

SAST 2219/ AFRC 2219/ GSWS 2219/ SOCI 2970

Caste and Race: Dialogue (Spring 2023)

Instructor: Rupali Bansode

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:30 pm by appointment via email

Email: rbansode@sas.upenn.edu

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:15-11:44

Course Description: Ongoing discussions around race, racism, caste, casteism, and other related themes on either social media platforms or news media has become an everyday phenomenon, but these discussions are often disconnected from the trajectories of academic discourses (for example, intellectual and conceptual histories). As students of sciences, natural or social, it becomes crucial to make and understand the previously made social and historical inquiries around these issues. In this course, we will be precisely doing this by reading and discussing the relevant texts on caste and race and immersing ourselves collectively for a semester in an exploratory spirit that broadly falls under the rubric of caste-race dialogue. However, activist considerations and the concerns of the dalit movements, political parties, affirmative action, and other such dimensions, which, although important, are outside the remit of this course.

Learning outcomes:

- Introduce students to different theoretical considerations on caste and race
- Understand the complexities of caste and race as theoretical concepts, and the historical trajectories of their formulations
- Familiarize students with some of the foundational/important scholars on caste and race
- Lead students to think about the similarities and differences between caste and race

Course Requirements & Grading (100):

- Attendance & Participation (15%)
 - Class participation, assigned readings completion, class preparation, and attendance.
- Fortnightly Response note on Readings (25%)
 - From unit 1 onwards, students will be expected to write a fortnightly response (700-1000 words) to the readings assigned for the class. Please note these should not be summaries of the readings; rather, these should provide your response to the readings and notes taken during class. These notes will account for up to five response papers in total.
- Reviews of selected book chapters from the assigned books (15*2 = 30% in total)
 - Your responses (1500-2500 words) must be in conversation with at least two or three other course readings discussed in the Units.
- Final Papers (30%): Research paper (4500-6000 words, excluding references) discussing the intellectual work of one of the thinkers/themes we will be discussing in Unit one. If you would like, you could also reflect on that theme in conversation with the other theme/thinker we will discuss in Unit two. You could connect the work of this thinker with any of the themes we will be discussing in class.

Courtesy: Please be on time; a delay of 7-10 minutes might be acceptable; however, if this becomes recurrent, it would impact your marks assigned for class participation. Two absences per semester will be excused with reason. In case of longer absence due to sickness, or family emergency, I will need to be informed in advance. Allow me a time of two days to get back to your emails. Any email sent after 5 pm during weekdays will be responded to during the next two days. Any emails sent during the weekend will be responded to during the weekdays. Considering the political debates around the themes, we will be handling in this course; it would be a decorum of the class to consider the topic discussed as ideas and any perspective put forth in the class as an idea. Thus, we ensure that we remain respectful towards the individual (even thinkers we will be reading) who give an idea/perspective different from ours.

Course Readings: All required readings will be made available on Canvas. (The given readings could be changed depending on the course flow. This would be done with prior notice, and the changed readings would be available on Canvas. Every class will either revolve around one or two readings. Besides a few classes, most classes will have between 20-40 pages of readings.)

I would encourage you to purchase the following books for the course, as they will be covered (except for a few chapters) during the class:

- Omvedt, Gail. *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals*. Delhi: Navayana Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 2008.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. Vintage, 1983.
- Du Bois, W.E. B. *The Negro*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001

These books shall be made available at the Penn Bookstore at 36th & Walnut.

Course Readings (provisional) and Assignments

Thu., Jan. 12 – Introduction to the Course

Tue., Jan. 17 – South Asian History

- Tinker, Hugh. Preface. *South Asia: a short history*, by Tinker, University of Hawaii Press, 1990, pp. xi-xix.
- Bose, Sugata and Jalal, Ayesha. South Asian history: an introduction. *Modern South Asia*, by Bose & Jalal, Routledge, 2004. Second Edition. pp. 1-8.
- http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/southasia_timeline.htm

Unit One: On Caste

Thu., Jan. 19 Pre-colonial India

- Omvedt, Gail. Introduction: Visions. *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals*, by Gail Omvedt, Navayana Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 2008, pp. 7-32.

Tue., Jan. 24 Who studied caste and how?

- Cohn, Bernard. “Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture*.” *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Oxford UP, Delhi. 1987. pp. 1-17.

Thu., Jan. 26 Definitions of Caste

- Ambedkar, B.R. "Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development." *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches- Volume 1*, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014. pp. 3-22.

Tue., Jan. 31 Complexities of Caste

- Dirks, Nicholas B. "The Original Caste: Power, History and Hierarchy in South Asia." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 23.1 (1989): 59-77.

(Response note one due by 9 pm)

Thu., Feb. 2 Complexities of Caste (continued)

- Phule, Jotirao, "Slavery." *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*. 22-50

Tue, Feb. 7 Colonial Perceptions

- Bayly, Susan. "Western 'Orientalists' and the Colonial Perception of Caste." *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*. Cambridge UP, 1999. pp. 97-143.

