

EMORY UNIVERSITY

BRAJESH SAMARTH

MIDDLE EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

FRESHMEN SEMINAR – 190 (Fall 2023)

21st Century India: Nationalism to Neo-nationalism

**Brajesh Samarth,
Middle Eastern and South Asian, Fall 2023
September 9, 2023**

Class Time & Location

Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00-5:15 pm, New Psyc Building, #235

Instructor' Office Hours

S-304B, Callaway Center, 2:30-4 pm F, and by appointment via Zoom

Email: brajesh.samarth@emory.edu, Cell Phone: (615) 391 3597 (weekdays only)

I review emails regularly and will respond to an email within 12 hours. If you wish to call or set up a Zoom video chat, please send a request and we can set up a Zoom appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION



Evidence Based Seminar

Evidence: something that supports or challenges a claim, theory, or argument.
(Adapted and synthesized from the Oxford English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary.)

This is an evidence-focused First-Year seminar, which is part of Emory's "The Nature of Evidence: How Do You Know?" This course will discuss how evidence is used to support knowledge and beliefs. Evidence-focused courses foreground issues of evidence, teach explicitly about evidence, and demonstrate that the use of evidence is an integral part of the learning experience.

This course will explore the image of 21st century India through mediums such as scholarly written texts and films on the respective topics, and will be focused on the depicted reality vs. the historical

reality. Films have the ability to project powerful images of a society in ways conventional academic mediums cannot, thus we will also be watching movies, documentaries and videos to support our textual resources. Students who have had no prior experience with South Asian cinema will get an exposure to a new world-view. Students who have already been exposed to it will find and articulate new ways of approaching Bollywood movies, and learn about India commendably.

This course examines the Indian culture, society and history. We will mainly examine these important aspects of India, and explore how concepts such as gender, caste, religion, and nation change over time. Many major themes in contemporary South Asia—such as the rise of (neo) nationalism, the social hierarchies, the relationship between the politics and the corruption, and the role of religion in India—must be understood with reference to the turbulent years which shaped current India. We will be reading about some of the major political, social, religious, and cultural developments within early modern, colonial, and postcolonial South Asia. Students will be exposed to various sources (texts and videos), and learn how to read and evaluate primary and secondary texts, how to weigh evidence, and how to formulate a coherent historical argument.

Course Objectives

Students can expect the following through successful completion of this course:

1. To gain an awareness of the historical background of the subcontinent and of contemporary Indian society
2. To learn about the political and economic realities and challenges Indians face inside and outside Indian subcontinent
3. To develop your own critical approach to understand historical events and cultivate arguments based on evidence
4. To analyze the different types of questions, methods, and analyses employed in different social science disciplines, and the value (as well as the potential challenges) of placing them in conversation
5. To understand and interpret Indian literature and movies (or, movies related to India) within relevant cultural contexts. And, demonstrate independent, critical thought in the analysis and discussion of these movies using reasons and evidence for supporting ideas.

I expect the classroom to be an atmosphere where the free and vital exchange of ideas is encouraged; respect for all persons is fundamental to that atmosphere. **This classroom will be an exercise in creating a public sphere where community responsibility for truth entails that the public sphere belongs not to opinion but to rational argument supported by evidence and research.** For each contribution, be it an explanation or a question, you must aim at engaging with the material and your classmates. Please also remember that the classroom is composed of students from diverse backgrounds. You will be expected to conduct yourself professionally and as a scholar in all situations.

Learning Outcomes

As part of this program, we will be reading texts and discussing our current socio-political reality, analyze evidence and knowledge construction, as well as talking about how researchers, film-makers and scholars use evidence to create compelling interpretations of our socio-political reality, in its ideal and non-ideal forms. The evidence-based goals for this course are as follows:

1. To distinguish uses of evidence in understanding Indian History and the challenges it brings.

- Learn about the differences between primary and secondary sources
 - Learn about the limits and advantages of primary sources that consist of aggregate data vs. narrative data
2. To access, locate, identify, and analyze evidence.
- Identify, gather, and analyze primary evidence on the topics
 - Recognize the value and limitations of different types of evidences for different kinds of literary scholarship, including close readings and movies
3. To evaluate evidence.
- Analyze primary sources in writing and orally, individually, and collectively
4. To build arguments based on primary evidence and assess the arguments of others.
- Learn how to organize, summarize, and synthesize evidence of different kinds
 - Present your insights clearly and imaginatively

REQUIRED TEXTS

Academic Articles and papers will be provided by the instructor on Canvas

1. Most of the films/documentaries/videos for this course are now available on Netflix (or YouTube) and you are welcome to watch the films using an account there.
2. Please be aware that the contents of some of the films may be disturbing (abuse, violence, explicit sexual content) to some students.

TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

It is very important to master the technologies of this course and to meet course requirements and deadlines. Most of these will be integrated into our Learning Management System, Canvas (which many of you are already quite familiar with; for those who need a tutorial, see [here](#)). Key programs for the class include Microsoft Word, a good web-browser and Adobe Reader so you can access our online readings. Please familiarize yourself with the technological requirements for this class and reach out for assistance if you are experiencing difficulties.

COURSE POLICIES

Class Participation

You and your input are central to the success - or failure - of this class. I will act as a discussion facilitator, guide, and your teacher; your responsibility is to prepare for and participate fully in class discussion. What is valued is not merely the quantity, but the **QUALITY** of your contribution.

Class Discussion on Assigned Readings

You are expected to read assigned texts before the class devoted to discussion of them. This is a class based on collaborative discourse. As such, being prepared to participate in discussions is a course requirement. This entails having read, annotated, and thought about the complete assignment carefully before class starts. I strongly recommend that, as you read *assigned texts* you take notes (in the margins or elsewhere). The reading should get easier as you become more familiar with the topic, but please feel free to see me at any time if you are having difficulties with the language, and I will be happy to talk and recommend some resources.

Furthermore, you must have a copy (paper or paperless) of the text to class every day. Since we will be engaged in closely examining the texts/articles we read and the language that they use, if you don't have your text/articles then you aren't prepared for class, even if you have read the assignment. Naturally, this admonition applies to the texts that you will find online.

I encourage you to compare the use of evidence in different disciplines which they familiar with or aspire to learn or master in future. It is important for students to understand both commonalities and differences across the disciplines. You must see our in-class conversations as an opportunity to form and participate in a vibrant intellectual community in which we all remain open to learning from one another. Be ready to speak honestly and without hostility, and to listen with empathy. Throughout the semester, do remain aware of the impact that your words and behavior can have on your colleagues.

More broadly speaking: Ask questions. Be curious. You are more than welcome to have a different interpretation of a text than a classmate or me; just be sure to share your perspective in a productive and supportive manner. Since the course will be conducted as a seminar and not a series of lectures, the substance of our class meetings will primarily consist of your responses to the course texts (such as general questions, impressionistic responses, or interpretations of particular passages) and, secondarily, my engagement with your responses. Your thoughts and questions will provide the starting point for our discussions. Your active participation will be consequently factored into your final grade for the course. If you're reluctant to speak up, please talk to me and we'll figure out a way for you to participate. Additionally, you are required to participate in weekly Canvas Discussions by Monday of the following week so you are prepared to discuss our readings in class.

Attendance

Students are to attend and actively participate in all hours of instruction in-person. In our MESAS 190, this means about 28 sessions in Fall 2022 semester. Given the complexity of distinguishing between 'excused' versus 'unexcused' absences, the program guidelines refer only to 'absences.' The record of absences is not included in the grading scale (i.e., the performance grade) but rather in the overall final grade.

The first absence of one class hour will result in a 1% deduction from the final class grade, after the first absence, each successive absence subtracts 2% i.e., missing 4 classes (7%) = a 93% ceiling for calculating a final grade. If students expect or even anticipate exiting from classes for some reason, they should choose to take the class during another semester.

Students who will miss class for official University-sponsored activities should notify their instructor during the first week of class regarding the date(s) of expected absence(s) and the official activity involved.

