

Fall 2017

Gender & Sexuality in Indian Cinema

GH / SSEA / LIT/ WGS/RLST 328L  
3 credits

Fulfills requirements for the Global Humanities and Religious Studies options in GHR major; the English major; the Film Studies option; the South & South-East Asia Studies minor; and the WGSS major and minor

Dr. Vanita

Tuesday, Thursday 9.30-10.50

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This course introduces you to Indian cinema, both popular and independent. India has the world's largest film industry, producing about one thousand films a year in several languages. Indian cinema has its own grammar and conventions, and is today the most important cultural unifier in the country.

Goals

1. To acquire an overall understanding of Indian film industry and its various branches, such as popular cinema, independent cinema, new-wave/art cinema, documentary
2. To acquire a basic understanding of the specific grammar and conventions of popular Indian cinema, and of how these change over time
3. To acquire a basic understanding how cinema draws on Indian literature and theatre in its changing representation of gender and sexuality
4. To acquire a basic understanding of how Indian cultures and religions and their varied approaches to gender and sexuality are represented in films
5. To become acquainted with some debates around gender and sexuality in India, as they are played out through films from the 1950s to the present

Learning Outcomes

Students will gain a basic understanding of

1. the Indian film industry, its various branches and how they change from the 1950s to the present
2. the conventions and grammar of Indian popular cinema
3. Indian public and critical debates around gender and sexuality in films
4. Indian religions and cultures as represented in films with regard to gender and sexuality

Texts Required

1. Routledge Film Guidebooks: *Bollywood* by Tejaswini Ganti

## 2. Essays and extracts on Moodle

Films Required (all are in the library on reserve except for two films, which are on Youtube with subtitles)

1. *Mother India*, 1957
2. *Mughal-e Azam* [The Mughal Emperor], 1960
3. *Amar Prem* [Immortal Love], 1971
4. *Aandhi* [Storm], 1975
5. *Sholay* (Embers), 1975
6. *Deewaar* (Wall) 1975
7. *Kabhi Kabhi* [Sometimes], 1976
8. *Ghar* (Home) 1978 (on Youtube with subtitles)
9. *36 Chowringhee Lane*, 1981
10. *Ek Duuje ke Liye* [For One Another's Sake], 1981
11. *Bazaar*, 1982 (on Youtube with subtitles)
12. *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Road), 1955
13. *Mirch Masala* (Spices), 1987
14. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The Courageous One will Carry Away the Bride) 1995
15. *Tales of the Night Fairies* 2008
16. *Dostana* (Friendship), 2008
17. *Love Sex aur Dhokha* (Love, Sex and Betrayal) 2010
18. *Vicky Donor* 2012
19. *Dedh Ishqiya* (One and a Half Lovers) 2014
20. *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (Brother Bajrangi) 2015

### Recommended Viewing

1. *Devdas*, 1955 On reserve and also on Youtube with subtitles (ur-text on tragic love)
2. *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* (Master, Mistress and Servant), 1962 (neglected wife's sexuality)
3. *Guide*, 1965 On reserve (wife rebels and becomes a career woman)
4. *Pakeezah* (Pure One) 1971 On reserve (famous film about a courtesan who marries)
5. *Silsila* (Sequence/Affair) 1981 (extramarital affair)
6. *Nikaah*, 1982 On Youtube with subtitles (Muslim women)
7. *Hum Aap Ke Hain Kaun* (Who am I to You?), 1994 (happy families)
8. *Fire*, 1998 On reserve (lesbianism; not an Indian film but made in India)
9. *Lagaan* (Land Tax) 2001 On reserve (anti-colonial struggle and white woman)
10. *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* (Keep Going, Brother Munna) 2006 On reserve (Gandhian techniques for social change in contemporary India)
11. *Cheeni Kum* (Less Sugar), 2007 On reserve (disapproved marriage between older man and much younger woman)
12. *Ghare Baire* (Home and the World) 1984

