



REL 3938: RELIGION and BOLLYWOOD; Spring 2016
University of Florida, Department of Religion
Tues. 8th-9th periods and Thurs. 9th period
Anderson 13

Instructor: Jodi Shaw

jodilshaw@ufl.edu

Office: AND 123

Office hours: Thursdays 2:00-3:30, Fridays 11:00-12:30, and by appointment

DESCRIPTION:

Bollywood, a term coined in the 1970s, is often dismissed as frivolous, over the top, and derivative, yet it is a form of popular culture that has had a tremendous impact on millions of lives worldwide. Here, we will look at Bollywood (Hindi), Kollywood (Tamil), and Tollywood (Telugu) films from the perspective that popular culture shapes and is shaped by its context, and can tell us important things about our aspirations, fears, and critiques. This course contends that religion plays a critical role in India's secular cinema. It is a backdrop for strife, for bonding, an object of scrutiny, and a source of miracles. We will look at the ways in which religion is presented, or not, in popular cinema, exploring topics like: transformation, place, class, ethics, and politics.

This class fulfills the **Gordon Rule** writing requirement (GR2) for undergraduates. This means you are required to write a minimum of 2,000 words for this class. We will focus on developing the skills to write about film.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop a nuanced understanding of the ways in which the flows of popular cinema shape, challenge, and or uphold daily social and religious life
- To recognize, and question the manner in which different religions are depicted in films
- To problematize dyads like religious/secular, art/entertainment, and north/south by highlighting the porous spaces between them as well as their multi-directional exchanges
- To foster the skills to read films carefully
- To learn to write about film

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation 15% (15/100 points)
 - do all reading (see schedule)
 - view EACH required film (see schedule)
 - be prepared to discuss the readings and films
2. 6 discussion posts on Canvas (lowest grade will be dropped). 5% each, 20% overall, or 20/100 points.
 - Discussion posts begin on week 5, Feb. 3rd, and all the following week's **except for week 8** (February 23-25), when you will view *Raanijhanaa* (2013) there will be no prompt for that week.
 - The prompts will be related to a given week's film, and or readings.
 - Posts should be **approx. 250-350 words**, and are due that Wednesday at 11:59. They are under the discussion tab on the courses website.
3. **500-800 word** midterm paper on *Raanijhanaa* (2013), which will be due March 18th at 11:59. (The details will be discussed in class.) 20% or 20/100 points
 - **All papers** should be double spaced, 12 point font. All sources should be cited according to MLA (see helpful websites below for a link explaining how to do this), and have a bibliography. Submit your papers on Canvas.
4. An abstract with an annotated bibliography for the final paper due March 25th at 11:59. (The details will be explained in class.) 10% or 10/100 points.
5. A power-point presentation of your paper at the end of the semester. (The details will be discussed in class.) 10% or 10/100 points.
6. **1500-2500 word** final paper. The topic for the final paper will be decided upon with the instructor's approval. It is due during finals week, the date TBA. 25% or 25/100 points.

Attendance is **mandatory** and more than three absences without legitimate explanation will be reflected in the final grade which will be marked down (A to A- for example) for each unaccounted for absence. Class will meet Tuesday and Thursday, and you will be expected to have watched the film by Wednesday in order to answer the prompt. The instructor reserves the right to give a pop quiz / writing prompt if students continually demonstrate a lack of preparedness and have not completed the readings and/or film.

Remember these films are very long, so be sure to plan accordingly.

CONSEQUENCES OF LATE ASSIGNMENTS

The grade will be marked down (A to A- for example) for each day they are late unless the student supplies legitimate written documentation to justify the tardiness. Assignments will not be accepted a week after assigned deadline. The grade will automatically be zero for that assignment.

