



Hindus & Muslims in South Asia

Tu-Th 1:15-3:05, Bldg 260, Rm 12

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Office hours: Tu-Th, 3:30-4:30
70 - 72D

Hindus and Muslims have been living together in South Asia for about 1200 years, with both peaceful and conflicted histories. Or should we say "Hindus" and "Muslims"? One kind of narrative shows them creating rich composite cultures and interdependent social worlds; another kind shows them building walls of separation and attacking each other. In 1947 the subcontinent was split violently into separate nations on the basis of majority religious populations. Pakistan was the Muslim state, yet over 100 million Muslims remained in India. (Today India has about 155 million Muslims.) In 1971, Pakistan split into two countries, with the eastern wing becoming Bangladesh. All three of these nation-states have been defined to a large extent by religious identity, though views about religion and nation have gone through many changes over the years. We will examine the categories of "Hindu" and "Muslim," honing our sophistication about how they are defined, enacted, and deployed in different historical and social-political locations. We will study key moments and examples in the history of Hindu-Muslim presence and interaction in the subcontinent. A central concept will be narrative: how do people fashion the stories of who they are and what happened in the past, and how do these stories shape identities, actions and policies in the present? Another will be subject position: are we seeing through the eyes of political leaders, religious interpreters, intellectuals, families "on the ground," nationalist chroniclers, colonial rulers, women, men, children, etc.? Our sources include multiple genres -- academic study, oral history, film, poetry, and literature.

Reading Assignments

All readings will be available either by online link, by pdf on Coursework, or in a photocopied reader that will be distributed in class. Full bibliographical info on all readings will be provided in the reader.

Films

I'm organizing a weekly series of films, to be shown on an evening that works best for most people. These films are powerful and will change your learning experience significantly. Maybe they'll change your life! But I know your time is limited. If it would help, I can offer a 1-2 unit 199 that will give you credit for attending the films. For 1 unit you just need to attend 6 out of 8. For 2 units, you also need to give an oral report to the class on one of the films. 3 films are required for everyone: *Earth*, *Khamosh Pani*, and *Final Solution*. You can watch these with the class or on your own.

Requirements

We have no midterm or final exam. The short papers in the first half of the course, with the small group discussions and role-plays, will encourage you to read/view the assignments thoroughly and with engagement. By the sixth week you'll be so used to working like this that you won't need any more structural encouragement. And you'll begin working on a term project.

Attendance and participation: very important.

A class is a temporary community; we create it together. It's not just a matter of reading assignments and turning in your papers. Being in class a lot is good for your grade. Not being there is not good for your grade. Please let me know if you need to be away.

Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5: short papers of 2-3 pp due at 5 pm Friday. These papers will be divided into two parts: (1) choose two items (from readings or film) assigned that week; summarize crisply and clearly what's most important in their content and method; (2) choose a role and a viewpoint of someone you encounter or can imagine from one reading/film. It can be a participant in the historical situation, or it can be a scholar/writer with different methods and intellectual premises than the author you read. In at least two of these four short papers, you should choose a viewpoint you are not sympathetic with. Write about 1.5 pages in the first person, representing the truth of the situation as you see it.

In weeks 2-5, small groups will meet during class time on Thurs. (usually 2:15-2:45) to discuss the content of the readings and the viewpoints represented therein (of the writers and/or of those written about). Prepare for this meeting by knowing what's in the readings and picking a point of view to present to the group. You should have a draft of your first-person statement ready to read aloud; you can fix it up if necessary and turn it in the next day.

Course paper, 10-15 pp, due Friday, June 5 at 5 pm.

This will enable you to go deeper into something introduced in the course or to work on something we couldn't cover in our course. I will give a list of suggestions. If two or more students want to do a joint project, propose it to me. All the due dates below are Friday at 5 pm.

Week 6. Send a written proposal for your paper. You can propose up to two possible topics. Write a paragraph (or two if you are trying two ideas), telling why you are interested in the topic and what you hope to do with it.

Week 8. Send progress report on your paper, with outline, proposed argument, and at least three annotated sources.

Week 9-10. Give a class presentation on your project.

Week 10. Send the paper.

Grading.