Number of Absences	Deduction from Final Grade	
0	0%	*One percentage point is taken off the final grade for the first absence. Each successive absence is penalized at 2%. Note that three late arrivals are taken as equal to one absence <i>Any late arrival of more than 15 minutes will count as one absence from class.</i>
1	1%	
2	2%	
3	2%	
4	2%	
	7% = total	

ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be computed as follows:

1. Classroom Participation and Evidence Based discussion:

The success of this course depends on your active and thoughtful participation and engagement in and outside of class. Your participation grade is broken down into three parts: Attendance, Weekly Discussion Posts, and In-Class Discussions.

Weekly Discussion Posts (250-300 words) by Monday

A. Briefly summarize the readings in your own words and answer the week’s guiding questions, available on the Discussion section of Canvas.

B. Give some indication of your reaction to the reading:

- What did you find most interesting or useful in the readings?
- What did you find most troubling and problematic? Confusing? Why?
- What aspects of your own experience make sense in light of the readings?

2. Presentations:

Each student will be required to lead a classroom discussion during the course of the semester. Guidelines shall be discussed in class. You will present your analysis and examples in class, leading and facilitating discussion for the entire class period. For the discussions, students will be required to have a teaching plan ready and prepare "thought questions" to elicit discussion on the readings and film. You will prepare and send a 1-page (2-sided maximum) presentation handout to be distributed to everyone. A sign-up sheet and further details will be given in the second week of the semester; it is best if you start working on your presentations as soon as you sign up for them, in order to do a good job and collect relevant examples/visual aids.

3. Quizzes:

There will be two quizzes (consisting of both, multiple-choice and short answer questions) in Week 6 and 12 based on the topics covered in class.

4. Evidence Based Essay:

This is a scaffolded assignment, that is, you will produce different components at each stage, and each component will build on the ones before it. This is a staged assignment that culminates in a 10 pages paper (2000-2500 words).

5. Documentary Project:

For your project, you will be preparing a short documentary on the topics covered in class.

Late work:

Students are expected to turn in all work on time. Late papers will only be accepted in the case of documented illness, emergency, or other misadventure.

GRADING SCALE

100-95	94-91	90-88	87-84	83-81	80-78	77-74	73-71	70-68	67-64	63-61	<61
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Item	Timeline	Points
Classroom Participation		
• Attendance	28 classes	10
• Weekly Discussion Posts	13 Weeks	10
• Class Discussions	13 Weeks	10
Presentation	1 Presentation with a partner	10
Quiz 1	Week 6	10
Quiz 2	Week 12	10
Essay: 3 Steps	Week 13	30
Project	Week 14	10

Class Policies

- Students are responsible for all assignments and announcements presented in class.
- Be in class on time and prepared to participate in class discussion.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, crude, or inappropriate remarks of any kind will not be tolerated. Respect your classmates and instructor, and always use civil discourse in class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Be careful not to copy the work of peers or to use material without proper attribution. Nothing can be more disastrous for your grade or for your college record than to be found to have violated the university's rules on academic honesty. Students who violate these rules are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course or dismissal from the university or both. Please refer to the Emory College Code of Honor, http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html.

If you have any questions about properly utilizing sources, check with the instructor.

Statement on Academic Integrity and Outside Assistance

All students are expected to abide by the Emory Honor Code with regard to class work, activities, and assignments related to their language classes. Plagiarism refers to the unattributed, direct copying of language and/or ideas from a source other than the student. This includes translations of source material into the target language. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden as a part of Emory's Honor Code. Assistance on take-home written assignments may take various forms. It is acceptable for students to receive help on daily grammar assignments and workbook exercises. Under no circumstances, however, is another person to compose **any part** of an essay for you or contribute to the ideas or substantive expression of individual assignments. Tutors from the CTL are expected to abide by these rules. ***Please note that peer editing on compositions is permissible only when specifically allowed in the instructions for the assignment.*** Your instructor may also ask you to declare the amount of assistance you have received on any written or oral assignment. For collaborative or group work, your instructor will issue guidelines on what is appropriate.

Special Needs

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS I value inclusion in our seminar. If you have a documented disability and have anticipated barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, or you are in need of accommodations for this semester, please contact the Office of Access, Disability Services, and Resources (ADSR) to learn more about the registration process and steps for requesting accommodations. All info will be held in the strictest confidence. If you are currently

registered with ADSR and have not received a copy of your accommodation notification letter within the first week of class, please notify ADSR immediately. For additional information regarding ADSR, please visit the website: equity.emory.edu/access.

