

South Asian Migration to US
AAS 325 (35495) / ANS 372 (31285) / HIS 365G (39230) / WGS 340 (46375)
TTH 9:30-11 AM SZB 240

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11-12:30 PM or by appointment

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Course Description

This course examines the South Asian diaspora in United States. We will cover migration of people from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to United States and other parts of the world. While studying the history and culture of South Asian America, we will discuss globalization, transnationalism, migration, assimilation, formation of a diaspora, discrimination, and gender and sexuality, all major themes in Asian American Studies. The course is arranged chronologically and thematically. We will start in the nineteenth century following the journey of the first South Asian migrants to US. We will then move on to studying the Bengali and Punjabi immigrants to U.S. and the formation of Bengali-African and Punjabi-Mexican communities. We will study how American immigration laws have facilitated or inhibited South Asian migration to US in the twentieth century. Topics covered include economic and social reasons for migration, adaptation to American life, cultural and religious assimilation, changing family structures, and discrimination and exclusion. We will end the semester by discussing South Asian American life in the twenty-first century.

This course carries the Cultural Diversity in the United States flag. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/ccc/teaching-resources/syllabus>

Course Objectives

Through the semester we will study more than a century of South Asian American history. A primary goal of this course is to highlight the diversity within South Asian America. We will encounter a diaspora whose members belong to different religious, linguistic, economic and

social groups. Many came to the United States forcibly to seek economic opportunities lacking at home. Others came enthusiastically with dreams of making it “big” in the land of abundant opportunities. We will also examine South Asian American interactions with other Americans in the fields of social activism and community development.

You are encouraged to participate in South Asian American life in Austin. I will bring to your attention relevant films, lectures, art, music, and dance performances. Assignments for this course will help you in improving writing and communication skills. Our class meetings will be a blend of lectures and discussions.

Required Readings

Most of the reading for this course is in the form of articles and book chapters. You will find many reading assignments on Canvas. This course has two textbooks and both are available for purchase at the university bookstore and are on reserve at the PCL library. If you purchase books from another source make sure you have the correct edition.

Textbooks:

Karen Isaken Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997). Available at the University Coop, PCL reserve.

Amy Bhatt and Nalini Iyer, *Root and Reflections: South Asians in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013). Available at the University Coop and PCL reserve.

Book chapters and articles on Canvas. The course is listed as AAS 325 for all students.

The following books are available in a digital format (“electronic resource”) through the UT libraries. You can download relevant chapters in PDF format. Use the following link to do a title search.

<http://catalog.lib.utexas.edu/search/t>

Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Vivek Bald, Miabi Chatterji, Sujani Reddy, and Manu Vimalassery edited, *The Sun Never Sets: South Asian Migrants in an Age of U.S. Power* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Knut A. Jacobsen and R. Pratap Kumar edited, *South Asians in the Diaspora: Histories and Religious Traditions* (Boston: Brill, 2004).

Karen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California’s Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

Vijay Prashad, *Uncle Swami: South Asians in America Today* (New York: New Press, 2012).

Lavina Dhingra Shankar and Rajini Srikanth, *A Part, Yet Apart* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

Assignments and Grading

Attendance: 5%

Class Participation: 10%

Object Analysis Assignment: 5%

Exam 1: 25%

Exam 2: 25%

Research paper abstract and bibliography: 5%

Research paper: 25%

Attendance: You are required to attend all class meetings. I expect to be informed before the start of class if you are unable to attend due to health reasons or family emergency. More than two unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Class participation: You are responsible for completing all the assigned readings **before** each class meeting. Participation in class activities is crucial and a component of your final grade. We will have regular class discussions based on required readings in which you are expected to participate. In class and take home written assignments will also count towards class participation. If I am not satisfied with class participation I will give a pop quiz.

Films: We will watch documentaries through the course of the semester. You will be tested on film content and themes that come up in class discussions. You should treat the films as visual texts.