Clips from these and other films will be shown in class

## Requirements

Students are required to

- (a) attend classes regularly. More than four absences not explained to my satisfaction will result in halving your grade for attendance and class participation, and more than eight absences will result in a zero for attendance; leaving early or coming late without explanation will be treated as an absence. Explanations (preferably in advance of the absence) must be backed up with documentation, communicated to me in writing and accepted by me.
- (b) Keep up with assigned reading, and participate in discussion
- (c) view the prescribed film each week in the library. At least one copy of each film is on reserve in the library (except for two films, which are on Youtube with subtitles). In some cases, I have put my own copies in as well so more than one copy is available. All the films are on 4-hour reserve and must be viewed in the library. You can view them individually or you can view them in groups of up to 6 in the Listening and Viewing Room in the library.
- (d) Once a week, type a thoughtful **one-page response** to a film for that week, use it in class discussion and hand it in at the end of the class. Handwritten and late responses will not receive credit.
- (e) take quizzes and tests in class. Quizzes can be made up within the week (not more than twice in the semester), but not later. To make up a quiz, contact me in person or on email to make an appointment.
- (f) **Check Moodle and UM email regularly**, especially the day before class. I send out notifications and changes by email. UM policy forbids me to write to you on any email address other than the UM one. The best way to communicate with me is by email.

## Grades

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Class attendance & Participation	20%
Typed responses	15%
Quizzes	20%
Three in-class tests	15% each

Responses and test essays must (a) clearly address the topic (b) show knowledge of the film (c) adhere to the conventions of academic writing, including correct grammar and syntax.

Quizzes are designed to test (a) whether you have seen the films and read the texts (b) understood information communicated in class.

**Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind, in any assignment, will result in your failing the class and may also result in other penalties such as expulsion from the University (for further details, refer to the section on Academic Misconduct in the Student Conduct Code).**

Disability Modifications:

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to complete the work as I have outlined it, please notify me in the first week of class. I will need a letter from Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 ( 406.243.2243).

Reading Schedule

**This schedule is tentative. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with any changes and to obtain any hand-outs given in class in her/his absence.** Assignments indicated for a certain class are to be completed in advance of that class, e.g. come to class on 5 September, having read Wolpert, pp. 68-77; and “The Epics.” On 7 September come to class having seen *Mother India* and read Ganti, pp. 56-73.

Date	Assignment (to be completed before class)	Class Plan	In-class assignment
31 August		Background information on Indian society, culture, history, religions, literature, theatre and cinema	
5 Sept	Read Stanley Wolpert, <i>India</i> , pp. 1-5; “the Epics.”	Background continued: the history, grammar and conventions of Indian cinema. Background for <i>Mother India</i> : nation-building; Goddess worship and mother worship.	
7 Sept	SEE <i>MOTHER INDIA</i> Read Ganti, pp. 2-32. S	Discuss <i>Mother India</i> . Background for <i>Mughal-e Azam</i> . Themes: Muslim rule in India; love legends; love versus duty; the Muslim social; the Hindu devotional.	
12 Sept	SEE <i>MUGHAL-E AZAM</i> Read Wolpert, pp. 147-157; Ganti, pp. 90-102.	Discuss <i>Mughal-e Azam</i> . Background for <i>Amar Prem</i> : Goddesses, women devotional poets, alternative families, adoption, courtesans and sex-workers. Diegetic and non-diegetic songs.	

14 Sept	SEE <i>AMAR PREM</i> Read Ganti, pp. 33-36; Patrick Colm Hogan, <i>Understanding Indian Movies</i> , pp. 1-6.	Discuss <i>Amar Prem</i> . Background for <i>Aandhi</i> . Indira Gandhi, Women in politics, sexuality within marriage.	Quiz on materials covered thus far.
19 Sept	SEE <i>AANDHI</i> Read Ganti pp. 137-148.	Discuss <i>Aandhi</i> . Background for <i>Sholay</i> . Male bonding and romantic friendship. Range of female characters. Masculinities and different types of villains/heroes.	
21 Sept	SEE <i>SHOLAY</i> Read Vinay Lal, "The Impossibility of the Outsider in Modern Hindi Film."	Background for <i>Deewaar</i> . Male and female stardom. The rise of Amitabh Bachchan. The angry young man; mothers and sons; siblings; friendship; pre-colonial same-sex sexualities.	Quiz on materials covered since 14 Sep.
26 Sept	SEE <i>DEEWAAR</i> Read Ganti, 103-24.	Discuss <i>Deewaar</i> . Background for <i>Kabhi Kabhi</i> : conflicting ideals of masculinity; female heterosexuality; middle-class women in the media.	
28 Sept	SEE <i>KABHI KABHI</i> Read Ganti, 125-36 and "The Jealous Husband in Hindi Cinema."	Discuss <i>Kabhi Kabhi</i> . Background for <i>Ghar</i> . Pleasures and dangers of the new city; rape; male and female experience and sensibilities.	
3 Oct	SEE <i>GHAR</i>	Discuss <i>Ghar</i> . Background for <i>36 Chowringhee Lane</i> . Women directors and producers. Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians. Singleness. Privacy and loneliness.	Quiz on materials and films covered since 21 September.
5 Oct	Prepare for test		In-class essay-type test

