

History 01:508:331
Women in Modern South Asia
Instructor: Rochisha Narayan
Monday & Wednesday 4th Period (1.10 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.)
Campbell Hall A3

Instructor Contact Information:

Office: 013, VDH

Office Hours:

Email: rnarayan@history.rutgers.edu

Course Description and Objectives: This course maps the history of women in South Asia from the eighteenth century to the present. The **two** main objectives of this course will be to analyze the colonial state and its policies with respect to women and, to study the growth of women's organizations and movements within the context of nationalist struggles.

Women in South Asia comprised of a heterogeneous group who were divided along lines of caste, class, region, occupation and faith. This heterogeneity will form the core of the course. At the outset students will learn about 'voice' and see how women from different castes in the medieval period voiced their rejection of caste hierarchies and patriarchal constraints. Students will then learn about state and families during the eighteenth century and note the changes in state and family structures with the later establishment of the colonial state. Students will learn about the ways in which colonial law, administrative, educational and reform policies, and cultural constructions based on 'race' and 'gender' had differential impacts on women depending on their caste, class, region and faith. They will then consider how these policies led to the emergence of an elite yet heterogeneous group of educated and reformed women in the nineteenth century who became literary activists and formed women's organizations. Students will learn about the relationship and the intricate connections between these organizations and nationalist movements of the early twentieth century. They will then consider the role of peasant and lower caste women in peasant and anti-caste movements in the twentieth century. An understanding of these different and often conflicting movements will complicate assumptions of a homogenous category of 'women'. Subsequently, students will interrogate the women's movement of the 1970s and 80s within this variegated, conflicting and stratified context of women's experiences.

Required Texts:

- Course Packet on Electronic Reserve at Alexander Library (All the readings will be available on the E-reserves)
- Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge University Press, 1999, paperback)

Useful Sites for Maps and Illustrations

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps>

<http://dsal.uchicago.edu>

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/web/indiv/southasia/curl>

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00wp/>

Assignments and Grading:

- Class Attendance: 25%
- Class Participation: 30% (This includes asking questions and making contributions about the readings and lectures. In each class, **students will be expected to write and turn in at least two questions or observations about the readings for the day**)

Acknowledgment: I am grateful to Professor Indrani Chatterjee for sharing her syllabus for the Women in Modern South Asia, Spring 2007 course with me. I have drawn significantly from Professor Chatterjee's syllabus and her valuable comments to construct this course.

- A **Four-Five** page paper: 20% (In this paper you are required to write an essay on the question of 'voice' using extracts of women's writing, testimonies and other readings from the course.)
- A **Ten** page essay: 25% (In this essay students are required to develop a discussion on the stratified and heterogeneous experiences of women in twentieth century colonial India and elaborate on how this impacted women's activism during the period.)

Late Assignments:

Late Submissions will not be accepted except in cases of emergency in which case the student will have to provide the necessary explanatory documentation.

Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is not acceptable under any circumstances. For more details go to the webpage: <http://history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm>

Class Attendance and Participation: Class attendance is mandatory and counts towards 25% of your grade. Any unexcused absence will definitely affect your grade. Participation in class is a crucial component of the course. Students are expected to come prepared with the assigned readings to each class. Students are also expected to engage with the readings and contribute to discussions by posing questions regarding the readings and making observations of their own. As we move from week to week students should be able to make connections between the issues and readings from different weeks.

Class Etiquette: You are required to come to class on time. If you must come late or leave early please make sure you occupy seats closest to the doors so as not to disturb others. Any student coming in fifteen minutes after or leaving fifteen minutes before class ends will be marked absent for the day. In class you are expected to work and learn in co-operation with your fellow students. Listening and engaging respectfully with each other is a must during discussions as you are here to learn from the instructor and others in the class.

Schedule of Classes

January 23	Understanding terms and categories: South Asia, Women and Gender history.
January 28	'Voice': Daud Ali, 'From Nayika to Bhakta: A Genealogy of female subjectivity in early medieval India', pp. 157-180. (<i>E-reserves</i>)
January 30	Katherine Butler Brown, 'If Music be the food of love: masculinity and eroticism in Mughal <i>mehfil</i> ' pp. 61-86 (<i>E-reserves</i>)
February 4	The Bhakti Movement, dissenting caste hierarchies and patriarchies: 'Mirabai' in John S Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer ed., <i>Songs of the Saints of India</i> , pp. 119-140.
February 6	Historicizing and Complicating distinctions between Family and State: Sumit Guha, 'The Family Feud as a Political Resources in Eighteenth-century India' in Indrani Chatterjee ed. <i>Unfamiliar Relations</i> , pp. 73-94.

- February 11 Moving beyond binaries: William Dalrymple, 'White Mughals: The Case of James Achilles Kirkpatrick and Khair un-Nissa' in Indrani Chatterjee ed. *Unfamiliar Relations*, pp. 122-160.
- February 13 Indrani Chatterjee, 'Coloring Subalternity: Slaves, Concubines and Social Orphans in Early Colonial India', pp. 49-97 (*E-reserves*)
Watch film clips from Mangal Pandey
- February 18 Where does death matter? Colonial Law and slave women: Sylvia Vatuk, 'Bharttee's Death: Domestic Slave-Women in Nineteenth-Century Madras', pp. 210-233. (*E-reserves*)
- February 20 Where does death matter? Colonial Law and the Upper-Caste woman: Anand Yang, 'Who's Sati? Widow burning in early 19th century India' (*E-reserves*)
Lata Mani, 'Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India', pp. 88-126.
- February 25 Vaishnav Bhakti and an Upper-caste Hindu woman's selfhood: Rashundari Debi, Excerpts from *Amar Jivan* (My Life), pp. 192-210 (*E-reserves*)
- February 27 Differing notions of selfhood among Upper-caste Hindu Women: Pandita Ramabai, 'The High-Caste Hindu Woman', pp. 130-180. (*E-reserves*)
- March 3 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, pp. 1-63,
- March 5 Literary Activism and Muslim Women: Gail Minault, 'Ladies Home Journals: Women's Magazines in Urdu' in *Secluded Scholars*, pp. 105-157. (*E-reserves*)
- March 10 Read twentieth century first-person narratives from Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha ed. *Women Writing in India*. (*E-reserves*).
Four- Five page Essay due in Class
- March 12 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, pp. 64-120.
- Spring Break March 15-23**
- March 24 The Nationalist Movement: Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, pp. 120-156
- March 26 Working-class women and Domesticity: Samita Sen 'Gendered Exclusion: Domesticity and Dependence in Bengal', pp. 65-86. (*E-reserves*)
- March 31 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, pp. 157-188.
- April 2 Prem Chowdhury, 'Customs in a Peasant Economy: Women in Colonial Haryana', pp. 302-336. (*E-reserves*)
- April 9 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, pp. 189-222
- April 14 Peasant Women and the Nation-State, Extracts on the Telengana Struggle from *We Were Making History*. (*E-reserves*)

- April 16 Partition: Excerpts from Kamla Patel, *Torn from the Roots: A Partition Memoir* (*E-reserves*)
- April 21 Watch Film Pinjar
- April 23 Watch Film Pinjar
- April 28 The Contemporary Feminist Movement: Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing*, pp. 97-142. (*E-reserves*)
- April 30 Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing*, pp. 143-190. (*E-reserves*)
- May 5 Discussion for Final papers.
- May 12 Last Date for Submission of Final papers by 5 p.m. in 013 VDH