RULES

Cell phones and other devices must be turned off. If a student makes or receives calls in class he or she will be asked to leave, and will be marked absent for the day. Students may take notes on a laptop, tablet, etc., but the instructor reserves the right to ask the student to turn it off if circumstances warrant it. Texting, tweeting, chatting, and so forth are also deemed reasons to be asked to leave and the student will then be counted as absent. Any type of disruptive behavior including, but not limited to, snoring or whispering will also result in the student being asked to leave and counted as absent. Tardiness is strongly discouraged; it disrupts the flow of the class and distracts your classmates. Chronic tardiness without a legitimate written excuse, will result in a reduction in the final grade.

GRADING POLICY

Response posts: 20 pts (20%)

Mid semester paper: 20 pts. (20%)

Final paper abstract and annotated bibliography: 10 pts. (10%)

Final presentations: 10 pts (10%)

Final paper: 25 pts (25%)

Discussion and attendance: 15 pts (15%)

Total 100 pts (100%)

Grading Scale: 100-93: A, 92-90: A-, 89-86: B+, 85-83: B, 81-79: B-, 78-75: C+, 75-72: C, 71-69: C-, 68-66: D+, 65-62: D, 61-60: D-, 59-0: E

- Grade A is reserved for work that is exceptional in quality, for work showing keen in sight, understanding and initiative. (Note: No A+ grades).

- Grade B is for work that is consistently superior, for work showing interest, effort and/or originality.
- Grade C is a respectable grade that reflects consistent daily preparation and completion in a satisfactory manner of all work required in the course. A minimum “C” average (2.00) is required for graduation.
- Grade D is below the average necessary for meeting graduation requirements and ordinarily is not accepted for transfer by other institutions. A grade of a “D-” is the lowest passing grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are required to conform to the University’s academic honesty policy in regard to plagiarism and other types of cheating. This means that with all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” There is a zero tolerance policy in this course for any type of cheating and plagiarism. Any student found to have cheated, plagiarized, or in any other way violate the honor code for any assignment in this course will be prosecuted to the full extent of the university honor policy including judicial actions and sanctions. Please see the university guidelines for more information.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting classroom accommodations or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Disability Resource Center <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> to make an appointment to discuss your needs or request accommodations. Please ask the instructor if you would like any assistance in this process.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES POLICY

Please visit <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#religious> for information on UF’s policy on religious observances. Please note that students are required to inform instructors of any religious observances in order for it to be excused and students are responsible for any work that will be missed.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Dwyer, Rachel (2006) *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, New York: Routledge.

Corrigan, Timothy (2012) *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Eighth Edition, Pearson.

Velayutham, Selvaraj, editor (2008) *Tamil Cinema: The Cultural Politics of India's Other Film Industry*, New York: Routledge.

Other required reading will be available on the classes' Canvas site

REQUIRED FILMS

(Be sure to search for the correct year, because some films have been re-made, or have the same title.)

NOTE: Students are responsible for renting or purchasing these films, just as they would books.

NOTE: all films except *Guide*, *Raavanan*, and *Bombay* can be found to rent at two or more of the following sites: iTunes, Amazon Video, Google Play Movies & TV.

Guide (1965) Dir. Vijay Anand; 3 hr 3 min

Gopala Gopala (2015) Dir. Kishore Kumar Pardasani; 2 hr 33 min

Raavanan (2010) Dir. Mani Ratnam. (The dubbed Telugu version is called *Villain* and might be found on Youtube with English subtitles. The Hindi version is called *Raavan*.) 2 hr 17 min

Raanijhanaa (2013) Dir. Anand L. Rai; 2 hr 20 mins

Kutti Pulli (2013) Dirs. M. Muthaiah, G. Bhoopathy Pandian; 2 hr 30 min

Amar Akbar Anthony (1977) Dir. Manmohan Desai; 3 hr 5 min

Kaala Patthar (1979) Dir. Yash Chopra; 3 hr

Bombay (1995) Dir. Mani Ratnam; 2 hr 21

Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998) Dir. Karan Johar; 2 hr 57 min

Helpful websites:

