ANTH 4701.017 (cross-listed with) PHIL 4960 Proseminar in Philosophy - Section 004
- Bollywood and Religions of India and South Asia

Spring 2011 – 3 Credit Hours

Course Description
This course is about the ways in which the Hindi cinema recasts Indian religions and cultures, from epics and classical drama, devotional songs, Hindi-Urdu poetry, to the portrayal of religious communities. From its humble beginnings to contemporary global incarnation with the label “Bollywood”, Indian film industry has consistently maintained its link with the native cultural legends such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. This course examines the Indian culture as manifested in the Hindi films. The course assumes no previous knowledge of Indic religions or cinema, and all films will be shown with English subtitles. Coursework will include a series of short response papers and a final project, as well as active participation in class discussions and regular attendance at required weekly screenings.

Learning Outcomes
Students completing this course will be able to:
• Understand the Indic religious ideas in their historical and contemporary forms
• Analyze and interpret Hindi cinema within relevant cultural contexts;
• Demonstrate independent, critical thought in the analysis and discussion of Indian cinema using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons as appropriate to the humanities.

Students completing this course will be additionally able to:
• Compare systematically the ideas and cultural practices of people from different religious communities in India;
• Identify ideas and cultural practices as embedded in Indian pre-colonial, colonial, and/or post-colonial contexts;
• Explain shifts in ideas and cultural practices connected to migration, conquest, and/or colonization in India.

Course Structure
Class time will be divided between lectures, select film and documentary screenings, and discussions of the films and required readings.

Instructor
Dr. Pankaj Jain (pankaj.jain@unt.edu)
Office: 330E Chilton Hall  Telephone: 940-369-7574
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1 - 3:00 PM or by appointment

Course Meetings
Lectures
**Days:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, **Time:** 3 – 4.20 pm, **Room:** Matt 109

**Film Screenings**

**Days:** Mondays, **Time:** 2 – 5 pm, **Room:** Media Library, Chilton Hall, Room 111C

**Note:** Most Indian films are now available on Netflix and you are welcome to watch the films using an account there. This will also be very useful for your final research paper.

**Caution:** Some film titles may refer to different films produced in different years so please pay special attention to the year and/or producer, director before watching it so that you are prepared to take the quiz on the relevant film as mentioned below in weekly schedule.

**Course Materials**

**Required Textbook**


**Prerequisites**

None

**Grading**

**Grade Components**

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<td>Class Preparation and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Class preparation and participation is essential for success in the film course. Students are expected to come to class having completed all written, readings, and viewing assignments and should be prepared to actively participate in meaningful discussion about films in question and complete a short quiz. Active participation may include sharing your questions and comments about the films with the class, engaging your class mates in relevant and meaningful dialogue based on the topics/readings, and/or participating in other class activities (e.g., small group discussions, worksheets, and so forth). Class preparation and participation is evaluated using the following criteria: A+ (100%): Outstanding class preparation and class participation. Student meets and exceeds all criteria for &quot;A&quot; (described below). A (95%): Student comes to class prepared, having read and thought about the assigned films and texts and having completed all written assignments. Student often comes</td>
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<td>with written notes, and participates actively in class. Student arrives on time, stays the full length of the class, is attentive, responds when called upon, and volunteers frequently with pertinent questions and comments.</td>
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<td>B (85%): Student is usually prepared, sometimes with written notes, and responds when called upon. Student is attentive, participates in all activities, and volunteers with questions and comments on occasion.</td>
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<td>C (75%): Student shows evidence of being unprepared from time to time. Due to lack of preparation, student may have some trouble responding to instructor's questions or participating in class discussion/activities. Student does not volunteer often and sometimes comes to class late/leaves early.</td>
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<td>D (65%): Student is unprepared and/or inattentive. Student never volunteers and regularly comes to class late/leaves early.</td>
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<td>F (0%): Student exhibits a lack of concern for the class, sleeps in class, or distracts his/her classmates. Student's behavior has a negative effect on the class.</td>
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<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Three short essays (5 pages each) that synthesize your thoughts on the films, readings, and class discussions. You may write on any topic of your choosing provided that you clear it with the instructor. Ideally, each essay should include discussion of at least two of the course films and should refer to relevant assigned readings. Essays are to be submitted on Blackboard course website on the following dates: Thursday Feb 10 (Week 4), Thursday Mar 10 (Week 8), and Thursday Apr 7 (Week 12).</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Write a research essay of about 8 to 10 pages, you must watch additional films and cite outside references for this essay. Essay topics must be decided in consultation with the instructor with a short synopsis before March 12th 2011 (before the Spring break). Final papers must be submitted on Blackboard website before Tuesday May 10, 2011, 1.30pm (the final exam date and time).</td>
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<td>Oral Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Each student will be asked to give one short oral presentation (10 minutes) over the course of the semester in</td>
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which they connect films with relevant Indian cultural, social, and historical contexts. This will be based on your final project and can be work-in-progress between the Spring break and the final week.

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<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Short, weekly quizzes, administered every Tuesday at the beginning of class, will cover material from the films and readings.</td>
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**Requirements for Credit-Only (S/U) Grading**

In order to receive a grade of S, students are required to take all exams and quizzes, complete all assignments, and earn a grade of C- or better. Conversion from letter grading to credit only (S/U) grading is subject to university deadlines. Refer to the Registration and Records calendar for deadlines related to grading.

**Late Assignments**

Late submissions will be marked down one letter grade per day, except in the case of excused absences. Extensions will be granted only in extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor, in line with university policy on attendance. In the case of an excused absence, students should submit any missed assignments on the next class day that he/she is in attendance.