Object Analysis: This is the undergraduate version of “show and tell.” You will bring an object to class related to any theme that we have discussed in the course. Examples of themes that you can use – South Asian assimilation in US, examples of acculturation, reasons for migration out of South Asia, transnational religious cultures, diasporic culture, South Asian inspired American material culture. Besides material objects you can also focus on famous South Asian Americans or characters from popular culture. If you are focusing on popular culture or famous personalities you can bring an object related to them or pull up photographs on the class computer. Tell us why you chose this particular object/person/character. Identify the relation to class material. Connect the object/person/character to class readings and discussions. What sparked your interest in the object/person/character? Prepare an oral presentation that is approximately 5 minutes in length. Use of visual aides (Power Point, Prezi etc.) is optional. Individual class presentations will be spread over multiple days. You need to present on the day you signed up for. If you are absent on your chosen date, you will lose all the points for this assignment. This assignment is worth 5% of the overall grade.

Exams: You are responsible for completing two non-cumulative exams, each worth 25% of the overall grade. Both will be in-class exams consisting of short answer and short essay questions. Bring an unused blue book and pen to class on the day of the scheduled exams.

Research Essay: The essay is an 8-10 page (double spaced) research paper due on the last day of class. You are required to formulate an argument using primary sources. I will discuss ways in which one researches and writes a successful paper. You can also find research essay guides on Canvas. A research abstract (350 words) along with a preliminary bibliography is due in class on the assigned date. This assignment will help you improve your research, analytical, organizational and writing skills.

Deadlines: Hardcopy of written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. For every day that your assignment is late you will lose one letter grade on that assignment.

If you are having trouble in class or are dissatisfied with your assignment grade/s come see me promptly. Don't wait until the end of the semester to seek my guidance on how to improve your standing in the course.

Academic Integrity

As per University policy, those who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Refer to http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php for more information on academic integrity, plagiarism, and consequences of academic dishonesty.

Accommodations

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-232-2937 (video phone).

<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

If you have a disability you need to notify me during the first two weeks of the semester and provide appropriate documentation.

Emergency Situation

Please familiarize yourself with recommendations from the Office of Campus Safety and Security (512-471-5767) on what to do in the event of an emergency.

<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: utexas.edu/emergency.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050.

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus. All changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.

Class Schedule

Readings assigned for each day should be completed *before* class meeting on that day.

Jan 16 T Introduction to the course

Migration and Diaspora

Jan 18 TH *Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians*, p. 1-8. E-Book.
*Lavina Dhingra Shankar and Rajini Srikanth, *A Part, Yet Apart*, p. ix-xv. E-Book.

Jan 23 T Brown, *Global South Asians*, p. 9-58. E-Book.

Jan 25 TH * *Continuous Journey* – Documentary Screening in Class
* Vivek Bald, *Asian Americans in Dixie*, p. 33-53. Canvas.

South Asians in New York and the South

Jan 30 T Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem*, p. 11-48. E-Book.

Feb 1 TH * Bald, *Bengali Harlem*, p. 49-93. E-Book.
* Vivek Bald, *'Lost' in the City: Spaces and Stories of South Asian New York, 1917-1965*. Canvas.

Feb 6 T Class Discussion – Primary Sources – All on Canvas.
* Jumping Ship
* Shaikh – New Orleans
* DuBois-Ambedkar Correspondence

Punjabi-Mexican Americans

Feb 8 TH * Karen Leonard, *South Asian Americans*, p. 39-65.
* Karen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, p. 37-61. E-Book.

Feb 13 T * *Roots in the Sand* - Documentary Screening in Class
* Amy Bhatt and Nalini Iyer, *Roots and Reflections*, p. 18-45
* Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, p. 62-100. E-Book.

Feb 15 TH Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, p. 123-62. E-Book.

Submit Migration Stories assignment at the beginning of class on Feb 20. Print Copy.