Philip Lutgendorf's University of Iowa site on Indian Cinema: <http://www.uiowa.edu/indiancinema/>

Writing about film Duke University: <https://twp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/film.pdf>

Purdue Online Writing Lab (explains MLA citation style) <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

SCHEDULE

Intro

Week 1: Jan 5 and 7

Syllabus review, present some recurring themes and ways of viewing by watching four music clips, and introductions

Module 1: Film History, Theory, and Genre

Week 2: Jan 12 and 14

Reading:

Jan 12: Dwyer, Rachel, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, chapter 1: “The Mythological Film” 12-62

Jan 14: Velayutham, Selvaraj, editor, *Tamil Cinema: The Cultural Politics of India’s Other Film Industry*, chapter 3: Ram, Kalpena “Bringing Amma into Presence in Tamil Cinema: Cinema Spectatorship as Sensuous Apprehension,” 44-58.

Suggested viewing (**not** required): *Harishchandrajai Factory* (2009) Dir. Paresh Mokashi (Phalke biopic) ; *Celluloid* (2013) Dir. Kamal (biopic of JC Daniel the father of Malayalam film)

Week 3: Jan 19 and 21

Reading:

Jan 19: Dwyer, Rachel, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, Chapter 3: “The Islamicate Film” 97-131

Jan: 21: Lutgendorf, Philip, “Is There an Indian Way of Filmmaking?” in *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol.10, No.3 (Dec.,2006): 227-256.

Week 4: Jan 26 and 28

Reading:

Jan 26: Dwyer, Rachel, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema*, Chapters 4 &5: “The Religious and the Secular in Hindi Film”; “Concluding Remarks” 132-167

Jan 28: Ganti, Tejaswini *Routledge Film Guidebooks: Bollywood*, Chapter 4 “Genre and Hindi Cinema” 137-159

Suggested viewing (**not** required) *Daawat-e-Ishq* (2014) Dir. Habib Faisal

Module 2: Transformation: Swamis, Krisna and Rama

Week 5: Feb 2 and 4; respond to prompt on Canvas by 11:59 on the 3rd

Film: *Guide* (1965) Dir. Vijay Anand.

Reading:

Shankar, Subrahmanian “ Chapter 2 Lovers and Renouncers, or Caste and the Vernacular” in *Flesh and Fish Blood*, 27-64.

Week 6: Feb 9 and 11; respond to prompt on Canvas by 11:59 on the 10th

Film: *Gopala Gopala* (2015) Dir. Kishore Kumar Pardasani

Reading:

Bryant, Edwin, editor, *Krishna: A Sourcebook*, Read the summary portions of chapters 2 &4; Minor, Robert N. “Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita,” 77-80; Bryant, Edwin F. “Krishna in the Tenth Book of the Bhagavata Purana” 111- 119 (It is recommended you read the verses in translation for both chapters, but not required).

Corrigan, Timothy *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Eight Edition, Chapters 1 &2, pages 1-35

Week 7: Feb 16 and 18; respond to prompt on Canvas by 11:59 on the 17th

Film: *Raavanan* (2010) Dir. Mani Ratnam

Reading:

Richman, Paula, editor *Many Ramayanas*. Richman "Introduction: The Diversity of the Ramayana Tradition" 3-16.

Richman,"Chapter Nine: E.V. Ramaswami's Reading of the Ramayana" 177- 195

Sen, Meheli and Anustup Basu, editors, *Figurations in Indian Cinema*; Ghosh, Bishnupriya "Sensate Outlaws: The Recursive Social Bandit in Indian Popular Culture" specifically the subsection entitled, "Scene Two: The Bandit King" pages 26-28

[https://books.google.com/books?](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=gadEAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA21&dq=raavanan&ots=vCXwWXBa5L&sig=E5AcjZdTkyzRploy24n0xIeJfIs#v=onepage&q=raavanan&f=false)

