

ENGL 0519 BFS:

Partition and the Making of South Asia

This course will examine the ways in which imaginative literature and film have addressed the difficult socio-political issues leading up to, and following from, the independence and partition of British India. Pakistan and India came into being as nation-states in moments of great national trauma: historians have long argued over the process that led up to Partition, and we will study some of these debates, but for the most part we will examine novels, short stories, poetry, and some films to think about the impact of Partition and Independence on communities and individuals in South Asia. In doing so, we will recognize the continuing role of these events and experiences in shaping the cultural, social, and political realities of contemporary South Asia (including the creation of Bangladesh in 1972). We will also learn about the crucial role played by literary and creative texts in making available to us the full dimensions of human tragedy, especially those precipitated when the imperatives of nation-formation redefine the lives of individuals or of sub-national communities.

There will be four writing assignments for this course:

The **first** will be a short paper (1200 words) based on a class presentation, and due one week after the presentation.

The **second** will be a book review (1200 words) of a book on the Partition of British India or the emergence of Bangladesh in 1972. You will decide on a book to review in consultation with the instructor; this review will be due on -----.

The **third** assignment will be “archival”: you will find a relevant document that we have not touched upon in the course and write a framing account for it (800-1000 words). This can also be an introduction to a newspaper report, an advertisement, an image, that you believe grants us insight into the Partition process and its aftermath. This will be due on -----.

The **final** assignment will be a longer research paper (2500 words) in which you will reflect upon one or more of the major themes explored in the course, and you will engage with several texts appropriate to your essay. The topic of this essay must be decided in consultation with the instructor by _____ (which means that you will have done at least some work, and put together a bibliography, on this topic by then). On _____, you will present your project to the class so that your colleagues can respond to your ideas. This can also be a creative/critical assignment in which you will respond, in any manner you believe appropriate, to the materials you have read so far, or to stories about the Partition process that you have read or which are now documented on various websites. You could, for instance, decide to interview someone who experienced Partition and then to reflect critically—calling upon your readings for this course—on the difficult memories and opinions you encounter in the interview. This

essay will be due on _____.

All your written work is to be submitted by email (ideally as a .docx attachment, so that I can comment using TrackChanges).

Your grade will be based on the following: Presentation and paper: 20%; book review: 20%; “archival” assignment: 20%; final essay: 40%). I should make clear that your final grade will reflect improvements in your writing and critical thinking over the course of the semester.

Books for the course (I will expect you to use these editions):

Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, Paperback ISBN: 0822324946
Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India*, Paperback ISBN: 0915943565
Suvir Kaul, ed. *The Partitions of Memory* Paperback ISBN 0253215668
Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*, Paperback ISBN: 061832996-x

Syllabus: [**These dates will change, of course**]

Week 1

1/17: Introduction; screening of “Division of Hearts (directed by Sati Khanna and Peter Chappell; DVD 008640) and “The Little Terrorist” (directed by Ashwin Kumar; DVD 015377).

Week 2

1/24: One history: Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisiya, *The Aftermath of the Partition of South Asia*, pp. 1-100, 248-65.

Week 3

1/31: Other testimonies and issues: Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*.

Week 4

2/7: Short stories as evidence I: Stories from Alok Bhalla, ed. *Stories About the Partition of India* (Vols. I-III). Bhalla, “Introduction” (I. vii-xxxiii), Jamila Hashmi, “Exile” (I. 39-53), Rajinder Singh Bedi, “Lajwanti” (I. 55-66), Satinath Bhaduri, “The Champion of the People” (I. 209-28). Suraiya Qasim, “Where did She Belong” (II. 109-117), Samaresh Basu, “Adab” (III. 21-28), Asif Aslam Farrukhi, “The Land of Memories” (III. 43-57).

Jason Francisco, “In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India’s Partition Burning Freshly,” *The Annual of Urdu Literature*

Suvir Kaul, ed. *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*,

"Introduction," pp. 1-29.

