

Week 12 Agenda: U3 Diffusion of People and Cultures

India and South Asia: From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies

As we draw the primarily instructor-led portions of the course to a close, we'll circle back to the main idea from the beginning of this unit: What does an Ethnic Studies approach bring to our studies of South Asia? We'll look at how inequalities are perpetuated in the South Asian American community – do inequalities that originated in South Asia diffuse from the region along with the people? Does American culture change the way those inequalities are expressed or introduce new ways? We'll also more explicitly introduce using multiple perspectives/lenses in analysis because it is part of what students will be asked to do in the student-led Unit 4.

Optional Readings for Teachers or as Class Text

- Bhatt and Iyer Ch. 6-Epilogue
- Chakravorty, Kapur, and Singh Ch. 6-Epilogue
- DeVotta and Ganguly Ch. 7 "The Politics of Caste" by Christophe Jaffrelot (pgs. 161-184)
- Dutt Ch. 1-Epilogue

LESSON #1: Introduction to the Application of Multiple Perspectives

Optional Bell-Ringer: Think back to our earlier lessons on identity. Which facets of your identity bring you the most power in your school setting? Do any of them make you an underdog?

Purpose

- Students will already have had experience in their other classes using different lenses to approach course material, even if it isn't always specifically highlighted. This quick lesson is meant to help you draw your students' attention to the value of multiple perspectives – and prompt them to consider why as we study something academically we need to be aware of which lenses we are choosing to use (or not).

Prep

- Be prepared for students to discuss in pairs or small groups
- Have a copy of the handout (below) copied for each student – you will also use this chart in Lesson #2 (along with another handout that you should copy onto the back)

Procedure

1. As a class, brainstorm some challenges your school needs to address.

2. In pairs or small groups, have students choose one of the challenges to discuss. Allow them to freely ponder, then propose the following questions to help them target their discussion using multiple perspectives:
 - ❖ Do freshmen and seniors experience the challenge in the same way?
 - ❖ Are students and teachers equally concerned?
 - ❖ Does your school have groups that are differently impacted by this challenge?
 - ❖ Does the challenge look the same if you think of it in terms of gender?
 - ❖ What if you think about the challenge in terms of socio-economic status?
 - ❖ Will the right solution look the same to everyone?
3. Bring the discussion back to the whole group. Explain that understanding which lenses you are using – or not using – is part of what you have to do in academic work. You must be clear about what you are and are not trying to contribute to your audience’s knowledge base. As an example, brainstorm which facets of identity might be important to consider if you were researching political power in a country (or another topic of your choice).
4. Give students the handout (below). Tell them that in the next lesson they will use the handout to take notes on an article. For this lesson, ensure they will be able to look for representation of each of the perspectives (or identify them as missing).

Name _____

Multiple Perspectives

How does changing the lens we consider this topic through change what we see – or what we don't see?

Class Lens (based on wealth or other important marker of social status)	
Race and/or Ethnicity Lens (based on perceived race category or culture group identity)	
Gender Lens (based on identification as female or male, or a rejection of that binary)	
Economic Lens (trade, jobs, money, class)	
Social & Cultural Lens (hierarchies like caste, art, religion, language, gender)	
Political Lens (government, laws, power)	

LESSON #2: Model Minority (Article Analysis Using Multiple Perspectives)

Optional Bell-Ringer: Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you represent not just yourself, but an entire group that you are a member of?

Purpose

- The myth of South Asians being part of a “model minority” can be an impactful part of the South Asian American experience. In addition to being introduced to the concept, students will have an opportunity to practice using multiple perspectives.

Prep

- Students will need their copy of the handout (above) from the previous lesson and the article response prompts handout (below)
- Students will need access to “Intersectionality within the Indian American Experience” by Muskaan Arshad in the Fall 2021 issue of the *Harvard Political Review*: <https://harvardpolitics.com/indian-american-experience/>
- Decide if you need to also provide copies of the reading support handout (below) or otherwise modify the reading (for example, using <https://rewordify.com/>)

