

India & South Asia: From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies

Course Design by Rachel Heilman, Issaquah High School

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Developed with the support of Dr. Sunila Kale and the South Asia Center (Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington), with funding from the U.S. Department of Education National Resource Centers Program.

General Information

Description

How can understanding a particular region both shape and enhance our understanding of ourselves and the world around us? As we gain knowledge, how do we both recognize and cross the political boundaries we see on maps? In this one-semester course we will use an interdisciplinary approach to examine India and wider South Asia as we work to conceptualize the ways people, power, geography, and the past shape the region. For the purposes of this course South Asia will include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In our role as global citizens we will also expand our inquiries to the web of connections between South Asia and our own individual and social identities.

Expectations and Goals

Units include:

- South Asia as a Region
- Identities in South Asia
- Diffusion of People and Cultures
- Student-Led Inquiry and Presentation

Throughout the course we will be building a foundation in some interdisciplinary approaches to the construction of knowledge:

- Area Studies
- International Studies
- Ethnic Studies

Course Materials

Required Materials

- Notebook

Required Text

- Selected articles (available online and linked in weekly agendas)

- The course is designed to be text-less, but you could choose any of the optional texts below if you'd like to expand the course. You could use the optional texts to level the course up, assign homework (there isn't any built in), or provide enrichment. Each weekly agenda will include an assortment of potential reading assignments.
- *The Story of India* (BBC/PBS) Episode 3 "Spice Routes and Silk Roads," Episode 5 "The Meeting of Two Oceans," and Episode 6 "Freedom" – check your library streaming options or purchase the episodes

Optional Texts

These texts are not required for this course, but one or two selections from this list will be of value for the instructor, as supplemental student readings, or in order to expand or re-level the course. Which text you choose will reflect which aspects of the course you would like to emphasize.

- Bhatt, Amy and Nalini Iyer. *Roots and Reflections: South Asians in the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013.
- Bose, Sugata, and Ayesha Lala. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.
- Chakravorty, Sanjoy, Davesh Kapur, and Nirvikar Singh. *The Other One Percent: Indians in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- DeVotta, Neil, and Sumit Ganguly. *Understanding Contemporary India*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021.
- Dutt, Yashica. *Coming Out As Dalit*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2019.
- Jeffrey, Craig and John Harriss. *Keywords for Modern India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Nanda, B.R. *Gandhi and His Critics*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Ludden, David. *India and South Asia: A Short History*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2014.
- Mann, Michael. *South Asia's Modern History: Thematic Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Mines, Diane P., and Sarah Lamb. *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- Nanda, B.R. *Gandhi and His Critics*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Talbot, Ian. *A History of Modern South Asia: Politics, States, Diasporas*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2016.
- Visweswarn, Kamala. *Perspectives on Modern South Asia: a Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- Wadley, Susan Snow. *South Asia in the World: An Introduction*. Oxfordshire England: Routledge, 2015.

Course Schedule

The following schedule is designed to accompany a semester-long high school course. Individual weekly agendas will provide lesson plans that can be adjusted to fit particular bell schedules.

Note: Week 13, Lesson 1 provides an opportunity to invite members of your local South Asian community and/or guests who specialize in the region academically into your classroom. Beginning to schedule that early in the semester is likely necessary. If you are able to arrange for some chai to sip while chatting with your guests that would be optimal! Perhaps your school has a culinary program that you could collaborate with?

Week	Unit	Lessons
Week 1	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Introductions and Expectations • “10 Things to Know About India” Analysis
Week 2	Unit 1: South Asia as Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Area Studies • Physical Geography (Case Study: Connections in the Indian Ocean) • Linguistic Geography (Case Study: “Multilingualism in India”)
Week 3	Unit 1: South Asia as Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography of Belief Systems (Case Study: Cultural Diffusion) • Geography of Well-Being (Case Study: Bhutan)
Week 4	Unit 1: South Asia as Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Geography (Case Study: Partition) • Assessment: Conceptualizing South Asia as a Region (Short Essay)
Week 5	Unit 2: Identities in South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Culture is Like an Iceberg” Activity • Personal, Social, and National Identities • Close Reading and Response: Excerpt from Madhu Kishwar’s “Who Am I? Living Identities vs. Acquired Ones” • Intro to International Studies
Week 6	Unit 2: Identities in South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Where is India?” Analysis • Facets of Identity in India • Political History Overview
Week 7	Unit 2: Identities in South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-Led Case Studies: Gandhi, Ambedkar, Phule, Savarkar, Periyar, and Jinnah

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Identity in the Context of Indian Nationalism (One-Pager Presentation)
Week 8	Unit 2: Identities in South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Case Studies/One-Pager Presentations • Close Reading and Response: "The Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Its Regional and Global Ramifications" • Close Listening and Response: Manan Ahmed Asif (<i>The Loss of Hindustan: The Invention of India</i>) Interview • Assessment: Identities in South Asia
Week 9	Unit 3: Diffusion of People and Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Urbanization, Migration, and Cultural Diffusion • Rural to Urban Demographic Shifts (Case Study: <i>Lifelines</i>) • Extension Options (Historical Migrations, Urbanization, Refugees)
Week 10	Unit 3: Diffusion of People and Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline: South Asian Migration to the United States • Intro to Ethnic Studies • Intro to American Immigration Policy • WebQuest: Intro to the South Asian American Experience
Week 11	Unit 3: Diffusion of People and Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asians and Race in the U.S. (Case Studies: Bhagat Singh Thind and 1907 Bellingham Riots and 9/11)
Week 12	Unit 3: Diffusion of People and Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Perspectives Analysis (Case Study: Myth of the Model Minority) • Inequality in the South Asian American Community (Case Study: Caste in the United States) • Assessment: Ethnic Studies Program Proposal -- Letter to the Editor
Week 13	Unit 4: Student-Led Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chai and Chat Discussions and Reflection (plan to include academic and community guests if you are able) • Choosing a Research Question • Context Research

Week 14	Unit 4: Student-Led Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a Thesis Statement • Research
Week 15	Unit 4: Student-Led Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding Research and Presentation Preparation
Week 16	Unit 4: Student-Led Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation Preparation
Week 17	Unit 4: Student-Led Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations • Reflections
Week 18	Final Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Reflection