Course Description
The Indian subcontinent is iconic for its abundant and varied visual forms—from calendar art to monumental architecture, television soap operas to contemporary painting. In this course, we will examine many of the visual forms and practices of the region from an anthropological perspective—that is, placing people, culture and social practice at the center of our inquiry.

Many scholars use South Asian visual practices to “provincialize” Western theories about globalization, visuality and modernity. In this course, we will assess such scholarship, analyzing debates around the constitution of a uniquely South Asian mode of visuality. Throughout, we will place visual practices in their historical and political contexts. Through the South Asian case, we will address broader theoretical questions about how nationalism, religion, gender and class are mediated through visual forms.

This course is interdisciplinary in appeal and content, speaking to students of the social sciences, art history, media studies and related disciplines alike and requiring no previous knowledge. It introduces students to the anthropology of visual culture, training students to read and assess ethnographies—the mode of research and genre of scholarly writing that defines the discipline of anthropology.

Course Texts
These texts are available for purchase in the bookstore; are available on reserve at the library as well. In addition to these books, required readings below are available for download on the course’s Sakai website under the ‘Resources’ tab.

Requirements

(15%) Class Participation
This class requires your energetic, respectful, consistent and thoughtful participation. The participation aspect of your grade is based on the quality of your contribution to class discussions.

Each week, students are required to post a brief (approx. 1 page) response to the readings in the Forums folder of the course’s Sakai website. Responses must be posted by 10:00 p.m. the night before the class session (that is, usually Wednesday nights).

Working with a partner (or, in some cases, two), each student will also co-moderate a class discussion of her choosing. On this day, you must come to class with at least three discussion questions each about that week’s readings that you will then pose to the class. It is advisable to review your fellow students’ reading responses in order to address their ideas in the course of the discussion. Co-moderators are not required to post reading responses for the class session they moderate.

More than one absence not excused by a note from a doctor or your class dean will result in a two-point reduction of your overall course grade per absence. More than one episode of tardiness to class will result in a one-point reduction of your overall course grade per tardiness.

(20%) Essay I Due Mon. Feb. 21 in your professor’s mailbox; PNE 331 by 4:00 pm.
5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font. Assessing the concept of “Visual Culture” and its applicability to the South Asian context. Further details will be provided closer to the due date.

(25%) Essay II Due in your professor’s mailbox, PNE 331 Mon. April 11 by 4:00 pm.
6-8 pages double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font. Analyzing a unit of your choice, and putting several of the readings, concepts, and films into conversation. Further details will be provided closer to the due date.

(10%) Research Paper Presentation in class April 28 or May 5.
10-15 minute presentation of the visual form/phenomenon you are researching for your final research paper, showing audio-visual materials in and presenting the theoretical and ethnographic topics you are investigating. Further details will be provided.

(30%) Final Research Paper Due in your professor's mailbox, PNE 331 Wed. May 11 by 4:00 p.m.
Approx.15 pages in length, double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font. This paper will mobilize course readings as well as readings you discover through library research to explore a South Asian visual form/phenomenon that interest you.
--Abstracts proposing final research topic due Mon. April 4 by 4:00 pm.
--Annotated bibliographies for final research project due Mon. April 18 by 4 pm.
Guidelines/Regulations

• Laptops, iPads/Pods, cell phones, and other electronic devices may NOT be used in the classroom unless a documented handicap requires them. Electronic devices must be switched off for the duration of class (not merely silenced).

• Your professor is engaged in active and ongoing research. Therefore, she will not be available to answer emails or phone calls outside of regular working hours (9-6) on weekdays. If you have questions outside those hours, please consult this syllabus, the Sakai course website, any assignment sheets, and your fellow classmates.

• Late work will have 5 points (out of 100) deducted for each day late (a new day begins an hour after the time of the deadline). Incompletes will not be given for this course.

• Students must abide by the Wellesley Honor Code. Plagiarism will be strictly punished. Please be aware that improper citation can constitute plagiarism. Take care to learn and follow the proper citation practices of the discipline of anthropology. See the AAA Style Guide in the Resources folder of this course’s Sakai website and Carleton College’s helpful online citation guide for anthropology at http://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/soan/resources/citation/

• Papers will be graded according to the rigorous standards of the Wellesley College Writing Program, which are posted in the course website’s Resources tab.