Procedure

1. On their Multiple Perspectives chart (handout above), students should write “Muskaan Arshad – Model Minority Reading” in the blank column heading.
2. Students should read the article “Intersectionality within the Indian American Experience” by Muskaan Arshad (<https://harvardpolitics.com/indian-american-experience/>) and take brief notes on their Multiple Perspectives charts as they read. The notes should be bits of information or quotations that exhibit the particular lenses. They may not have something to write in every box.
3. When they are finished reading the article, students should respond to the prompts on the second handout (below) – ideally it should be copied onto the back of the first handout.
4. Optional Extension: PBS’ *Asian Americans* lesson plans “The Model Minority Myth” (<https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/model-minority-myth-video/asian-americans/>) or “Views from the Top and Bottom of Success in the Silicon Valley” (<https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/success-silicon-valley-video/asian-americans/>).

Name _____

Multiple Perspectives Reflection

1. When Arshad references Audre Lorde's assertion that "we don't live single-issue lives," she is referencing the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality is a concept that was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw, a law professor. It is a concept that asks us to consider how people's social identities overlap and interact with each other, particularly how those layered social identities might result in exacerbated oppression.

Based on what you've learned in this course and read in Arshad's article, how do you think intersectionality shapes the lives of South Asian Americans (not just Indian Americans)?

2. What do you think of the concept of a "model minority" – does such a thing exist? Explain your thinking.
3. This article was written to address concerns beyond Arshad's own personal life, but no one piece of writing is going to use all of the lenses on your chart. Which one(s) did Arshad make use of? Which ones are not present in the article? What do you think guided her choices about which lens to use?

Reading Support for “Intersectionality within the Indian American Experience” by Muskaan Arshad

Meritocratic – power and influence are earned based on individual effort rather than wealth or some other measure of social status

Benign – harmless

White supremacy – the belief that people who are socially categorized as White should be dominant and the systems that support that dominance

H-1B Visa – a visa is temporary permission to enter a country as a non-citizen; H-1B refers to the visa program that gives employers the ability to ask the government to grant people who are not U.S. citizens temporary (3-6 years) permission to live and work in the U.S. The employers must attest to the government that hiring these foreign professionals, who will work in “specialty occupations” that require at least a bachelor’s degree of education, will not harm the wages or working conditions of similarly employed American workers (for more information, see <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/h1b-visa-program-fact-sheet>)

Dalits – Equality Labs defines Dalits as “Caste communities that were forced by Caste [legal and social discrimination] into slave and [forced] agricultural labor, and undignified sanitation work like manual scavenging. Branded untouchable for jobs considered spiritually polluting, they struggle against extreme violence and discrimination.” (<https://www.equalitylabs.org/castesurvey/#what-is-caste>)

Systemic Discrimination – people in particular groups are disadvantaged because patterns of power are reflected in governmental and social institutions (like school, the legal system, government, etc.)

“accrue generational wealth” – the process of building on and benefitting from your ancestors’ financial well-being (home ownership, ability to support your nutritional and educational needs, etc.)

Privilege – benefits a person has because of some aspect of their identity rather than because of their own efforts

Diaspora – diffusion of people away from their homeland

Caricature – an imitation of someone in which characteristics are exaggerated for comedic effect and/or based on a stereotype

Xenophobic mindsets – thinking in a prejudiced way

Intersectionality – a concept that was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw, a law professor. It is a concept that asks us to consider how people’s social identities overlap and interact with each other, particularly how those layered social identities might result in exacerbated oppression.

LESSON #3: Caste in the United States

Optional Bell-Ringer: What do you know about caste? Write down as many facts as you can – how you'd define it, where it came from, how it affects people's lives.

Purpose

- Caste is an important concept for scholars of South Asia to understand, but it is also important for Americans to be familiar with because influential social constructs diffuse along with people. This lesson will deepen students' understanding of the concept of caste and then extend their thinking into how caste impacts South Asian American communities.

Prep

- Preview and be prepared to project the Introduction to Caste PPT
- Students will need a piece of paper because essentially, this is an exercise in whole-group document analysis – you'll be projecting the text and asking students to record their analysis to it and finally draw their own conclusion as to how caste is best defined
- You'll have to use your own judgment about how much discussion and support students need – I recommend reading each slide aloud, giving them time to ponder, then discussing in small groups or as a class before you have them write anything down

Procedure

1. Guide students through the Introduction to Caste PPT.

LESSON #4: Caste in the United States

Optional Bell-Ringer: How do you think caste might affect people of South Asian heritage who are living and working in the United States?

