

**South Asian Migration to the United States**  
**AAS 325 (31540) / ANS 372 (31735) / HIS 365G (38440) / WGS 340 (44810)**

Instructor: Dr. Aarti Bhalodia

Email: [bhalodia@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:bhalodia@austin.utexas.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course examines the South Asian diaspora in the United States. We will cover migration of people from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to the 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. The course is arranged chronologically and thematically. We will start in the nineteenth century following the journey of the first South Asian migrants to the U.S. We will then move on to studying the formation of Bengali-African, Punjabi-Mexican and other multiracial communities. We will study how American immigration laws have facilitated or inhibited South Asian migration to the U.S. 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. The purpose of the Cultural Diversity in the United States Flag is for students to explore in depth the shared practices and beliefs of one or more underrepresented cultural groups subject to persistent marginalization. In addition to learning about these diverse groups in relation to their specific contexts, students should engage in an active process of critical reflection. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one underrepresented cultural group in the U.S.

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.

<https://ugs.utexas.edu/flags/students/about>

### **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. We will also examine South Asian American interactions with other racial groups in the fields of social activism and community development. Our class meetings will be a blend

of lectures and discussions. 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.

### **Reading Assignments**

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 and Class Participation: 5%

Written Assignments: 15%

Class Presentation: 15%

Quizzes: 15%

Exam 1: 25%

Exam 2: 25%

Grade	Cutoff
A	94%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	<60%

Class participation: Attendance is mandatory. 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. If I am not satisfied with class participation I will give a pop quiz.

Class etiquette: During lectures you should be listening attentively to the instructor and taking notes. All PowerPoint slides will be posted on Canvas. During class discussions all students are required to treat each other with respect. Students who are repeatedly disruptive will receive a poor class participation grade. Disruptive behavior includes showing up to class late, leaving early, talking to a neighbor while class is in session, talking/texting on a phone, checking email/playing computer games and sleeping. I strongly encourage you to use pen/pencil and paper to take notes and put away your electronic devices.

Written assignments: Take-home written assignments will be based on assigned reading and other relevant course material.

Class presentation: 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. Besides material objects you can also focus on famous South Asian Americans or characters from popular culture. Prepare an oral presentation that is approximately 8 minutes in length. 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. Along with the class presentation you will also submit a five page (double spaced) essay related to your presentation topic. This assignment is worth 15% of the overall grade.

Quizzes: You are responsible for completing three quizzes, each worth 5%. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions.

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.

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/conduct/academicintegrity.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 512-410-6644 (video phone).

<http://sites.utexas.edu/disability/>

If you have a disability you need to notify me during the first two weeks of the semester and provide appropriate documentation from SSD (Services for Students with Disabilities).

### **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](http://utexas.edu/emergency).

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050. <https://besafe.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>

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

## **Class Schedule**

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

### **Background and Introduction to the Course**

Aug 28 W     Introduction

- Aug 30 F Judith M. Brown, "Introduction," in *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora*, p. 1-8. E-Book.  
Lavina Dhingra Shankar and Rajini Srikanth, "South Asian Identity in Asian America," in *A Part, Yet Apart*, p. ix-xv. E-Book.

### **Migration and Diaspora**

- Sept 2 M Labor Day – No Class
- Sept 4 W Brown, *Global South Asians*, p. 9-28. E-Book.
- Sept 6 F Brown, *Global South Asians*, p. 29-39. E-Book.

### **South Asians in the American South**

- Sept 9 M Vivek Bald, "Selling the East in the American South: Bengali Muslim Peddlers in New Orleans and Beyond, 1880-1920," in *Asian Americans in Dixie*, p. 33-53. Canvas.
- Sept 11 W Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem*, p. 49-64 and 81-93. E-Book.

