

South Asian Diaspora
AAS 2100 & ANTHR 2410

Spring 2015

McGraw Hall 215Michell (Tues and Thurs 11:40-12:55)

Instructor: Professor Viranjini Munasinghe

Office: McGraw 205

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-3:30 in **Rockefeller 425**; Friday 2:30-3:30 **McGraw 205**. You need to sign up for office hours in McGraw—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 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 Taxiwalas 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 “homeland”? 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 be expected to come prepared with 2 or more questions/issues related to the readings (approx. 1 page). Your comments will be used as a basis for class discussion and will be collected at the end of each class. 25%
2. One 15 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.
Cornell University Press, 2000.
3. Michele Ruth Gamburd, Transnationalism and Sri Lanka’s Migrant Housemaids,

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. 27	Debating D/diaspora –exile/immigrant/ ethnic/ cosmopolitan? <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. R. Brubaker (2005) 1-19.2. R. Radakrishnan (1996) 203-215.
Jan. 29	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.Georg Simmel (1908) 143-149.2.Vijay Prashad (2000) 1-20.3.Munasinghe (1997) 72-86.
Feb. 3	Diaspora and Empire Film: Roots in the Sand
Feb. 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Marina Carter in Koshy (2008) 45-70.2. Munasinghe (2001a) 67-96.
Feb. 10	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Robert Morrell and V. Padaychee (1991) 71-102.2. Sudesh Mishra in Koshy (2008) 71-94.3. Twaddle (1998) 149-163.

- Feb. 12 **Diaspora and (Third World) nationalisms**
1. Eisenlohr, Patrick (2007) 968-996.
 2. Munasinghe (2001b) 1-34.
- Feb. 17 Break
- Feb. 19 1. Dibyesh Anand and N. Kaul (2011) 183-195.
2. Willford, Andrew (2002) 247-280.
- Feb. 24 -26 **Diaspora, Settler Colonies and (First World) nationalisms (Britain, Australia and US)**
1. Steven Vertovec in Koshy (2008) 97-123.
 2. Tariq Modood in Koshy (2008) 124-145.
 3. Suvendrini K. Perera in Koshy (2008) 271-290.
- March 3-5 1. Vijay Prasad (2000) 69-108.
- March 10 **Classifying Diaspora (South Asians in the US)**
- Film: *None of the Above/or Desi*
- March 12 1. Nazli Kibria in Lavina Shankar and R. Shrikanth (1998) 69-78.
2. Min Song in Lavina Shankar and R. Shrikanth (1998) 79-104.
- March 17 **Homeland/ /Belonging/Patriotism/Long Distance Nationalism**
1. Camilla Orjuela and D. Sriskandarajah in Koshy (2008) 325-344.
 2. Neha Vora (2011) 306-318.
- March 19 1. Sharika Thiranagama (2014)
2. Bernardo Brown (2013)
General Discussion/Research Projects
- March 24 **Diaspora and Migrant Labor: High-Tech Braceros and Housemaids**
1. Sharmilla Rudrappa in Koshy (2008) 291-324.
- March 26 Conference: Class Canceled (work on your final paper)
- March 31-April 2 Spring Break
- April 7-9 1. Michel Ruth Gamburd (2000)

April 14-16 - **Transnational/Diasporic Youth Cultures (Attend Vijay Prashad's talk)**

1. Shalini Shankar (2008) pages will be assigned.

April 21-23 1. Falu Bakrania (2008)
2. Jessica Falcone (2013)

April 28-30-May 5 Presentations

MAY 8 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.

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.

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

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:

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 (1997) "Culture Creators and Culture Bearers: The interface of Race and Ethnicity in Trinidad". Transforming Anthropology.

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

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

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

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.

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.

Thiranagama, Sharika (2014) "Making Tigers from Tamils: Long-Distance Nationalism and Sri Lankan Tamils in Toronto. American Anthropologist (2): 265-278.

Twaddle, Michael 1990. "East African Asians through a hundreded years." In South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity. Edited by Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach, and Steven Vertovec. Cambridge University Press. 149-163.

Willford, Anrew 2002. "Weapons of the Meek": Ecstatic Ritualism and Strategic Ecuymenism among Tamil-Hindus in Malaysia," Identities 9(2):247-80.