New York University  
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication  

South Asian Diaspora: Media and Cultural Politics  
MCC-UE 1314

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course examines the politics and forms of visibility of the South Asian diaspora in the United States. Through the examination of media archives and a critical engagement with the research literature, the course will 1) situate the South Asian diasporic experience in the U.S. within a larger global trajectory of migrant mobility 2) survey the production, performance and representation of diasporic South Asian identity and 3) analyze the transformations in the relationship between nations and the South Asian diaspora in a global and mediated context.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
After completing this course, students will be able to effectively:

• Contextualize the experiences of global South Asian diasporic cultures.
• Evaluate different theories and approaches to the study of diaspora especially in a context of globalization and technological change.
• Discuss the changing role and political impact of the South Asian diaspora in terms of its media visibility.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Readings will be uploaded via the NYU Classes when chapters fall within fair use requirements. Most other selections are available through NYU Bobst as electronic books.

ASSIGNMENTS
Participation will be based on attendance, diligent reading, and active participation in all class activities. Students are expected to keep pace with the reading and post responses to the readings each week on NYU Classes. There will be three brief assignments at the end of each three week period. The final project will consist of an oral class presentation and a 15 page paper. Detailed instructions will be provided to students in class for these assignments.

EVALUATION
Field assignments – 3 (15% each): 45%
Reading Responses and participation: 25%
Final Project: 30% (20%: written paper: 10%: in class presentation)

EVALUATION RUBRIC
A= Excellent
This project is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings, and reflecting critical and technical topics covered in class. Students who
earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully in
every class meeting.

B=Good
This project meets the general requirements, offering contributions at a general level of
understanding. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful in nearly all class meetings.

C=Average
This project is adequate but nothing more, meeting the minimum requirements but without
significant original thought, reflection, or inventiveness, whether theoretically or practically.
Classroom participation is inarticulate or infrequent.

D= Unsatisfactory
This project is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the projects and discussions.
Critique and implementation demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material
and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic, or
rare.

F=Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

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COURSE POLICIES
Absences and Lateness
Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower
grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of
the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work.

Format
We will provide specific format requirements for the different project assignments. As for
written work, please type and double-space submissions. Please also number and staple multiple
pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your
writing. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format
Yourlastname Coursenumber Assignment1.doc

Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect
on our assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered
paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph, we will review the question and
either augment your grade or refine our explanation for the lost points.

General Decorum
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework,
eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.
Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism (http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity)
The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you
• cheat on an exam,
• submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
• receive help on a take home examination that calls for independent work, or
• plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
• copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
• download documents from the Internet;
• purchase documents;
• report from other’s oral work;
• paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
• copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people’s ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources. Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty
• Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
• Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
• Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
• Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
• Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions
If a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline. The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the NYU Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.

STUDENT RESOURCES
• Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.
• Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 4th Floor. Schedule appts at rich15.com/nyu/ or walk-in.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

South Asian Diaspora: Media and Cultural Politics

_______ Global Trajectories

Week 1
• Introduction to the course, expectations, policies.
• Washbrook David. The World of the Indian Ocean (13-22)
• Appadurai, Arjun. Selections from Modernity at Large (48-65)
• FILM: Screening of excerpts from films: 
  Jahaji Bhai: Anatomy of Migration (Directed by Suresh Pillai)
  Pure Chutney (Directed by Sanjeev Chatterjee)

Week 2: Transnational Migration Histories
• Bose, Sugata. Flows of Capitalists, Laborers and Commodities (72-121)
• Chatterji, Joya. From Imperial Subjects to National Citizens: South Asians and the International Migration Regime since 1947. (183-197)
• Kureishi, Hanif. Selections from The Buddha of Suburbia (1-10)
• Bald, Vivek. Chapters 2 and 4, Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America (137-159)
• Screening/ Discussion of film: My Mother India (2001; Directed by Safina Uheroi)

Week 3: Migration History in the US
• Jensen, Joan. Chapters 1 Passage from India (4-20)
• Shukla, Sandhya. South Asian Migration to the United States. (166-180)
• Lal Vinay. Chapters 4, 5 and 6, The Other Indians (20-48)
• Mazumdar, Sucheta. Racist Responses to Racism: The Aryan Myth and South Asians in the United States (47-55)

Spatial and Mediated Presence

Week 4: Space and Identity
• Shukla, Sandhya. Little Indias, Places for Indian Diasporas (78-131)
• Penn, Kal. The ‘Hilarious’ Xenophobia of Time’s Joel Stein (web posting)
• Khandelwal, Madhulika. Becoming American, Being Indian (12-34)
• Shankar, Shalini. Selections from Desi Land (80-99)
• Kalita, Mitra. Selections from Suburban Sahibs (47-64)

** Assignment/ Field Report 1: Formation of South Asian spaces in the city
Week 5: Audible and Visual diasporic culture
- Shukla, Sandhya. Building Diaspora and Nation: The 1991 ‘Cultural Festival of India (296-315)
- Dave, Shilpa: Apu’s Brown Voice: Cultural Inflection and South Asian Accents (313-336)

- FILM: SCREENING OF EXCERPTS:
  - Ravi Shankar’s performance at Monterey Pop Festival 1967