**Attendance Policy**

**Attendance**

Class attendance is mandatory. Some absences may be excused in accordance with the university attendance regulation.

**Absences**

For every unexcused absence in excess of 2 (two), your semester grade will be reduced by one percentage point per additional absence. If you accumulate 6 (six) or more unexcused absences, your semester grade will be an F. If you miss more than 10 minutes of a class period (unless pre-approved by me), it will count as absence; however, you are still encouraged to attend so as not to miss the material covered in class.

**Makeup Work**

If you miss class for any reason, whether excused or unexcused, you are still expected to be prepared for the next class. Students should contact a classmate for information on missed material and assignments prior to the next class.

**Course Drop Info**
Please see UNT website for schedule – http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html

Academic Integrity

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic integrity. Assignments are intended to assess individual knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. In addition, aiding and abetting others to cheat or plagiarize will also not be tolerated. All individuals involved in an act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct according to UNT policy: http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm

Policy on Equal Opportunity and Disability

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

Course Schedule

Week 1 — Indian Culture and Films


Required Reading:

Other Relevant Films:
*Do Aankhen Baarah Haath*
*Do Bigha Zameen*
*Naya Daur*

Week 2 — Hindu Epics and Films I


Required Reading:

Other Relevant Films:
*Hum Paanch*
*Mahabharata*

Week 3 — Hindu Epics and Films II
**Screenings:** *Hum Saath Saath Hain* (“We Are Together”), Suraj Barjatya. Screening on Feb 7.

**Required Reading:**

**Other Relevant Films:**
*Sampoorna Ramayana* (“The Complete Ramayana”)
*The Legend of Prince Rama*

### Week 4 — The Islamicate Films


NOTE: First paper due in class on Thursday.

**Required Reading:**
Desouliieres, Alain. “Religious Culture and Folklore in the Urdu Historical Drama Anarkali, Revisited by Indian Cinema”, in *Indian Literature and Popular Cinema: Recasting Classics.*


**Other Relevant Films:**

*Mere Gharib Nawaaz*

*Fiza*, Khalid Mohammed, 2000


### Week 5 — The Christian Social Films


**Required Reading:**

**Other Relevant Films:**
*Baton Baton Mein*, Basu Chatterjee, 1979

### Week 6 — The Parsee (Zoroastrian) Social Films


**Required Reading:**
Jain, Pankaj. ‘Such a Long Journey’: Portrayal of Parsi Community in Films

Week 7 — Renunciation and Non-Renunciation

**Screenings:** Devdas, Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Screening on Mar 7.

**Required Readings:**
Jain, Pankaj. “Renunciation and non-renunciation in Indian Films” in Religion Compass.

**Other Relevant Films:**
Siddhartha, Conrad Rooks, 1972

Week 8 — The Music of Indian films

**Screening:** Mirza Ghalib, Gulzar. Screening on Mar 21.

NOTE: Second paper due in class on Thursday

**Required Readings:**
Hines, Naseem. “From Ghazal to Film Music: The Case of Mirza Ghalib”
Mir, Ali. “Lyrically Speaking: Hindi Film Songs and the Progressive Aesthetic”

Week 9 — The "Mythological" Films

**Screening:** Hanuman, 2005, 138 min. Screening on Mar 28.

**Required Reading:**
Dwyer, Rachel, “The Mythological Film”, in Filming the Gods
Philip Lutgendorf, “A Monkey’s Childhood”

**Other Relevant Films:**
Mahabharata, Babubhai Mistry, 1965
Agni Varsha ("Fire and Rain"), Arjun Sajnani, 2002
Jai Santoshi Maa (“Hail, Mother Santoshi”), Vijay Sharma, 1975

Week 10 — the Devotional Films

**Screening:** Meera, Gulzar. Screening on Apr 4.

**Required Reading:**

**Other Relevant Films:**
Sant Tukaram ("Saint Tukaram"), Vishnupant Damle and Sheikh Fattelal, 1937
Week 11 — Religion in “Secular” Films

**Screening:** *Dosti*, Satyen Bose, 1964. Screening on Apr 11.

**Required Reading:**
Dwyer, Rachel, “The religious and the secular in the Hindi Film”, in *Filming the Gods*

Jain, Pankaj. “Virtue Ethics of *Boot Polish* and *Dosti* vis-à-vis *Slumdog Millionaire*” in *Journal of Visual Anthropology*.

**Other Relevant Films:**
*Boot Polish*, Prakash Arora, 1954

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Week 12 — Religion in “Secular” Films II

**Screening:** *Bombay*, Mani Ratan. Screening on Apr 18.

**NOTE:** Third paper due in class on Thursday

**Required Reading:**

**Other Relevant Films:**
*Padosi*, V Shantaram, 1941

*Zakhm*, Mahesh Bhatt, 1998

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Week 13 — Films from Pakistan and Bangladesh

**Screening:** *Khuda Kay Liye*, 2005. Screening on Apr 25.


**Other Relevant Films:**
*Clay Bird
*Khamosh Pani

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Week 14 – Romance, Consumerism, and Diaspora

**Screening:** *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (“The Brave Heart Gets the Bride”), Aditya Chopra, 1995, 190 min. Screening on May 2.

**Required Reading:**


**Additional Resources:**


**Other Relevant Films:**

- *Dil Chahta Hai* (“The Heart Desires”), Farhan Akhtar, 2001, 185m.
- *Pardes* (“In a Foreign Land”), Subhash Ghai, 1997