Attendance & participation: 20%

Short papers: 10% each = 40%

Final paper: 40%

Lateness on anything, including the proposal in week 6 and the progress report in week 8, will tarnish the grade. If you have a good reason to request an extension, please do so at least 48 hours before the due date.

Schedule

Part I: Overviews

3/30 *Introduction to the course*

For reference:

A huge "timeline" (not entirely linear, with rich links) of South Asia from 1st millennium BCE to the present that does not conveniently separate out Hindus, Muslims, Brits, or anybody else:

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routes/index.html#dates>

Timeline of Indo-Muslim history, 613-1947:

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/overview/charts/saislamtimeline.html>

4/1 *Views of history*

India 1200-1700: Metcalf & Metcalf, ch. 1, *A Concise History of India*, pp 1-28.

Amartya Sen, "India through its Calendars," <http://www.littlemag.com/2000/sen.htm> (later published in *The Argumentative Indian*, pp. 317-333).

Vinay Lal, "Aurangzeb, Akbar, and the Communalization of History"

<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/Mughals/Aurang3.html>

4/6 *Categories and borders*

Richard Eaton, from Introduction to *India's Islamic Traditions, 711-1750*, pp. 1-11;

Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim*, pp. 11-40;

Sadat Hasan Manto, "Toba Tek Singh"

Manto (1912-1955) was a great writer of pre-partition India and post-partition Pakistan, who produced a large body of work even though his life ended tragically at the age of 42. If you want to know more about him, Wikipedia is OK: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saadat_Hasan_Manto

Film: *Had Anhad/ Bounded Boundless: Journeys with Kabir and Ram* by Shabnam Virmani, 2008 (103 min)

4/8 *Hinduism & Islam*

Akbar Ahmed, *Journey into Islam: the Crisis of Globalization*, ch 1, pp. 1-4, 33-46; ch 2, pp. 49-82.

Vasudha Narayanan, *Hinduism*, pp 6-22

From introduction to *The Life of Hinduism*, J.S. Hawley & Vasudha Narayanan, pp. 1-16.

Film in class *Elephant God – the Ganesh Festival in Mumbai*;

4/13 *Shared religious spaces*

"A Medieval Encounter between Hindu and Muslim: Eknath's Drama-Poem *Hindu-Turk Samvad*" (16th century], Eleanor Zelliott, in Eaton 2003, 64-79.

Rachel McDermott, "Khandita Najrul: The Legacy of a Master Poet in West Bengal and Bangladesh"

Joyce Flueckiger, *In Amma's Healing Room: Gender and Vernacular Islam in South Asia*, excerpts from ch. 5, "Religious Identities at the Crossroads," pp 168-79; 190-199.

Shail Mayaram, "Being Hindu and Muslim in South Asia"

Part II: Partition and other narratives

Film: *Muharram and the Coals of Karbala* (74 min.)

4/15 *Partition: the historical moment*

Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, chaps 1-2, pp 19-50.

Primary sources: speeches & writings in 1940s by Jinnah, Gandhi, Azad, Nehru.

4/20 *Oral histories of partition – the Punjab side*

Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 3-12, 55-77; 78-83, 87-91, 100-11, 114-20, 125-30

Required film: *Earth*

4/22 *Oral histories, Punjab, cont., + a glimpse of Calcutta*

Butalia, pp 139-71

Ashis Nandy, "Death of an Empire"

[FYI, you might find interesting: Ishtiaq Ahmed, "The 1947 Partition of India: A Paradigm for Pathological Politics in India and Pakistan"

Ask LH for pdf, or go to <http://www.apnaorg.com/articles/ishtiaq/ishtiaq.html>]

For the next two weeks we will use the events and debates surrounding the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya on Dec. 6, 1992, which so many of our authors have referred to as a crucial turning point, as a case for studying how religion and politics mix in South Asia; how religious stories, symbols and emotions are deployed along with political ideologies, goals and strategies; and how the construction of history plays a crucial role.

4/27 *Half a century later: "Ram's birthplace" vs "Babar's mosque"*

Richard Davis, "The Iconography of Ram's Chariot."

K.N. Panikkar, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization"

Film: *In the Name of God* by Anand Patwardhan, 1992.

