British India

Professor: Dr. Aminur Rahman (arahma7@gmu.edu)
Course duration: January 24 to May 18
Office and office hours: By appointment
Cell: 571 594 4559 (emergencies only)
Class meets: Monday 7.20p.m. – 10.00 p.m.
Room: RSCH 202

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Our objectives in this course will be revisiting historical events in British India. We will also attempt to determine how political, social, and economic factors, and ideas, such as caste, religious identities, gender, nationalism, colonialism, revolution, regionalism, and so on, have shaped the region’s history. By being a part of the course, you agree to rethink and reinterpret your ideas on British India as well as the discipline of history.

Approach & Focus

This is NOT a lecture class. In this course we will read and write about, report on, and discuss topics concerning British empire in India and beyond, assessing the various ways in which Empire exercised its power (or not) over its subjects and—whether colluding, unthinkingly, or defiantly—how they defined their roles in history.

Evaluation

This course is structured to reward students who come to class, complete the assigned reading, participate in discussions, and stay on top of their assignments. Evaluation will rest on class discussion (30%), ten-minute presentations for mid-term on individually assigned research topic (20%), final research paper (40%), and 5 short reaction question (10%). No presentations may be postponed without either 24 hours’ advance notice or a life-changing emergency. Presenters will write a one-page outline of their oral presentation, copied and distributed to classmates. Oral presentations must be on readings/ books/ selected/ assigned topic that we are going to focus throughout the semester.

Note: The purpose of both oral presentation and final research paper is to impart the content of more source materials, and hence information, to classmates. But your assessment and evaluation is just as important as conveying the author’s purpose, style, method, and degree of success. Both your 10-minute mid-term presentation and your
final research paper must be polished, edited, original, pledged contributions. A hard copy of your research paper is due to me on or before the last class day.

The importance of informed discussion

As I mentioned before that this is NOT a lecture class, so don’t be passive. Class participation, focusing on and asking questions about the readings and presentations, is vital to the success of this course, so diligence in reading all assignments in advance is expected without exception. All are very strongly urged to read ahead of the topics. Asking in an uninformed way about something that is clearly presented in the readings or reports will blatantly reveal what you have not done your reading and will reduce our level of comfort. See the criteria for evaluating class participation. I will try to call on a wide variety of classmates for purposes of equity.

Besides discussion, there will be some interactive activities such as group work and group research.

Moreover, class attendance is vitally important—for each unexcused absence beyond three, the course grade will therefore be reduced by 20%. In place of a final examination, a submitted research paper will be considered as your final.

Required Texts:

The following are available from GMU Bookstore and online.

Text Book


Required Books:


2. Bayly, Susan, Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age (The New Cambridge History of India)

3. Dirks, Nicholas, Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India.

All other reading will be available on Blackboard.

Writing assignment before starting the reading (required): write one double-spaced typed page on “My Image of India.” Be thoughtful and candid. Write an essay before starting the readings, due in class, on our second-class day, at the beginning of class. Since I will read and mark for content and style, and return in class, this cannot be
submitted via email. The point is to establish a baseline for your knowledge and awareness about India.

NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY IS ASSUMED OR REQUIRED.

**Information about final research paper**

You are required to cite references in writing your papers. Use of these references should follow the techniques outlined below. Footnotes and citations are required. If you get a fact from a textbook, book, or a journal article, you must list the author, date, and page in the footnote. You will cite your references to give credit to persons whose ideas or facts you use. All quotes must have a citation; otherwise, it is plagiarism (see section on plagiarism below). Remember, always cite the primary reference—if you take a specific point from one of the course textbooks, and that point is cited as being derived from a work by another author, look in the bibliography of the textbook for that original citation.