Purpose:

- Students have thought their way through some very complex and difficult concepts this week – systemic discrimination, intersectionality, and caste. A case study is a good opportunity to see how these abstract constructs look in the real lives of real people.

Prep

- Students will need a coloring page of some sort and colored pencils to keep their hands occupied as they listen, though doodling on a blank page should also be an option
- Students will hand in their coloring page at the end of the lesson, after you've had them record a response on the back
- Be prepared to play the NPR *Rough Translation* episode "How To Be An Anti-Casteist" (34 min.): <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/21/915299467/how-to-be-an-anti-casteist>

Procedure

1. Explain to students that their primary job is simply to listen, though they will have a prompt to respond to and turn in at the end of the episode.
2. Ensure all students have a coloring page or blank piece of paper to doodle on.
3. Play NPR's *Rough Translation* episode "How To Be An Anti-Casteist" (34 min.): <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/21/915299467/how-to-be-an-anti-casteist>.
4. Have students color and listen.
5. When the episode ends, have students turn their coloring/doodle page over and list the following: What responsibility do companies and institutions in the U.S. have to be aware of caste and take action to limit any inequalities it creates?

Assessment: Ethnic Studies Program Proposal Letter to the Editor

Purpose

- Now that students have had an opportunity to examine patterns of diffusion and the lived experiences of South Asians in the United States, they can put that context together with their consideration of Ethnic Studies.

Prep

- Copy of the assessment directions (below) for each student

Procedure

1. Students should respond to the prompt, following the guidelines provided in the assessment directions.
2. Grade the assessments using the rubric provided (below).

Unit 3 Assessment

Diffusion of People and Cultures

You have learned *a lot* about how South Asians have affected the world beyond the boundaries of South Asia. Now you'll consider what you've learned about South Asian communities in the United States and draw some conclusions about Ethnic Studies programs. Should colleges nurture and expand their Ethnic Studies programs, introducing them if they don't already have them? What role should Ethnic Studies play in our K-12 school systems?

Your task is to write a hypothetical letter to the educational institution or system of your choice (actually sending it is not part of the assessment) expressing your position on the introduction or expansion of an Ethnic Studies program.

Your letter must include:

- ❖ An introduction explaining who you are and why you've chosen to direct your letter to the particular audience you have chosen
- ❖ Your definition of Ethnic Studies (include enough detail to make clear you understand the purpose of that particular type of interdisciplinary study)
- ❖ Your argument – should an Ethnic Studies program be supported? If so, how? If not, why not? You should explicitly reference at least two things you learned throughout the course of this unit.

Rubric

CONCERNS Areas that need improvement	CRITERIA Standards for this assessment	STRENGTHS Evidence of exceeding standards
	Introduction of self	
	Explanation of why the recipient was chosen	
	Defines Ethnic Studies	
	Statement of position	
	Content from the unit that supports the position (#1)	
	Content from the unit that supports the position (#2)	

Relevant Washington State Standards

SSS1.9-12.5 Explain the challenge and opportunities of addressing problems over place and time using disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses.

SSS3.9-12.1 Evaluate one's own viewpoint and the viewpoints of others in the context of a discussion.

C1.11-12.2 Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order.

C2.9-10.1 Explain how citizens and institutions address social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and international level.

C3.9-10.2 Analyze relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

C4.11-12.3 Evaluate the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

E1.9-10.1 Analyze how the costs and benefits of economic choices have shaped events in the world in the past and present.

E1.9-10.2 Analyze how choices made by individuals, firms, or governments are constrained by the resources to which they have access.

E2.9-10.2 Describe the effects of specialization, availability of resources, and technology on a variety of economies.

G1.9-10.2 Explain the causes and effects of voluntary and involuntary migration in the world.

G2.11-12.6 Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

G2.11-12.7 Evaluate current opportunities and obstacles connected with international migration.

G3.11-12.4 Evaluate how changes in the environmental and cultural characteristics of a place or region influence spatial patterns of trade and land use.

H2.11-12.3 Evaluate how individuals and movements have shaped contemporary world issues.

H3.11-12.1 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.