

Indian History Through Literature (IHTL)

Course Coordinator: Geetanjali Tyagi

Course Description:

This course will consider the history of South Asia, with a focus on the making of modern India, through the vantage point of literature in the English language. The class intends to use the backdrop of the city of Delhi - variously the capital city of the Mughals, British Raj, and independent Indian state - to illuminate five critical processes which have indelibly altered India in the creation of its contemporary society. Thus, the course is divided up into five units, each of which will be centered on a single text:

- 1) Imperialism and the History of Delhi
- 2) Nationalism, Decolonization, and Partition
- 3) Post-Independent National Identities
- 4) Religious Connections and Communalism
- 5) Globalization, Class, and Caste.

Each unit will feature a combination of lectures, film clips, discussions of this material and the readings, independent and group research in the city of Delhi.

This course aims at :

- helping students to interrogate their own cultural values through an open-minded and critical analysis of diverse Indian cultures as articulated in literature about India
- to assess the benefits of learning through contact with others from different cultural backgrounds or who hold different viewpoints, through class discussions and collaborative exercises set in the city of Delhi and develop a clear argument using recognized historical methods, based on an interpretation of primary and secondary sources (especially literature) concerning the history of modern India

- to clearly write and orally discuss their ideas about key processes in the making of modern India based on a comprehension of the relation between history and literature.

Course Assessment:

Students from all backgrounds are welcome in this class and no previous knowledge of the course's subject is required. Assignments will require a thoughtful analysis of our shared texts together with presentations from independent and collaborative research at locations across the city of Delhi.

By the fourth week of the course: take home assignment + class presentations/group discussions = 30% of total course grade.

By the tenth week of the course: take home assignment = 30% of total course grade.

End Semester exam = 40% of total course grade.

Essential Readings :

- Metcalf, Barbara D. and Thomas R. Metcalf. *A Concise History of Modern India*, 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Dalrymple, William. *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*. 1993.
- Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*. 1956.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. 1980.
- Vassanji, M. G. *The Assassin's Song*. 2007.
- Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger: A Novel*. 2008