For citation, follow American Historical Association Style. You can have a detailed style guide here:

http://deerfield.history.museum/dtc/programs/American%20Historical%20Review%20Citation%20Style.pdf

**POLICIES:**

a) **Cell phone:** During class all phones must be switched off and put away. Neither students nor instructor should compose, read, or respond to text messages during class.

b) **Laptop:** Students who wish to use a laptop computer for note-taking are welcome to do so. However, students who use laptops for purposes other than taking notes (i.e., email, instant messaging, internet browsing unrelated to the course) will be asked to leave and no longer be permitted to use a computer in class.

c) **Submission of written work:** All written work is due at the beginning of class in hard copy on the day indicated on the syllabus. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in a 12-point font (Times New Roman). Your name should be on each page of the paper, and all pages should be stapled and numbered. You should retain electronic copies of all written works, and your instructor may ask for an electronic copy of your paper in order to use it as an example in teaching or to submit to a plagiarism detection site.

d) **Late policy:** All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you
must contact your instructor for how to submit late work. No make-ups will be allowed for the midterm or the final exams.

e) **Plagiarism:** DO NOT DO IT. It is easy to spot and can result in expulsion from the University and loss of degree. For detailed policies and practices see: [http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm#plagiarism](http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm#plagiarism)

f) **Academic accommodations:** If you are a student with a documented condition that warrants academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS ([http://ods.gmu.edu/](http://ods.gmu.edu/)). Additional support may be obtained through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): [http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)

g) **Academic integrity:** All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code: [http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code](http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code)

h) **Disclaimer:** This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements of changes will be made online and during class meetings. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule below indicates themes, discussion topics, readings, & deadlines.

**Week 1:** January 24, 2022

- Introduction & Orientation
- Course Intro
- Introduction to British India

**REQUIRED READING**


**Week 2:** January 31, 2022

**Focus Topic**

Imperialism, colonialism, and word view 1

**Focus book**


**REQUIRED READING**
1. Kumar, K., Visions of Empire, Chapter: One, The Idea of Empire
2. Kumar, K., Visions of Empire, Chapter 6, The British Empire

**Week 3:** February 7, 2022

**Focus Topic**
Imperialism, colonialism and world view 2

**Focus book**

**REQUIRED READING**


**Movie: A Passage To India**

**Week 4:** February 14, 2022

Discussion Section: The Debate on Sati
(Group Research)

**REQUIRED READING**


(Available: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1829bentinck.asp

**Suggested Movie: Water**

**Reaction Question (not more than 300 words)** According to your opinion, how
Bentinck’s testimony was conformed with the overall British policy in India? (Hard copy due before the class)

**Week 5:** February 21, 2022

**Focus Topic**
Colonialism and Knowledge

**Focus Book**

**REQUIRED READING**


**Week 6:** February 28, 2022

**Focus Topic**
Rebellion and Transition to Crown Raj

**Focus Book**
Metcalf & Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*

**REQUIRED READING**

1. Metcalf & Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, Chapter 4. Revolt, the modern state, and colonized subjects, 1848 - 1885

2. Bayly, *Indian Society*, Chapter 6, 'Rebellion and Reconstruction', and Conclusion,


**Suggested Movie:** Mangal Pandey
**BBC Radio:** The Indian Mutiny (In Our Time)
**Reaction Question:** Why and how do you think Indian mutiny changed the British colonial approach in India?

**Week 7:** March 7, 2022

**Midterm Presentation**

**Week 8:** March 14, 2022

Spring Break: No class, enjoy your break.

**Week 9:** March 21, 2022

**Focus Topic**  
A Nation in the Making

**Focus Book**  
Chatterjee, Partha, *Nationalism, Nation and its Fragment*

**REQUIRED READING**

Chatterjee, Partha, *Nationalism, Nation and its Fragment*, Chapter One:  
Who's Imagined Communities

- Ch. 2 The Colonial State  p. 14
- Ch. 3 The Nationalist Elite  p. 35
- Ch. 4 The Nation and Its Pasts  p. 76

**Week 10:** March 28, 2022

**Focus Topic**  
Gandhi: And Indian Nationalism

**Focus Book**  
Bayly, Susan, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*

**REQUIRED READING**

1. Bayly, Susan, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8


*International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (December 2014), pp. 413-449

Movie: Gandhi

**BBC Documentary:** The Making of the Mahatma

**Reaction Question:** How and why Gandhi had a very different view about Indian nationalism than Ambedkar?

**Week 11.** April 4, 2022

**Discussion Section:** Empire, Women, and Nationalism

**REQUIRED READING**

2. Tharu and Lalita, eds., Women Writing in India, “Tarabai Shinde”
3. Chatterjee, Partha, Nationalism, Nation and its Fragment, chapter 6

