
Culture and Society in South Asia

Tuesdays & Thursdays

3:30 – 4:45 PM

Econ 205

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Introduction

This course will explore the cultures of South Asia -- India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, & Sri Lanka -- with special emphasis on India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka as a basis for detailed comparison.

Classroom **lectures** will provide you with a general ethnographic background, while the assigned **readings** will give you specific examples to analyze and compare for their specific ethnographic content and conceptual arguments. ANTH 2100, or equivalent background, is a prerequisite for this course.

Unit 1: Geography, Kinship, and Marriage in South Asia. In this introductory unit you will become familiar with the geography of the region as measured by a Map Quiz. You will also learn about kinship and family patterns, life cycle, and gender ideas through lectures and readings in Mines & Lamb, eds. *Everyday Life in South Asia* and McGilvray, *Symbolic Heat*.

Unit 2: Persistence of Caste in South Asia. In this unit you will gain an understanding of how the Hindu caste system works both “in theory” and “in practice” at the level of village life. In addition to chapters in Mines & Lamb, you will read *Fierce Gods* by Diane Mines, a detailed ethnography of inter-caste tensions and rivalries in a rural village in southern India.

Unit 3: Popular Hinduism. In this section you will learn about popular Hindu beliefs and rituals, the oldest and largest religious tradition in South Asia. In addition to chapters from *Everyday Life in South Asia*, you will read Karline McLain’s study of popular illustrated Hindu religious media, *India’s Immortal Comic Books*.

Unit 4: Ethnicity and Social Conflict. Our attention turns next to issues of ethnic, religious, and linguistic identity, with a special focus on Islam in South Asia. *Zenana*, Laura Ring’s ethnography of an urban apartment building will give you a glimpse of urban life in Karachi, Pakistan, currently the most volatile and dangerous country in South Asia. We will also examine the ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka.

Unit 5: Globalization and Diaspora. The final unit will focus on the impacts of globalization on South Asia, and the new forms of culture that are being generated in the South Asian diaspora. We will read a brand new book by Anand Giridharadas, *India Calling*, that explores new forms of personal identity in contemporary India, as well as several articles about religion and consumerism in the South Asian diaspora.

SYNTHESIZING COMPONENTS OF THE COURSE

The readings in this course are quite challenging: they are not "introductory" texts. The classroom lectures and discussions -- and any films or visual materials -- will seek to place the books in broader perspective by providing background information on the cultural patterns of South Asian society as reflected in the anthropological literature of the region. Your task as students will be to digest and synthesize these various components, to identify similarities and differences, as well as find themes connecting them. Contrasts and comparisons between classroom lectures and assigned readings will be tested in your take-home essay exams.

EXAMS AND GRADES

Your performance in the course will be evaluated by means of **two mid-term take-home essay exams**, each worth 25% of your final grade, and a **final take-home essay exam** worth 30% of your final grade. Each essay exam will test your ability to synthesize and compare the assigned readings with the lectures. **Correct writing** will be evaluated in all assignments. There will also be a **map quiz** worth 10% based upon a geography practice sheet to be provided in advance. The remaining 10% of your final grade will be earned by **attendance and active participation** in class. All exams and quizzes must be completed in order to pass the course.

****PLEASE NOTE:** Late essay exams will lose one full letter grade immediately, and an additional full letter grade every 24 hours thereafter. Any exceptions must be approved in advance.

GRADUATE-LEVEL COMPONENT (ANTH 5750)

In place of the final essay exam, graduate students registered for ANTH 5750 will submit a research paper or a literature survey of approximately 15 pp. on a topic to be developed in consultation with the instructor.

REQUIRED READINGS: One copy of each on Norlin 24 hr. reserve.

Dennis McGilvray, *Symbolic Heat: Gender, Health, and Worship among the Tamils* (Mapin 2003)

Diane Mines and Sarah Lamb, eds., *Everyday Life in South Asia* (Indiana 2002)

Diane Mines, *Fierce Gods* (Indiana 2005)

Karline McLain, *India's Immortal Comic Books* (Indiana 2009)

Laura Ring, *Zenana: Everyday Peace in a Karachi Apartment Building* (Indiana 2006)

Anand Giridharadas, *India Calling* (Times Books 2011)

*Additional required PDF articles, and a map quiz practice sheet, will be posted on the CU Learn website.

OPTIONAL: Nelles *Map of the Indian Subcontinent*. (On Norlin Reserve. Available for \$15 with a \$1.00 course discount at Boulder Map Gallery, 1708 13th Street <http://bouldermapgallery.com> 303-444-1406. Remember to mention "Prof. McGilvray" if you want the discount.)

General Policies: Students requesting disability accommodation must provide a letter from CU Disability Services no later than September 1st. All incidents of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to the CU Honor Code Council, and the student will receive a grade of "F" in the course.

ANTH 4750/5750 Course Schedule

Fall 2011

*on CU Learn website

Aug 23	Where is South Asia? McGilvray, <i>Symbolic Heat</i>	Aug 25 *Map Quiz Practice Sheets
Aug 30	Family and Household Mines & Lamb, <i>Everyday Life</i> , 7-68	Sept 1 *McGilvray, "Households in Akk."
Sept 6	Gender and Personhood Mines & Lamb, <i>Everyday Life</i> , 81-166	Sept 8 MAP QUIZ in class
Sept 13	Love and Marriage *Gough, "Nayars and Definition of Marriage"	Sept 15
Sept 20	The Caste System, in Theory Mines, <i>Fierce Gods</i>	Sept 22 *Caste system diagram pdf
Sept 27	The Caste System, in Practice Mines, <i>Fierce Gods</i>	Sept 29 Essay exam topic assigned
Oct 4	Class and Social Change Mines & Lamb, <i>Everyday Life</i> , 166-228	Oct 6 FIRST ESSAY EXAM due in class
Oct 11	The Hindu Cosmos McLain, <i>India's Immortal Comic Books</i>	Oct 13

Oct 18	Popular forms of Hindu Worship McLain, <i>India's Immortal Comic Books</i>	Oct 20
Oct 25	Possession, Vows, & Monastic Orders Mines & Lamb, <i>Everyday Life</i> , 229-274	Oct 27
Nov 1	Islam in South Asia Ring, <i>Zenana</i>	Nov 3
Nov 8	Conflict Zones: Religion, Ethnicity, Language Ring, <i>Zenana</i>	Nov 10 Essay exam topic assigned
Nov 15	The Sri Lankan Conflict *McGilvray, <i>Crucible of Conflict</i> , 311-363	Nov 17 SECOND ESSAY EXAM due in class
Nov 22-24	FALL BREAK & THANKSGIVING -- -- -- -- NO CLASSES	
Nov 29	Globalization and Change Giridharadas, <i>India Calling</i>	Dec 1 Final essay exam topic assigned
Dec 6	The South Asian Diaspora Mines & Lamb, <i>Everyday Life</i> , 381-454 *Mankekar, "India Shopping"	Dec 8

Dec 10 (Saturday)

FINAL ESSAY EXAM due by 5 PM