "Between Master and Slave", pp. 96-122 and any **one** story from:

<http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/stories.asp?projectNo=37&SubmitProject=Go>

or

<http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/stories.asp?projectNo=38&SubmitProject=Go>

Week IX , 3 November **LITERATURE AND THE DIASPORA (II): THE MAKING OF MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN**

David Dabydeen, *The Intended* (whole book)

Source for Response Paper: Sean Lokaisingh-Meighoo, “The Diasporic Mo(ve)ment: Indentureship and Indo-Caribbean Identity”, pp. 12-17 available at: <http://www.cibera.de/fulltext/5/5001/cerlac/papers/pdf/Lokaisingh.pdf> and Hesse (ed) *Un/Settled Multiculturalism*, pp. 212-231

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ON 11/7, 11/8 & 11/9: STUDENTS SHOULD COME TO THIS MEETING HAVING IDENTIFIED THE PRIMARY SOURCES THEY INTEND TO USE FOR THEIR PAPERS

Week X, 10 November
No Class: Work on Papers

Week XI, 17 November
No Class: Work on Papers

Week XII, 24 November
No Class: Thanksgiving Break

*****First Draft due by 5pm on 11/28*****

Week XIII, 1 December **PRESENTATIONS AND PEER COMMENTARY**

Week XIII, 8 December **PRESENTATIONS AND PEER COMMENTARY**

Week XVI, 15 December
No Class
***** Final Papers due by 5pm *****