Film: Charulata

**Week 12.** April 11, 2022

**Focus Topic**

Castes, Nationalism and Nation Building

**Focus Book**

Dirks, Nicholas B. Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India

**REQUIRED READING**

2. Dirk, Nicholas, The Cast of Mind, Chapter 6, The Imperial Archive: Colonial Knowledge and Colonial Rule

**Movie:** Before the Rain (available on Netflix)

**Week 12:** April 18, 2022

**Focus Topic**

World War II and Imperial India

**Focus Book**

Mukerjee, Madhusree, Churchill’s secret war
REQUIRED READING

1. Madhusree, Mukerjee, *Churchill’s secret war*, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 4, Chapter 6


3. Gluckstein, Donny, *A People’s History of the Second World War: Resistance Versus Empire* Chapter 4, Title: India – From Famine to Independence

You tube video: The Great British Empire Ruled

**Week 13:** April 25, 2022

**Focus Topic**
Partition of India

**Focus Book**

REQUIRED READING

1. Bose and Jalal: Chapter 16
2. JALAL, AYESHA, The Pity of Partition, Chapter 1 and chapter 3

**Movie:** The Last Train and Earth

**You Tube Video:** The Last Days Of The British Raj (Partition of India)

**Week 14:** May 2, 2022

**Focus Topic**
Different Views

**Focus Books**
Shashi Tharoor, Inglorious Empire
Nirod C Chawdhury, Autobiography of an Unknown Indian

FURTHER READING


**Hannah Beech**, ‘The Face of Buddhist Terror’, July 01, 2013 TIME magazine


Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of the Peasant Insurgency in Colonial*...

Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*

Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992*

Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture*

Frederic Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*

John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405*

John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World*

Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History*

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*

Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*

Mason, Philip, *A Matter of Honour*

William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*

Nazir Ahmad, Mir’at ul Arus [The Bride’s Mirror]: a Tale of Life in Delhi a Hundred Years Ago, G. E. Ward, tr., (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001)

Ram Ahuja, Violence Against Women (Jaipur, 1998)

++Elisabeth Armstrong, Gender and Neoliberalism in India (New York, Routledge, 2011)


++J. K. Tina Basi, Women, Identity and India’s Call Centre Industry (London: Routledge 2009)

Aparna Basu, Mridula Sarabai: Rebel with a Cause (Delhi: OUP, 1996)


Antoinette Burton, Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915 (1994)

Antoinette Burton, Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernity (2000)


Urvashi Butalia, The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of Indiau (1998)

++Kabita Chakraborty, Young Muslim Women in India (New York: Routledge, 2011)

Uma Chakravarti, Rewriting History: The Life and times of Pandita Ramabai (Kali for Women, 1998).

The life of one of India’s earliest feminists.

Indrani Chatterjee, Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India (New Delhi: OUP, 1999)

Indira Chowdhury, The Frail Hero and Virile History: Gender and the Politics of Culture in Colonial Bengal (OUP India, 1998)

Radhika Chopra, C. Osella and F. Osella, eds., South Asian Masculinities (Kali for Women, 2004)

++Manuela Ciotti, Political Agency and Gender in India (London: Routledge, 2010).

++Mary Crawford, Sex Trafficking in South Asia: Telling Maya’s Story (London: Routledge, 2009)


Parmesh Dangwal, "I Dare!" Kiran Bedi, a Biography (New Delhi, USBS Publishers, 1995). Bedi was Chief of Police in New Delhi.

Frieda Hauswirth Das, Marriage to India (Plymouth, England, 1931). From lederhosen to silk, an eyewitness account of India during the freedom movement.


Leelamma Devasia and V. V. Devasia, *Girl Child in India* (Springfield, VA, 1992)


Leela Dube, *Women and Kinship: Comparative Perspectives on Gender in South and Southeast Asia* (Tokyo, 1997)

Joan Erdman and Zohra Segal, *Stages: the Art and Adventures of Zohra Segal* (Kali for Women, 1997)


Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and Cultures of Travel* (1996)


Raana Haider, *A Perspective in Development: Gender Focus* (Dhaka, 1995)


Haseena Hashia, ed., *Muslim Women in India since Independence* (Delhi, 1998)


Shahanara Hussain, *The Social Life of Women in Early Medieval Bengal* (Dhaka, 1985)


Qurratulain Hyder, *River of Fire* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998)


Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *Behind the Veil: Ceremonies, Customs, and Colour* (Karachi, 1953)

Isis International and Kali for Women, *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Development from India and Pakistan*, 1994