Week 5

2/14: Short stories as evidence II: Stories from Alok Bhalla, ed. *Stories About the Partition of India* (Vols. I-III). Saadat Hasan Manto, "Cold Meat" (I. 91-96), "Open It" (II. 69-72), "Toba Tek Singh" (III. 1-7). Stories from Saadat Hasan Manto, *Kingdom's End and Other Stories*, trans. Khalid Hasan: "It happened in 1919 (47-56)," "The Price of Freedom" (57-82), "The New Constitution" (83-92), "The Assignment" (113-18), "Three Simple Statements" (131-32).

Alok Bhalla, "Dance of Grotesque Masks: A Critical Reading of Manto's '1919 ki Ek Bat'," *The Annual of Urdu Literature*

Priyamvada Gopal, "Bodies Inflicting Pain: Masculinity, Morality and Cultural Identity in Manto's "Cold Meat," in Kaul, ed. *The Partitions of Memory*, pp. 242-68.

Week 6

2/21: Historiographical difficulties: Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*, pp. 1-91.

David Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," *The Journal of Asian History*, 57:4 (1998), 1068-1095.

Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, "Passports and Boundaries," and "The Phantasm of Passports," from *The Long Partition and the Making of South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (Columbia Univ. Pr., 2007), 161-226.

Week 7

2/28: Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India*. In class, we will screen Deepa Mehta's *Earth* and then discuss both the novel and the film.

Bapsi Sidhwa, Urvashi Butalia and Andrew Whitehead, "Bapsi Sidhwa and Urvashi Butalia Discuss the Partition of India," *History Workshop Journal*, No. 50 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 230-238.

Rani Neutill, "Bending Bodies, Borders and Desires in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* and Deepa Mehta's *Earth*," *South Asian Popular Culture*, 8:1 (2010), 73-87.

Week 8

3/14: Essays on the historiography of Partition from Mushirul Hasan, ed. *India's Partition*. Hasan, "Introduction," pp. 1-43; Leonard Gordon, "Divided Bengal . . .," pp. 279-321.

Paul Dimeo, "'With political Pakistan in the offing . . .'" Football and Communal Politics in South Asia, 1887-1947," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38:3 (2003), 377-94.

Md. Mahbubar Rahman and Willem Van Schendel, "'I am Not a Refugee': Rethinking Partition Migration," *Modern Asian Studies*, 27:3 (2003), 551-584.

Manas Ray, "Growing up Refugee," *History Workshop Journal*, 53 (2002), 149-179.

Joya Chatterji, "Right or Charity? The Debate over Relief and Rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1947-50, in Kaul, ed. *The Partitions of Memory*, pp. 74--110.

Week 9

3/21: Essays on the afterlife of Partition from Suvir Kaul, ed. *The Partitions of Memory*. Mukulika Banerjee, "Partition and the North West Frontier . . ." pp. 30-73; Ramnarayan Rawat, "Partition Politics and Achhut Identity . . .," pp. 111-139; Richard Murphy, "Performing Partition in Lahore" (183-207); Nita Kumar, "Children and the Partition," pp. 269-301.

Saloni Mathur, "Partition and the Visual Arts," in *Third Text* (2017), 2-8.

Screening of Amar Kanwar, *A Season Outside* (documentary; 30 minutes)

Week 10

3/28: Screening and discussion of Sabiha Sumar's *Khamosh Pani* (105 minutes)

Week 11

4/4: Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*

Suvir Kaul, "Separation Anxiety: Growing up Inter/National in *The Shadow Lines*," in the Oxford CULT Edition of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 268-86.

Week 12

4/11: Partitions today I: Mahesh Dattani, *Final Solutions*

Anna Bernard, "Partition as a Literary Paradigm," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 30 (2010), pp. 9-33.

Joe Cleary, *Literature, Partition and the Nation State*, pp. 15-94.

Week 13

4/18: Partitions today II: Screening and discussion of Rakesh Sharma's documentary, *Final Solution*.

4/25: Class presentations of final projects. Each student will bring to class 250-500 words of prose describing the project, and a bibliography that lists all primary and secondary materials.

<https://time.com/5365226/india-pakistan-partition-history/>
<https://electricliterature.com/7-books-about-the-partition-of-india-and-pakistan/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jul/16/partition-voices-untold-british-stories-kavita-puri-review>