Thu., Feb. 9 Gender and Colonialism

- Chatterjee, Partha. The nationalist resolution of the women's question. In K. Sangari & S. Vaid (Eds.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, Kali for Women, 1989. pp. 233-253
- Omvedt, Gail. "Ramabai/Women in the Kingdom of God." *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals*, Navayana Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 2008. pp. 205-223

Tue., Feb. 14. Brahmanism and Patriarchy

- Rege, Sharmila. "Caste as Endogamy: The Inextricable Links Between Caste and Violence Against Women." *Against the Madness of Manu: B.R. Ambedkar's Writings on Brahmanical Patriarchy*. Delhi: Navayana Publishing Pvt. Ltd. pp. 69-98.
- Omvedt, Gail. "Hinduism as Patriarchy Ramabai, Tarabai and the Early Feminists." *Understanding Caste*. Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan Pvt Ltd, 2011. pp. 10-38

(Response note two due by 9 pm)

Thu., Feb. 16 Brahmanism and Patriarchy (continued)

- Rege, Sharmila. "The hegemonic appropriation of sexuality: The Sase of the Lavani Performers of Maharashtra." *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 29.1-2 (1995): 23-38.
- Rege, S. (1996). "Caste and gender: The violence against women in India." *EUI Working Papers*, 1-15. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/1432>

Tue., Feb. 21 TBA

- Guest Lecture

Thu., Feb. 23 Mar. 2 Thinkers Buddhist Visions

- Omvedt, Gail. "Two Great Traditions of India and the Construction of Hinduism." *Understanding Caste*, Orient Black Swan Pvt Ltd, 2011. pp. 1-9.
- Omvedt, Gail. "Before Hinduism: The Buddhist Vision." *Understanding Caste*, Orient Black Swan Pvt Ltd, 2011. pp. 11-16.

- Omvedt, Gail “Iyothee Thass/ The Buddhist Utopia.” *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals*. Delhi: Navayana Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 2008. pp. 185-204.

Tue., Feb. 28 Caste in ‘Modern India’

- Srinivas, M.N. “Caste in Modern India.” In *Caste in Modern India and other essays*. Asia Publishing House, 1962. pp. 15-41.

(Also, please give me the name of the thinker and the theme you will be working on for your final research paper)

Thu., Mar. 2 No class but assignment due

Assignment One: Response paper on selected chapters from the book, “Seeking Begumpura”, by Gail Omvedt. It must be a conversation with at least two course readings discussed in Unit One.

March 4-12: Spring Term Break: No Classes

Unit Two: On Race

Tues., Mar. 14 Race and Africa

- Du Bois, W.E. B. “Africa.” *The Negro*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. pp. 9-19.
- Du Bois, W.E. B. “The Coming of Black Men.” *The Negro*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. pp. 20-29.

Thurs., Mar 16 Race and Africa (continued)

- Du Bois, W.E. B. “Ethiopia and Egypt.” *The Negro*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. pp. 30-46.
- Du Bois, W.E. B. “The Niger and Islam.” *The Negro*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. pp. 47-61.

Tues., Mar 21 Negro Revolt

- James, C. L. R. “A History of Negro Revolt.” *Fact*, 1938, pp. 5-45.

(Response paper three due by 9 pm)

Thurs., Mar 23 Negro Revolt (continued)

- James, C. L. R. “A History of Negro Revolt.” *Fact*, 1938, pp. 46-85.

Tues., Mar 28 The Negro in the United States

- Du Bois, W.E. B. “The Negro in the United States” *The Negro*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. pp. 30-61.

Thu., Mar. 30 Race and Gender

- Davis, Angela. “The legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood.” *Women, Race & Class*. Vintage Books, 1983. 3-29

(Response paper four due by 9 pm)

Tue., Apr. 4 Race and Gender

- Davis, Angela. "Rape, Racism and the Myth of a Black Rapist." *Women, Race & Class*. Vintage Books, 1983. 172-201.

Thu., Apr 6. TBA

- Guest Lecture

Response paper on selected chapters from the book, "Women, Race & Class", by Angela Davis, due by Monday, 10th April. It must be a conversation with at least two course readings discussed in Unit two.

Dialogue on Caste and Race

Tue., Apr. 11

- Berreman, Gerald D. "Caste in India and the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 66.2 (1960): 120-127.
- Cox, Oliver C. "Race and caste: A distinction." *American Journal of Sociology* 50.5 (1945): 360-368.

Thu., Apr. 13

- Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste (Oprah's Book Club): The origins of our discontents*. Random House, 2020. (Few Chapters)

Tue., Apr. 18

- Alexander, Michelle. The Rebirth of Caste. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, The New Press, 2010. pp. 20-57.

Thu., Apr. 20

- Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste (Oprah's Book Club): The origins of our discontents*. Random House, 2020. (Few Chapters)

(Response paper five due by 9 pm)

Tues., Apr. 25 – Selected writings of CLR James

Final Paper due on Tuesday, May 3rd, 2023