Week 6: Post 9/11 visibilities
- Appadurai, Arjun. Selections from Fear of Small Numbers (49-86)
- Maira, Sunaina. Chapters 5 and 6, Missing (258-290)
- Hegde, Radha S. Recognition: Politics and Technologies (61-81)
- Prashad, Vijay. The Day Our Probation Ended (3-47)
- Mathew, Biju. Chapters 6 Taxi!: Cabs and Capitalism in New York City (143-176)

FILM: Screening of excerpts
Discussion of film: American Made (2003; Directed by Sharat Raju)
(Film will be available for students to view in entirety through Bobst)

** Field report 2: Production of South Asianness in the city

Week 7: Activism and Identity Politics
- Gopinath, Gayatri. Who’s Your Daddy? Queer Diasporic Framings of the Region. (274-300)
- Sthanki, Maunica. The Aftermath of September 11 (68-80)
- Widdicombe, Lizzie. Thin Yellow Line (New Yorker article)
- Das Gupta, Monisha. Chapters 5 and 6, Unruly Immigrants (159-207; 208-254)

Visual and Performative Cultures

Week 8: Cinema and the Diasporic Audience
- Dwyer, Rachel. Bollywood’s Empire (409-418)
- Bhattacharya, Nandini. Romancing Religion. (346-367)
- Miller, Cynthia. Immigrants, Images and Identity (285-298)
- Desai, Jigna. When Indians Play Cowboys (71-100)
- Punathambekar, Aswin. ‘It’s Not Your Dad’s Bollywood (147-176)
- Vandevelde, Iris. Revisiting the NRI ‘genre’ (47-60)
**FILM:** Films on or by the South Asian diaspora will be made available as optional viewing through Bobst and used as examples in class discussions

**Week 9: Technology and Tradition**
- Rajagopal, Arvind. Hindutva Goes Global (237-270)
- Mallapragada, Madhavi. Desktop Deities (109-121)
- Case study of Bharat Matrimony and the reworked arranged marriage (Will arrange for CEO of premier diasporic dating website to talk to students via Skype as a case study in technology and tradition.)

**Week 10: Aura, Authenticity, Performance**
- Prashad, Vijay. Of Authentic Cultural Lives (107-130)
- Hegde, Radha S. Pursuit of Authenticity (131-161)
- Sharma, Nitasha Tamar. Chapter 5, *Hip Hop Desis* (234-288)
- Lall, Vinay. Chapter 9, *The Other Indians* (88-105)

**Field report 3: Media representation of ‘South Asianness’**

**Week 11**
- Radhakrishnan, Smita, Examining the ‘global’ Indian middle-class (7-20)
- Saxenian, Anna Lee 325-341
- Chakravartty, Paula 39-55

Audio clip: Listen to Cowboys and Indians (excerpt from This American Life).

**Week 12 Crime, Power and Coming of Age**
- Raghavan, Anita. Part Two: Rising from *The Billionaire’s Apprentice* (40-60)
- Raghavan, Anita. Rajat Gupta’s Lust for Zeros (NYT magazine article)
- Mehta, Suketu. Exclusive: Raj Rajaratnam Reveals Why He Didn’t Take a Plea (Newsweek article)
- Hegde, Radha S. National Anxieties and Diasporic Loyalties (1-22)
Week 13: Diplomacy and The Non Resident Citizen
- Mani, Bakirathi, and Latha Varadarajan. ‘The Largest Gathering of the Global Indian Family’ (45-74)
- Gottschlich, Pierre. The Indian Diaspora in the United States of America (156-170)
- De Oliveira, Mirian Santos Ribeiro. (Re-)connecting with the Indian Diaspora from the ‘Homeland’ (147-162)
- Collated global media reports of Prime Minister Modi’s visit to the US and Australia to meet the diaspora

Week 14: Wrap up
- Oral histories: Listen to excerpts of from oral narrative project on SA diaspora social media
- Brief presentation of final projects

Week 15
- Brief presentation of final projects/ continued
- Concluding discussion

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS/DUE DATES

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS
ASSIGNMENTS DUE: WEEKS 4, 7, AND 10.
These are short assignments which involve field observations and/or tracking media texts. Students will write two page reports which they will post on NYU classes.
1. WEEK 4: Formation of South Asian spaces
2. WEEK 7: Production of South Asian culture in the city
3. WEEK 10: Media representation and South Asian diaspora

READING RESPONSES AND PARTICIPATION
Students are expected to write brief responses of about a paragraph or two based on the readings of the day. Participation grade will be a composite of the classroom discussion and the written responses.
Students are expected to post at least 10 responses through the semester. Responses are to be posted the night before the class meeting so that others in class will have a chance to read the responses.

FINAL PROJECT:
The final project will be a 15-20 page paper that examines an aspect of South Asian diasporic identity and how it is produced, performed and/or represented. More details will be provided later. The project can be an elaboration of one of the field assignments. Students will present the project in class and then submit the written paper.
Class presentation: Will be scheduled during the last two class meetings
Paper to be submitted electronically during exam week.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

READINGS (IN THE ORDER LISTED IN SYLLABUS)


Hegde, Radha S. “National Anxieties and Diasporic Loyalties.” Draft in Progress.