### **South Asians in the American West**

- Sept 13 F **Quiz 1**
- Sept 16 M Karen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*, p. 62-78. E-Book.
- Sept 18 W Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, p. 79-100. E-Book.
- Sept 20 F *Roots in the Sand* - Documentary Screening in Class.  
Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, p. 123-43. E-Book.
- Sept 23 M **Quiz 2**

### **Multiracial Communities and Political Activism**

- Sept 25 W Vivek Bald, "'Lost' in the City: Spaces and Stories of South Asian New York, 1917-1965." *South Asian Popular Culture* 5, no. 1 (April 2007): 59-76. Canvas.
- Sept 27 F TBA
- Sept 30 M Exam review
- Oct 2 W **Exam 1**

## Second Phase of South Asian Immigration

- Oct 4 F Post WWII – No reading
- Oct 7 M Civil Rights and Cold War – No reading
- Oct 9 W Sujani Reddy, “The Hidden Hand”: Remapping Indian Nurse Immigration to the United States,” in *The Sun Never Sets: South Asian Migrants in an Age of US Power*, p. 103-124. E-Book.
- Oct 11 F **Quiz 3**
- Oct 14 M No Class
- Oct 16 W Anne Vallely, “The Jain Plate: The Semiotics of the Diaspora Diet,” in Knut A. Jacobsen and R. Pratap Kumar edited, *South Asians in the Diaspora: Histories and Religious Traditions*, 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. 220-42. E-Book.

## Family and Identity

- Oct 18 F Sayantani Das Gupta and Shamita Das Gupta, “Sex, Lies, and Women’s Lives: An Intergenerational Dialogue,” in Shamita Das Gupta edited, *A Patchwork Shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women in America*, 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.

Migration Stories assignment due in class on October 21.

- Oct 21 M *Hearts Suspended* – Documentary Screening in Class
- Oct 23 W Class Presentation – Group 1
- Oct 25 F 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.
- Oct 28 M Class Presentation – Group 2
- Oct 30 W Geoffrey Burkhart, “Identity Dilemmas,” in Parvati Raghuram, Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, Brij Maharaj, and Dave Sangha edited, *Tracing an Indian Diaspora: Contexts, Memories, Representations*, p. 299-319. Canvas.  
Surina Khan, “Sexual Exiles,” in Das Gupta edited, *A Patchwork Shawl*, p. 62-71. Canvas.

Nov 1 F Sandip Roy, "Coming Out of the Almirah: South Asian Americans Struggle with Coming Out in a Gay America that Looks Nothing Like Them," in Susan Kosby and R. Radhakrishnan edited, *Transnational South Asians: The Making of a Neo-Diaspora*, p. 244-70. Canvas.

### **South Asian American Experiences**

Beyond Bollywood assignment due in class on November 4.

Nov 4 M Nazli Kibria, "Bangladeshi American Dreams," in *Muslims in Motion: Islam and National Identity in the Bangladeshi Diaspora*, p. 28-56. Canvas.

Nov 6 W Class Presentation – Group 3

Nov 8 F Nazli Kibria, "The Racial Gap: South Asian American Racial Identity and the Asian American Movement," in *A Part, Yet Apart*, p. 69-78. E-Book.  
Sumantra Tito Sinha, "From Campus to Community Politics in Asian America," in *A Part, Yet Apart*, p. 146-67. E-Book.

Nov 11 M Class Presentation – Group 4

Nov 13 W Vijay Prashad, "The Day our Probation Ended" in *Uncle Swami: South Asians in America Today*, p. 1-26. E-Book.

Nov 15 F *Whose Children are These?* – Documentary Screening in Class  
Prashad, *Uncle Swami*, p. 27-47. E-Book.

Nov 18 M Class Presentation – Group 5

South Asian Americans in Political Life assignment due in class on November 20.

Nov 20 W South Asian Americans in Political Life – No reading.

Nov 22 F Class Presentation – Group 6

Nov 25 – 29 Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

Dec 2 M Class Presentation – Group 7

Dec 4 W Bhoomi Thakore, *South Asians on the US Screen*, p. 35-67. Canvas.

Dec 6 F Exam review and evaluations

Dec 9 M **Exam 2**