[hl=en&lr=&id=gadEAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA21&dq=raavanan&ots=vCXwWXBa5L&sig=E5AcjZdTkyzRploy24n0xIeJfIs#v=onepage&q=raavanan&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=gadEAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA21&dq=raavanan&ots=vCXwWXBa5L&sig=E5AcjZdTkyzRploy24n0xIeJfIs#v=onepage&q=raavanan&f=false)

Module 3: Place

Week 8: feb 23 and 25

Film: *Raanijhanaa* (2013) Dir. Anand L. Rai

***paper on this film due on the 18th at midnight

Reading:

Hinduism Today "Special Feature: Varanasi: Oldest and Holiest City of Shiva" <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=5598>

Williams, Philippa, "Hindu-Muslim Brotherhood: Exploring the Dynamics of Communal Relations in Varanasi, North India" in *Journal of South Asian Development* 2:2 (2007): 153-176.

Corrigan, Timothy *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Eight Edition, selection from chapter 3, pages 57-76.

Week 9: March 1 and 3 Spring Break

Week 10: March 8 and 10; respond to prompt on Canvas by 11:59 on the 9th

Film: *Kutti Pulli* (2013) Dirs. M. Muthaiah, G. Bhoopathy Pandian

Reading:

Velaytham, Selvaraj, editor, *Tamil Cinema: The Cultural Politics of India's Other Film Industry*, Chapters 8&9: Pandian, Anand, "8: Cinema in the Countryside: Popular Tamil Film and the Remaking of Rural Life" ; Krishnan, Rajan "9: Imagining Geographies: The Making of 'South' in Contemporary Tamil Cinema." Pages 124-153.

Module 4: Deified Stars, Politicians, and Poster Art

Week 11: March 15 and 17

***Paper on *Rannijhanaa* due the 18th at 11:59.

Reading:

March 15: Kakar, Shalini, "Starring' Madhuri as Durga: The Madhuri Dixit Temple and the Performative Fan-Bhakti of Pappu Sardar" in *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Special Issue: Temple Publics - Religious Institutions and the Construction of Contemporary Hindu Communities (December 2009): 391-416.

Mazumdar, Ranjani "The Man Who Was Seen Too Much: Amitabh Bachchan on Film Posters" in *Tasveer Ghar: A Digital Archive of South Asian Popular Visual Culture*. 1-4. tasveerghar.net

<http://tasveerghar.net/cmsdesk/essay/106/index.html>

March 17: Bate, Bernard, "Bhakti and the Limits of Apotheosis" in *Tamil Oratory and the Dravidian Aesthetic: Democratic Practice in South India*, Columbia University Press, 2009. 118-146

Module 5: Karma and Kismet in the Turbulent 1970s

Week 12: March 22 and 24; respond to prompt on Canvas by 11:59 on the 23rd

*****Abstract and annotated bibliography due the 25th at 11:59**

Film: *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977) Dir. Manmohan Desai

Reading: Rajagopal, Arvind (2011) "The Emergency as Prehistory of the New Indian Middle Class" in *Modern Asian Studies*, 45, pp 1003-1049

Week 13: March 29 and 31

Film: *Kaala Patthar* (1979) Dir. Yash Chopra

Reading: Corrigan, Timothy *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Eight Edition, Chapters 5 & 6, pages 108-154.

Module 6: Communalism, Family, and Friendship in the 1990s

Week 14: April 5 and 7; respond to prompt on Canvas by 11:59 on the 6th

Film: *Bombay* (1995) Dir. Mani Ratnam

Reading: Vasudevan, Ravi, *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema*, Chapter 7 "Bombay (Mani Ratnam, 1995) and Its Publics" 229-258

week 15: April 12 and 14

Film: *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) Dir. Karan Johar

Reading: Pinto, Jerry, editor, *The Greatest Show on Earth: Writings on Bollywood*, Chopra, Anupama "Shah Rukh Khan: A Global Icon" 25-34

presentations

Week 16: April 19

presentations wrap-up