10 Oct	SEE <i>36 CHOWRINGHEE LANE</i> Read Gokulsing and Dissanayake, <i>Indian Popular Cinema</i> , pp. 32-35; 86-94; 124-27	Discuss <i>36 Chowringhee Lane</i> . Background for <i>Ek Duije ke Liye</i> . Love legends, love-suicides, tragedy, realism, Regional differences.	
12 Oct	SEE <i>EK DUUJE KE LIYE</i>	Discuss <i>Ek Duije ke Liye</i> . Background for <i>Bazaar</i> : Muslim women; the lower middle classes; Smita Patil, Shabana Azmi and unconventional women characters	
17 Oct	SEE <i>BAZAAR</i>	Discuss <i>Bazaar</i> . Background for <i>Pather Panchali</i> : art cinema, Satyajit Ray, regional language cinema, rural life; childhood and poverty; siblings.	
19 Oct	SEE <i>PATHER PANCHALI</i> Read <i>Indian Popular Cinema</i> , pp. 129-30; 138-140.	Discuss <i>Pather Panchali</i> . Background for <i>Mirch Masala</i> : colonialism and the land revenue system; rural women; the cross-over new wave film; post-independence women's movements.	<b>Quiz</b> on materials covered since 10 Oct
24 Oct	SEE <i>MIRCH MASALA</i>	Discuss <i>Mirch Masala</i> . Background for <i>Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge</i> : the NRI film and its audiences; arranged marriage and love marriage; reinventing rituals.	
26 Oct	SEE <i>DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE</i> Read Ganti 36-55.	Discuss <i>Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge</i> . Background for <i>Tales of the Night Fairies</i> . Women directors; documentary; sex-work, feminist debates around it, sex-workers' movements.	

31 Oct			<b>In-class essay-type test</b>
2 Nov	SEE <i>TALES OF THE NIGHT FAIRIES</i>	Discuss <i>Tales of the Night Fairies</i> . Background for <i>Vicky Donor</i> . New urbanity. Regional difference revisited. Middle-class women's jobs. Dating. Divorce.	
7 Nov		See <i>Vicky Donor</i> in class.	
9 Nov		Continue watching <i>Vicky Donor</i>	
14 Nov		Discuss <i>Vicky Donor</i> . Background for <i>Dostana</i> . Homosexuality, cross-dressing, transgender, hijras, romantic friendship in films.	<b>Quiz</b>
16 Nov	SEE <i>DOSTANA</i> Read Ghosh, "Queer Pleasures for Queer People"; " <i>Dosti</i> and <i>Tamanna</i> : Male-Male Love, Difference and Normativity in Hindi Cinema."	Discuss <i>Dostana</i> . Continue discussion of homosexuality in films. The Karan Johar phenomenon, the LGBT movement.	
21 Nov		Background for <i>Love, Sex aur Dhokha</i> . Found footage; low-budget independent films; the new criminalized small town environment; social media; debates around pornography; "caste"; murder of runaway couples.	
23 Nov	Thanksgiving	No class	
28 Nov	SEE <i>LOVE SEX AUR DHOKHA</i>	Discuss <i>Love, Sex aur Dhokha</i> . Background for <i>Dedh Ishqiya</i> . Comedy and parody; pre-colonial same-sex sexualities; female-female friendships and	<b>Quiz</b>

		relationships; bisexuality.	
30 Nov	SEE DEDH ISHQIYA Read “Married among their Companions.”	Discuss <i>Dedh Ishqiya</i> . Review	
5 Dec		Background for <i>Bajrangi Bhaijaan</i> . Salman Khan phenomenon. Masculinity.	<b>In-class essay-type test</b>
7 Dec	SEE <i>BAJRANGI BHAIJAAN</i> Patrick Colm Hogan, “On Watching Indian Movies.”	Discuss <i>Bajrangi Bhaijaan</i> . Nationalism and internationalism. The diaspora’s connections to home; HAHK and <i>KKKG</i> .	<b>Quiz</b>
12 Dec		Review	