4/29 *Temple destruction, mosque destruction, temple building*

Richard Eaton, "Temple Desecration in Pre-Modern India" (2-part article, pdf).

Vishwa Hindu Parishad, "FAQ on Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Movement" – read pp 1-10 and Appendix, pp 18-21, on pdf, which is based on <http://vhp.org/?cat=9>, accessed March 2010)

The purpose of reading these together is to show different ways of constructing history and their political implications. Note that they are not of the same genre. Eaton's work is scholarly and more impressive as a professional work of history. The VHP FAQ represents a popular construction of events, which makes reference to scholarly history but does not demonstrate the discipline of historical scholarship as Eaton's work does. In the real world, various popular and scholarly arguments are always jostling with each other.

Patwardhan's 90-min. film *In the Name of God* will be shown during class time. LH won't be there because of the conference.

CONFERENCE: "Nationhood and Nation-Building in South Asia," Apr 29-30 in SIEPR conference room, Landau Econ Bldg, Serra & Galvez

You're encouraged to attend whatever sessions may interest you. For example: Thurs. 8:45-10:15: panel on religion and nationhood (including speakers from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh); Thurs 4:45-5:45, student research panel (organized by our own Rushi Talati); Fri. 10-11:15 and 11:30-12:45, two panels on Pakistan; Fri. 3:15-5:15, "The South Asian Mediascape" (on internet, TV, and cinema). I will send you the whole program; There will also be a student dance performance on the evening of Wed. Apr 28 in 320-105 that includes 2 members of our class.

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With this week's readings, we get a much longer view of how the construction of history around temples, holy images, and Hindu-Muslim encounters, going back to the 11th century, continues to play a role in today's politics.

5/4 *Narratives of Somnath*

Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, ch. 3, "Images Overthrown," pp 88-132

Film: *The Men in the Tree* by Lalit Vachani - a film about the RSS, 2002 (98 min)

5/6 *Somnath, cont.*

Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, from Ch. 4, "Visnu's Miraculous Returns," pp 132-42; and ch. 6, "Reconstructions of Somanatha," pp 186-221.

Optional: Romila Thapar, "Somanatha and Mahmud, Five Different Narratives" –pdf from LH, or http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_thapar_somnath.html

Part III: Current Issues

5/11 *History of Hindu nationalism in India*

2 chapters from Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*

Required film: *Khamosh pani*

5/13 *Islamic religious identities, ideologies, interactions*

TWO GUEST SPEAKERS:

Prof. Azim Nanji of Stanford's Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies and Dept. of Religious Studies, speaking on sectarian formations in Islam, highlighting South Asia

Dr. Nosheen Ali, postdoctoral fellow, speaking on sectarian encounters and conflicts in northern Pakistan

Farhat Haq, "Pakistan: A State for the Muslims or an Islamic State?" in Riaz, ed. (above), 119-45.

History of Hindu nationalism in India

Ali Riaz, "The Politics of Islamization in Bangladesh," in *Religion and Politics in South Asia*, ed. Ali Riaz, 45-70
Magnus Marsden, "Muslim Village Intellectuals: The Life of the Mind in Northern Pakistan"

Recommended (on Coursework):

Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs"

Nanji and Daftary, "What is Shia Islam?"

5/20 Gujarat 2002

1. Review of *Fear and Forgiveness: The Aftermath of a Massacre* by Harsh Mander at <http://middlestage.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-harsh-manders-book-on-gujarat-2002.html> (include links to human rights reports, bibliography, other articles)

2. Gyanendra Pandey: "In Defense of the Fragment: "Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today"

Required film: *Final Solution*

5/22 Kashmir

Guest speaker, Prof. Cabeiri Robinson. Reading TBA

Film: *Crossing the lines : Kashmir, Pakistan, India : a story of people at war over borders and boundaries /* by Pervez Hoodbhoy and Zia Mian. 2004. (45 min.)

5/25 Bombay since 1993

Punwani, J., "My Area, Your Area: How Riots Changed the City," in Patel & Masselos (eds.), pp. 235-264

Film clips in class: "Father, son & holy war"

Film: *Mumbai meri jaan* (Recommended film: *Black Friday*)

5/27, 6/1

student presentations