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:


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

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**Syllabus**

Jan. 22  
**Introduction**

Jan. 24  
**Debating Diaspora: immigrant, ethnic or cosmopolitan?**


Jan. 29.

1. Georg Simmel (1908) 143-149.

Jan. 31  
**Empire and colonial labor**

Film: *Roots in the Sand*
Feb. 5

Feb. 7

Feb. 12
Diaspora and Third World nationalisms

2. Munasinghe (2001b) 1-34.

Feb. 14

Feb. 19
Film: Mississippi Masala

Feb. 21
Diaspora and First World nationalisms (Britain, Australia and US)


Feb. 26

Feb. 28
Classifying Diaspora (South Asians in the US)


March 5
Film: None of the Above/or Desi

March 7
Homeland/Community/Belonging


March 12

March 14
General Discussion/Research Projects

March 19-21
Spring Break

March 26
Housemaids, High-Tech Braceros and Taxi-Wallas

March 28 Film: Taxi-Vala

April 2-4 **Transnational Youth Cultures**
2. Shalini Shankar (2008) pages will be assigned.

April 9 Film:

April 11 **Transnational (Long distance) Political and Cultural Patriotisms**

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


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


Simmel, G. (1908) “The Stranger”