Emory University is committed under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to providing appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the instructor(s) with an accommodation notification letter from Access, Disabilities Services and Resources office. Students are expected to give two weeks' notice of the need for accommodations. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with instructor(s) as soon as your accommodations have been finalized.

More information is available on the office's website at <http://www.ods.emory.edu/index.htm>.

MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING: The Counseling Center provides free, confidential counseling to all undergraduates dealing with stress or crises of any kind. To arrange an appointment, call (404) 727-7450 or go to the Counseling Center between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Counselors are on call in case of emergency. Read more at <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/>

Code of Conduct

Emory University expects that all students act honorably, demonstrating a keen sense of *ethical* conduct. The university expects that its students behave *respectfully*, providing particular *consideration* for other people and for property. As members of a community, Emory University expects that students act *responsibly*, being accountable for the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. University students are expected to be *trustworthy*, demonstrating *honest* character upon which others may rely with confidence.

<http://conduct.emory.edu/filebin/2014-2015%20Undergraduate%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

WEEKLY PLAN

Week 1: Syllabus Reading & Introduction

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Aug 24	Syllabus Main Features, India Main Features

Week 2: 21st Century India

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Aug 29	Sustainability in India: Challenges Facing India in the 21st Century
Aug 31	The History of Economic Development by Nimish Adhia
Video	

Week 3: 1857: The Revolt

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Sept 5	Student Presentation 1 , 1857 Smithsonian & The making of Indian Archives by P Deshpandey
Sept 7	India's Freedom Struggle 1857-1947: A Short History by Peter Haehs
Video	

Week 4: British India and Freedom Struggle

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Sept 12	Group Presentation , An era of darkness by Shashi Tharoor
Sept 14	An era of darkness by Shashi Tharoor
Video	

Week 5: Partition

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Sept 19	Student Presentation 2 , Three Partitions by Gyan Pandey, Jinnah Speech (Jinnah)
Sept 21	The Tired men of India and the Partition Massacres of 1947 by Rabia Ali
Video	

Week 6: The Relevance of Gandhi

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Sept 26	Student Presentation 3 , Chronology of Gandhi, The Gandhi everyone loves to hate by Vinay Lal
Sept 28	Gandhi's conundrum by Claude Markovits
Video	

Week 7: India-Pak Relationship

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Oct 3	Student Presentation 4 , India and Pak Engagement (US Inst. of Peace), Managing Tensions by Kao
Oct 5	Kashmir, recent developments and the US policy by K Alan Kronstadt
Video	

Week 8: Fall Break Week

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Oct 12	TBA
Video	

Week 9: Emergency

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Oct 17	Student Presentation 5 , Emergency in India: 1975-1977 by Rebecca Jane Williams
Oct 19	Right to Free Speech in a Censored Democracy by Subhradipta Sarkar
Video	

Week 10: Caste & Politics

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Oct 24	Student Presentation 6 , Census in Colonial India by Samarendra
Oct 26	Prejudice against Reservation by Thorat, BJP's 2019 victory by Finnigan

Video	
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Week 11: Religion & Politics

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Oct 31	Student Presentation 7 , Religious Nationalism and India's Future by M Vaishnav
Nov 2	Religion and Politics in India, Tolerance and Segregation in India (PEW)
Video	

Week 12: Dynasty Politics

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Nov 7	Student Presentation 8 , Dynasticism across Indian Political Parties by Adam Ziegfeld
Nov 9	Democratic Dynasties: Kanchan Chndra
Video	

Week 13: India and Bollywood

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Nov 14	Cuts and Bans by Brajesh Samarth , History of Bollywood: Tajaswani Ghati
Nov 16	Cinematograph Amendment Act 2021, Why Filmmakers are not happy by Raghav Tankha
Video	

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break Week

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Nov 21	TBA
Video	

Week 15: : Neo-nationalism and Culture of Protest

	Presentations and Discussion on Readings
Nov 28	Student Presentation 9 , The post-independence history of students' protests in India by Mazumdar
Nov 30	Why Nationalism Works? By Andreas Wimmer
Video	

