

## HISTORY 600/283

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

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30am-12:30pm

History 600 & History 283, Spring 2013  
Humanities, Room 5255  
Wednesdays 1:20pm-3:20pm

#### **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 final 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.

By the time you graduate from this class you will have developed several important skills that will serve you well as you go forward including learning how to define important historical questions, collecting and analyzing evidence, oral and written presentations of conclusions, and contributing to ongoing discussions.

Please Note: The history department reserves the right to collect information, including copies of papers, for the purposes of assessing, improving and accreditation of this course and the history 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](http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/reg/catalog_course.aspx?groupcoursekey=31638)  
The workshop is being offered on **5, 7 & 11 February**, from 6-7:30pm, Memorial Library, room 231
- 2) Three strongly recommended meetings with Brett Reilly, Research and Writing Specialist (RWS) during the weeks suggested in the syllabus. Brett can be contacted at [bmreilly@wisc.edu](mailto:bmreilly@wisc.edu).
- 3) From Week III onward 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.**
- 4) From Week III onward 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 at the start of class for 15 minutes. They will circulate *two* discussion questions that should be emailed to me by **6pm** on the Tuesday before class. I will circulate these questions to the entire class. Students should come to class prepared to engage in these questions.
- 5) One-page research proposals identifying the final paper topic and possible primary sources are due in class on **13 March**.
- 6) Students are required to set up individual meetings with me (on **3 & 5 April**) to discuss their research. Please bring the final primary sources you are planning to use to this meeting.
- 7) Students will be paired up to present first drafts of their paper (10 minutes) and comment on another student's paper (5 minutes) on **24 April & 1 May**. First drafts should be received by me and the commentator by **5pm** on **17 April**.
- 8) Final Papers due by 5pm on **8 May**.

**Note:** All requirements are same for students enrolled in the class under History 600 and 283. However, the length of the final paper for History 600 is 20 pages while the final paper length for History 283 is 15 pages.

**Evaluation:**

Attendance and active class participation: 10%

Response papers: 15%

Discussion Lead, Paper Presentation and Peer Commentary: 15%

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. Second hand books of the same can be purchased from amazon.com.

Journal articles not on the course website can be downloaded online from MadCat. Links to online material (required watching/reading) have been indicated on the syllabus. Please contact me at least 24hrs before class if you haven't been able to access readings/online links for any reason.

***CLASS SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS***

**Week I, 23 January** **INTRODUCTION & ORGANIZATION**

**Week II, 30 January** **BRITAIN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN**

Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 1 and conclusion

Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, Introduction

Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, ch 1

Week III, 6 February

**TRADE, INDENTURE AND THE MAKING OF A DIASPORA**

Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants*, ch 1

Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers*, ch 1

Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, ch 3

Rajat Kanta Ray, "Asian Capital in the Age of European Expansion: The Rise of the Bazaar, 1800-1914", *Modern Asian Studies*, 29, (3) 1995

**Source for Response Paper:** Death of Tharia Topan, *Times of India* Obituary

Week IV, 13 February

**LITERATURE AND THE DIASPORA (I) INDENTURED LABOR: A NEW SYSTEM OF SLAVERY?**

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

**Source for Response Paper:** BBC documentary: When Britain Reinvented Slavery

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tL-vtEyGDLI>

\*\*\*Schedule first recommended meeting with RWS this week to discuss response papers between 2/13 & 2/20\*\*\*

Week V, 20 February

**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

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

Week VI, 27 February

**DIASPORIC POLITICS (I): GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* chs 1, 2, 3 & 5

**Source for Response Paper:** M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha in Africa  
Preface and chs 1, 2 & 3

<http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL034.PDF>

OR

Gandhi (movie directed by Richard Attenborough, 1982). The movie is available at the university libraries and also online on youtube.com.

Respond only to the first part: up till Gandhi's permanent return to India during the First World War

**Week VII, 6 March DIASPORIC POLITICS (II): KENYA AND AFRICAN PARAMOUNTCY**

I.R.G. Spencer, "First Assault on Indian Ascendency: 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; *Sekanyobya* supplement 1 July 1921; and Resolutions of East African Association, 10 July 1921 (from Harry Thuku, Autobiography, document V)

**Week VIII, 13 March EXPULSION AND ARRIVAL**

**\*\*One page on proposed research for final paper due in class. You may set up a meeting with RWS before the proposal is due to discuss ideas\*\***

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

***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 , 20 March 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", available at:

<http://www.cibera.de/fulltext/5/5001/cerlac/papers/pdf/Lokaisingh.pdf>

*\*\*\*Schedule second recommended meeting with RWS this week to discuss paper topic and sources between 3/20 & 2/4/3\*\*\**

**Week XI, 27 March SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS**

**WEEK XII, 3 APRIL INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ON 4/3 & 4/5**

**STUDENTS SHOULD COME TO THIS MEETING HAVING IDENTIFIED THE PRIMARY SOURCES THEY INTEND TO USE FOR THEIR PAPERS**

**Week XIII, 10 April**

No Class: Work on Papers

*\*\*\*Schedule third recommended meeting with RWS to go over paper draft between 3/19 & 3/17 BEFORE paper draft is due\*\*\**

**Week XIV, 17 April**

No Class: First Draft due at 5pm

**Week XV, 24 April**

**PRESENTATIONS AND PEER COMMENTARY**

**Week XVI, 1 May**

**PRESENTATIONS AND PEER COMMENTARY**

**Week XVII, 8 May**

No Class

**\*\*\* Final Papers due by 5pm \*\*\***

**Some Useful Websites:**

On the use of the comma:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/21/the-most-comma-mistakes/>

Memorial Library South Asia Collections:

<http://memorial.library.wisc.edu/collections/soasia.html#a>

Digital Archive on South Asians in America (includes primary sources):

<http://www.saadigitalarchive.org/>

Digital Archives on South Asians in Britain (includes primary sources):

<http://www.movinghere.org.uk/>

Digital Database on South Asians in Britain:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/>

Center for Research Library (for inter-library loans):

<http://www.crl.edu/>