Feb 20 T Class Discussion – Primary Sources – All on Canvas
* Agricultural life in California
* American Immigration Policy

Second Phase of South Asian Immigration

Feb 22 TH Leonard, *South Asian Americans*, p. 67-106.

Feb 27 T Bhatt and Iyer, *Roots and Reflections*, p. 46-100.

Mar 1 TH **Exam 1**

Mar 6 T Sujani Reddy, “The Hidden Hand”: Remapping Indian Nurse Immigration to the United States,” in *The Sun Never Sets*, p. 103-24. E-Book.

Mar 8 TH Bhatt and Iyer, *Roots and Reflections*, p. 101-35

Mar 13 and Mar 15 Spring Break – No Class

Assimilation and Acculturation

Mar 20 T Leonard, *South Asian Americans*, p. 107-44.

Mar 22 TH **Individual Class Presentations**
* Bhatt and Iyer, *Roots and Reflections*, p. 136-71.

Mar 27 T *Anne Valley, “The Jain Plate: The Semiotics of the Diaspora Diet,” in *South Asians in the Diaspora*, p. 3-22. E-Book.
* Clara A.B. Joseph, “Rethinking Hybridity: The Syro-Malabar Church in North America,” in *South Asians in the Diaspora*, p. 220-39. E-Book.
* Karen Leonard, “South Asian Religions in the United States” in *New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the US*, p. 91-114. Canvas.

Mar 29 TH **Individual Class Presentations**
* Bhatt and Iyer, *Roots and Reflections*, p. 172-204.

Family and Identity

April 3 T * Leonard, *South Asian Americans*, p. 145-70.
* Kirin Narayan, “Haunting Stories: Narrative Transmissions of South Asian Identities in Diaspora,” in *South Asians in the Diaspora*, p. 415-34. E-Book.
* Aminah Mohammad-Arif, “A Masala Identity: Young South Asian Muslims in the US,” p. 67-87. Canvas.

- April 5 TH * Sayantani Das Gupta and Shamita Das Gupta, "Sex, Lies, and Women's Lives: An Intergenerational Dialogue," in *A Patchwork Shawl*, p. 111-28. Canvas.
 * Lubna Chaudhry, "We are Graceful Swans Who Can Also Be Crows: Hybrid Identities of Pakistani Muslim Women," in *A Patchwork Shawl*, p. 46-61. Canvas.

Research paper abstract and bibliography due at the beginning of class on April 10. Print copy.

April 10 T **Individual Class Presentations**

- April 12 TH * Sandip Roy, "Coming Out of the Almirah: South Asian Americans Struggle with Coming Out in a Gay America that Looks Nothing Like Them," in *Transnational South Asians*, p. 244-70. Canvas.
 * Geoffrey Burkhart, "Identity Dilemmas," in *Tracing an Indian Diaspora*, p. 299-319. Canvas.
 * Surina Khan, "Sexual Exiles," in *A Patchwork Shawl*, p. 62-71. Canvas.

- April 17 T Class Discussion – Excerpts from Piyali Bhattacharya, *Good Girls Marry Doctors*. E-Book.

South Asian American Experiences

- April 19 TH * Iftikhar Dadi, "The Pakistani Diaspora in North America" in *New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the US*, p. 37-70. Canvas.
 * Nazli Kibria, "Bangladeshi American Dreams," in *Muslims in Motion*, p. 28-56. Canvas.

April 24 T **Exam 2**

- April 26 TH * *Whose Children are These?* – Documentary Screening in Class
 * Vijay Prashad, *Uncle Swami*, p. 1-47. E-Book.

- May 1 T * Shilpa Dave, "Matchmakers and Cultural Compatibility" in *The Colorblind Screen*, p. 261-84. Canvas.
 * Bhoomi Thakore, *South Asians on the US Screen*, p. 35-46. Canvas.

Research paper due at the beginning of class on May 3. Print Copy.

- May 3 TH Class wrap up, evaluations and research papers due