

South Asian Diaspora
AAS 2100 & Anthr 2410
Spring 2013
McGraw Hall 366 (Tues and Thurs 2:55-4:10)

Instructor: Professor Viranjini Munasinghe

Office: McGraw 205

Office Hours: Tuesday 4:30-5:30 and Friday 2:30-3:30. You need to sign up for office hours—sign up sheet on office door. If these times are not convenient email me to make an appointment

Email: vpm1@cornell.edu

“And these Indians from Trinidad, despite their temples and rituals, so startling to the visitors, belong to the New World”

V.S. Naipaul

Course Overview:

This course will introduce students to the experiences and imagined worlds of South Asians who have traveled to various parts of the world at different historical moments beginning with colonial labor migrations of the 1800s to the present (as indentured laborers to the Caribbean, Pacific and Africa; as merchants and entrepreneurs to East Africa; as semi-skilled industrial labor to Britain; as domestics to the Middle East; and as highly skilled professionals and Taxi-wallas to the US). The course is specifically attentive to the different forms of labor, and Third World and First World nationalisms, which significantly shaped South Asian lives in the Diaspora. Through a comparison of the diverse experiences of the South Asian Diaspora, the course addresses some of the following questions: How useful is the concept of Diaspora to understand the experiences of this extremely diverse group? How useful is the category “South Asian” itself? What are the diverse ways in which the Diaspora is connected to the “homeland” and how does the Diaspora transform South Asia economically, politically and culturally? How do South Asians “abroad” simultaneously inhabit the cultural and political space of citizen and Diasporic subject? How is “South Asian” culture reconstituted in the Diaspora (we will explore various aspects of popular culture including music, dance and literature)? The course will end with an exploration of political possibilities posed by the South Asian Diaspora.

Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance and participation. For each class students will write responses to the readings (approximately 1 page). Your comments will be used to excite class discussion and will be collected at the end of each class. These responses will not be graded or returned to you (I suggest you make a copy for yourself). They will, however, affect your class participation component. 25%
2. One 20 minute presentation on the final paper. 25%

3. One 10-12 page final research paper on a subject directly relating to the South Asian diaspora, which engages broader theoretical issues raised in class and the readings.
50%

“Each Student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work.”

NO COMPUTERS OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES PERMITTED DURING CLASS

Required Texts:

1. Susan Koshy and R. Radakrishnan eds. Transnational South Asians : the making of a neo-diaspora, Oxford University Press, 2008.
2. Shalini Shankar. Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class and Success in Silicon Valley. Duke University Press, 2008.
3. Vijay Prashad Uncle Swami: South Asians in America Today. New Press, 2012.
4. Shyam Selvadurai. Story-Wallah : short fiction from South Asian writers. Houghton Mifflin Co., 2005.

All books are available at the Campus Book Store and the Asian American Studies Resource Center 420 Rockefeller; articles are available on Blackboard.

Syllabus

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Jan. 22 | Introduction |
| Jan. 24 | Debating Diaspora : immigrant, ethnic or cosmopolitan? <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. V.S. Naipaul (1982) 1-9.2. S. Rushdie (1991) 9-21.3. R. Radakrishnan (1996) 203-215. |
| Jan. 29. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Georg Simmel (1908) 143-149.2. S. Shukla (2001) 551-572. |
| Jan. 31 | Empire and colonial labor
Film: Roots in the Sand |

- Feb. 5
1. Marina Carter in Koshy (2008) 45-70.
 2. Munasinghe (2001a) 67-96.
- Feb. 7
3. Robert Morrell and V. Padaychee (1991) 71-102.
 4. Sudesh Mishra in Koshy (2008) 71-94.
- Feb. 12 **Diaspora and Third World nationalisms**
1. Eisenlohr, Patrick (2004) 81-98.
 2. Munasinghe (2001b) 1-34.
- Feb. 14
1. Dibyesh Anand and N. Kaul (2011) 183-195.
 2. Stanley Tambiah (1996) 82-100.
- Feb. 19
- Film: Mississippi Masala
- Feb. 21 **Diaspora and First World nationalisms (Britain, Australia and US)**
1. Avtar Brah (1996) 17-48.
 2. Suvendrini K. Perera in Koshy (2008) 271-290.
- Feb. 26
1. Vijay Prasad (2000) 69-108.
- Feb. 28 **Classifying Diaspora (South Asians in the US)**
1. Nazli Kibria in Lavina Shankar and R. Shrikanth (1998) 69-78.
 2. Min Song in Lavina Shankar and R. Shrikanth (1998) 79-104.
 3. K. Visweswaran (1997) 9-28.
- March 5
- Film: None of the Above/or Desi
- March 7 **Homeland/Community/Belonging**
1. Munasinghe (2001a) 97-134; 154-181.
- March 12
1. Sandhya Shukla (1999) 19-37.
 2. Caroline Osella and Filippo Osella in Koshy (2008) 146-178.
- March 14 **General Discussion/Research Projects**
- March 19-21 Spring Break
- March 26 **Housemaids, High-Tech Braceros and Taxi-Wallas**