Anees Jung, *Night of the New Moon: Encounters with Muslim Women in India* (Delhi, 1993)


Kalpana Kannabiran & Vasanth Kannabiran, *De-eroticizing assault: essays on modesty, honour, and power*
Kalpana Kannabiran and Vasanth Kannabiran, *Muvalur Ramamirthammal's "Web of Deceit": Devadasi Reform in Colonial India*

Kirin Kapadia, *Siva and Her Sisters: Gender, Caste, and Class in Rural South India* (Westview, 1995)


Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita, eds., *In Search of Answers: Indian Women's Voices from Manushi* (Delhi, 1996), any ten chapters.


Shahida Lateef, *Muslim Women in India: Political and Private Realities, 1890s-1980s* (Delhi, 1990)


Sarah Lloyd, *An Indian Attachment* (1984) An Englishwoman lives with an illiterate Punjabi farmer named Jungli for two romantic years, and this is her highly observant account.


Barbara Daly Metcalf, tr. And ed, *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's Bihishti Zewar*
Barbara D. Miller, The Endangered Sex: Neglect of Female Children in Rural North India, chapters 1-2, 5-7-8.
Susan Wadley’s student, on gendered demography.  HQ777 .M44 1981
Gail Minault, Secluded Scholars: Women’s Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India (Delhi: OUP, 1998)
Jasmin Mirza, Between Chaddor and Market: Female Office Workers in Lahore (2002)
Ainon Nahar Mizan, In Quest of Empowerment: the Grameen Bank Impact on Women’s Power and Status (Dhaka, 1994)
Swapna Mukhopadhyay and R. Savithri, Poverty, Gender, and Reproductive Choice: an Analysis of Linkages (Delhi, 1998)
Kishwar Naheed, ed., Women: Myth and Realities (Lahore, 1994)
C. Risseeuw, The Fish Don’t Talk about the Water: Gender Transformation, Power and Resistance among Women in South Asia, 1988
++Salla Sariola, Gender and Sexuality in India: Selling Sex in Chennai (London: Routledge, 2009)
Krupabai Satthianadhan, Kamala: the Story of a Hindu Life (Delhi: OUP, 1998). A 19th-century woman’s turbulent life, during which she became one of the first female medical students in India, and involved herself in early feminist activism.
Krupabai Satthianandhan, Saguna: the first Autobiographical Novel in English by an Indian Woman (Delhi: OUP, 1998)
Rajeshwari Sundar Rajan, Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture, and Postcolonialism (London, 1993)
Rajeswari Sundar Rajan, *Signposts: Gender Issues in Post-Independence India* (Kali for Women)

The scandal of the state: women, law, and citizenship in postcolonial India
KNS516 .R35 2003


Bharati Ray and Aparna Basu, eds., *From Independence towards Freedom: Indian Women since 1947*
(New Delhi: OUP, 1999)


Sarojini Sharan, *Women Prime Ministers in South Asia* (Delhi, 1995)


A. Suryakumari, ed., *Women’s Studies: An Emerging Academic Discipline* (New Delhi, 1993)


Josephine Inkster. Married at eleven, only to be “widowed” soon after by her husband’s conversion to Christianity, a Maharashtrian brahman woman recounts her life story.

Mary Tyler, My Years in an Indian Prison (London, 1977). A British woman goes to jail for “spying” during the Emergency, and relates her story of women in prison.

++Patricia Uberoi, Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family and Popular Culture in India (New York, OUP, 2006).

Mahadevi Varma, Sketches from My Past: Encounters with India’s Oppressed (Neera Kuckreja Sohoni, trans.) (Boston, 1994)

Viramma, Josiane Racine and Jean-Luc Racine, Viramma: Life of an Untouchable (Paris, 1997)

M. D. Vyas and Yogesh Shingala, The Life Style of the Eunuchs (New Delhi, 1987)

++Sumit and Tanika Sarkar, eds., Women and Social Reform in Modern India (2008)


Susan Wadley, Shakti: Power in the Conceptual Structure of Karimpur Religion (New Delhi, 1985)


Frances Maria Yasas and Vera Mehta, eds., Exploring Feminist Visions: Case Studies on Social Justice Issues. 1990

Sarah C. White, Arguing with the Crocodile: Gender and Class in Bangladesh. HQ 1745.6 .W54 1992