Week 16: Presentations

Date	Presentations
Dec 5	

Important Dates

No.	Item	Due
1.	Quiz 1	Week 6, Sept 28
2.	Quiz 2	Week 12, Nov 9
3.	Essay: Three Steps (Sept 15, Oct 20, Nov 21)	Week 14, Nov 21
4.	Project	Week 15, Dec 4

Note:

All readings in pdf will be posted by the instructor on CANVAS (print or bring your own copy for class discussion)

Details Of Final Paper (Staged Paper)

This is a scaffolded assignment, that is, you will produce different components at each stage, and each component will build on the ones before it. This is a staged assignment that culminates in a 7-8-page paper.

Step 1: Choice of Topic + Summary: 10% of your Final Paper Grade (Due: Sept 15)

Select one of the topics of the assigned reading texts or movies (or from future topics from the syllabus) for the course that captures your interest. Write a two-page paper summarizing the argument of the essay/movie and concluding with a statement about the most surprising/interesting/important aspect of the argument. Identify and list three sources of evidence used by the author of the article that were particularly crucial in developing the idea that you will be exploring in more depth.

Step 2: Evidence: 30% of your Final Paper Grade (Due: October 20)

Locate those three sources, either in the library or an online database, and read them, making notes about how the scholar of your chosen article made use of evidence. Summarize each of the sources and explain what the author drew from them, as well as what major ideas or information the author chose to exclude. If appropriate, try to choose a mixture of primary source material and secondary sources, and explain how each is handled differently.

Step 3: Joining the conversation: 60% of your Final Paper Grade (Due: November 21)

Write a 8-10 page paper (including revisions of Step 1 and Step 2 based on instructor's feedback) addressing how the author of the original article made use of the selected sources, what the author "found" in them, how effective the use of evidence was, and what other interpretations of the evidence might have been possible. How did those sources take on new meaning in the author's work? Were the sources used fairly? Are other interpretations of the sources possible? Do the sources raise questions that were not addressed in the main article you are examining? Did examining these sources change your view of the original article in any way?

DETAILS OF PROJECT (DOCUMENTARY (Due: Dec 4)

Task: This project permits groups of 2-5 persons or individuals to create a documentary or a Bollywood film on a theme of their choice.

Choose a social problem that is dear to your heart and argue for change with integrity, respect, and persuasion for the Documentary. Explore the Diaspora experience through your own perspective for the Bollywood film.

Criteria for Evaluation:

- Prepare a 8-12 minute video with English subtitles.
- Clarity of thought and script organization
- Storytelling creativity
- Clear audio ensures that the message reaches the intended audience.

Classroom Presentation Signup Sheet

Week	Presentations	Themes	Students' Names
Week 3	1	1857: The Revolt	
Week 4	Group	British India and Freedom Struggle	Group Discussion
Week 5	2	Partition	
Week 6	3	The Relevance of Gandhi	
Week 7	4	India-Pak Relationship	
Week 9	5	Emergency	
Week 10	6	Caste and Politics	
Week 11	7	Religion and Politics	
Week 12	8	Dynasty Politics	
Week 15	9	Neo-nationalism and Culture of Protest	

Presentation Guidelines

1. Each student will be required to lead a classroom discussion (PPT presentation) during the course of the quarter. Students will submit a page length review/critique of materials related to the discussion they lead in English.
2. For the discussions, students will be required to have a teaching plan ready and prepare "thought questions" to elicit discussion on the readings and film.
3. You will have about 30 minutes for your presentation, and this will include questions and discussion time during and after the presentation. The presentation should follow a logical progression, consisting introduction of an argument or an issue, literature review or supporting material, a conclusion and discussion.
4. The goal of your presentation is to help us understand your thought and ideas about the topic you are presenting. A presentation is usually a timed exercise, and you must therefore select your material carefully so that it fits into the time allocated. Depending on your time, choose a selected number of key points, rather than attempt to cram everything you've read into your presentation.
5. Concentrate on arguments or developments, rather than simple facts. The presentation should encourage your audience to think, and to follow this up with a discussion. Thus, make sure your presentation encourages questions and discussion.