1. Michele R. Gamburd in John Holt (2011) 687-694.
 2. Sharmilla Rudrappa in Koshy (2008) 291-324.
- March 28 Film: Taxi-Vala
1. Biju Matthew (1999) 195-205.
- April 2-4 **Transnational Youth Cultures**
1. Falu Bakrania in Koshy (2008) 215-243.
 2. Shalini Shankar (2008) pages will be assigned.
- April 9 Film:
- April 11 **Transnational (Long distance) Political and Cultural Patriotisms**
1. Camilla Orjuela and D. Srisikandarajah in Koshy (2008) 325-344.
 2. Jigna Desai in Koshy (2008) 345-367.
- April 16 Film: Chutney
- April 18 No Class (AAAS Conference)
- April 23-25 **Diasporic Dispositions**
1. Shyam Selvadurai (2005) or
 2. Vijay Prashad (2012)
- April 30 Presentations
- May 2 Presentations

MAY 6 FINAL PAPER DUE—Please note Academic Integrity Statement on Page 1. (Please include a stamped and addressed envelope if you wish your paper to be mailed to you with my comments—If there is no envelope I will assume you will not be collecting your paper and therefore not write comments on the paper)

Bibliography

Anand, Dibyesh and Nitasha Kaul (2011) "A Disruptive Ethnography of Tanzanian-Indians" South Asian Diaspora 3 (2): 183-195.

Bakrania, F (2008) "Roomful of Asha: Gendered Production of Ethnicity in Britain's Asian Underground" in Koshy.

Brah, A (1996) "Construction of the 'Asian' in Post-war Britain" in Cartographies of Diaspora. London: Routledge.

Carter, M (2008) "Slaves, Servants and Sugar Barons in Mauritius: Diversity and Transformation in a Historical South Asian Diaspora" in Susan Koshy and R. Radakrishnan eds., Transnational South Asians : the making of a neo-diaspora, Oxford University Press: 45-70.

Desai, Jigna (2008) "Bollywood, USA: Diasporas, Nations and the State of Cinema" in Koshy.

Eisenlohr, Patrick (2004). "Temporalities of Community: Ancestral Language, Pilgrimage, and Diasporic Belonging in Mauritius." Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 14, (1): 81- 98.

Gamburd, M (2011) "Female labor Migrants from Sri Lanka to the Middle East" in John Hold ed. The Sri Lanka Reader . Durham: Duke University Press.

Kibria, N (1998) "The Racial Gap: South Asian American Racial Identity and the Asian American Movement" in Lavina Shankar and R. Shrikanth A Part Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Koshy, Susan and R. Radakrishnan eds. (2008) Transnational South Asians: the making of a neo-diaspora, Oxford University Press:

Matthew, B (1999) "Dubious Generations: A Discussion with Vivek Bald" Amerasia 25 (3): 195-205.

Mishra, S (2008) "Tazia Fiji!: The Place of Potentiality" in Koshy: 71-94.

Morrell, Robert and V. Padaychee (1991) "Indian Merchants and Dukawallahs in the Natal Economy, c1875-1914. Journal of Southern African Studies 17 (1): 71-102.

Munasinghe, V. (2001a). Callaloo or Tossed Salad? East Indians and the Cultural Politics of Identity in Trinidad. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press: 67-96; 97-134; 154-181.

Munasinghe, V (2001b) "Redefining the Nation: The East Indian Struggle for Inclusion in Trinidad" Journal of Asian American Studies 4.1: 1-34.

Naipaul, V. S. (1982) "Introduction" in East Indians in the Caribbean: Colonialism and the Struggle for Identity. London, Kraus.

Orjuela, Camilla and D. Sriskandarajah (2008) "The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora: Warmongers or Peace-builders?" in Koshy.

Osella Caroline and F Osella "Nuancing the 'Migrant Experience' Perspectives from Kerala, South India" in Koshy.

Perera, S (2008) "The Skins of Pearls: Remembering and Forgetting in Diaspora Narratives" in Koshy.

Prashad, Vijay (2000). The Karma of Brown Folk. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press: 69-108.

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

Radhakrishnan, R. (1996) "Is the Ethnic "Authentic" in the Diaspora?" in Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location. Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press: 203-214.

Rudrappa, S (2008) "Braceros and Techno-Braceros: Guest Workers in the United States and the Commodification of Low Wage and High Wage Labor" in Koshy.

Rushdie, S. (1991). Imaginary Homelands. Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991. London, Granta Books: 9-21.

Selvadurai, Shyam (2005) Story-Wallah : short fiction from South Asian writers. Houghton Mifflin Co.,

Shankar, Lavina and R. Shrikanth (1998) A Part Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Shankar, Shalini. Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class and Success in Silicon Valley. Duke University Press, 2008.

Shukla, S (1999) "New Immigrants, New Forms of Transnational Community: Post 1965 Indian Migrations" Amerasia 25:3. 19-36.

Shukla, S (2001) "Locations for South Asian Diasporas" Annual Review of Anthropology, 30: 551-572.

Simmel, G. (1908) "The Stranger"

Song, M (2008) "Pahkar Singh's Argument with Asian America: Color and Structure of Race Formation" in Shankar and Shrikanth.

Tambiah, S (1996) "Two Postindependence Ethnic Riots in Sri Lanka" Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia, California: University of California Press.