• Students with disabilities who require disability-related accommodations are encouraged to work with Jim Wice, the Director of Disability Services. Find Jim on the third floor of Clapp Library. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, that is undocumented, Jim will arrange for you to be tested, and for appropriate accommodations to be made.

Course Schedule

1. Thurs. Jan. 27  Introduction

2. Thurs. Feb. 3  ‘Visual Culture’ in a South Asian Context

Readings
1. On ‘Visual Culture’
   Mirzoeff, Nicholas

   Rampley, Michael

   Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam

2. On South Asian Publics
Appadurai, Arjun and Carol A. Breckenridge

Pinney, Christopher

Recommended:
Freitag, Sandria B.

3. Thurs. Feb. 10 *Darshan*: Defining a Uniquely South Asian Visual Culture?
Readings
Eck, Diana L.

Babb, Lawrence.

Recommended:
Taylor, Woodman

Heidegger, Martin

Screening: *Jai Santoshi Ma* (Vijay Sharma, 1975, 138 min) selections

4. Thurs. Feb. 17 Indian and Colonial Visual Regimes
Readings
Davis, Richard H.

**Monday Feb. 21 Essay I: Assessing ‘Visual Culture’ due by 4:00 pm.**

5. Thurs. Feb. 24 Photography’s Indian Histories

Readings
Pinney, Christopher

Recommended:
Prakash, Gyan

Screening: City of Photos (Nishtha Jain, 2005, 60 min.)

6. Thurs. March 3 The Hybrid Visual and Social Registers of Calendar Art

Readings
Jain, Kajri
2007. Gods in the Bazaar Introduction and Chs. 2, 4, 6, and Conclusion

Screening: Painted Nation (Cyrus Sundar Singh, 2006, 60 min.)

7. Thurs. March 10 The Aesthetic, Moral and Political Logics of Hindi Fiction Film

Readings
Mazumdar, Ranjini

Rajadhyaksha, Ashish

Thomas Rosie

Vasudevan, Ravi

Screening: Selections from Hindi fiction films.

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Thurs. March 17 ***NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK***
Thurs. March 24 ***NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK***
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8. Fri. April 1 ***PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL CLASS MEETING***
The Politics and Aesthetics of Contemporary Indian Art

Guest Lecturer: Beth Citron, Curator of Contemporary Indian Art, The Rubin Museum, New York.

**Monday April 4 Abstracts for final research projects due by 4 pm.**

9. Thurs. April 7
The Social Worlds of Indian Fiction Film

Readings
Ganti, Tejaswini

Larkin, Brian

Screening: Out of Thin Air (Shabani Hassanwalia and Samreen Farooqui, 50 min., 2009)

**Monday April 11 Essay II due by 4:00 pm.**

10. Thurs. April 14
Indian Documentary Film

Readings
Matzner, Deborah
Forthcoming. “Interstitial Productions: Female Documentary Filmmakers in Mumbai.”

Rajagopal, Arvind and Miriam Sharma.
Roy, Srirupa

Screenings: In the Name of God (Anand Patwardhan, 95 min., 1992) selections Lakshmi and Me (Nisththa Jain, 50 min., 2007)

**Friday April 15  Faye Ginsburg public talk, time TBA. Attendance required.**

**Monday April 18  Annotated Bibliographies for Final Projects due by 4:00 pm.**

11. Thurs. April 21 Indian Television and the Shaping of Postcolonial and Post-liberalization Publics

Readings
1. On pre-liberalization television:
   Ohm, Britta

Rajadhyaksha, Ashish

2. On television and liberalization:
   Butcher, Melissa

Rajagopal, Arvind

Recommended:
Das, Vena

Ghosh, Shohini
Grewal, Inderpal  
*Positions* 7: 799-827.

**Screening:** Selections from the televised versions of the *Ramayana* (1987), *Ramayana* (2008), and *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*.

12. Thurs. April 28  
Student Presentations

13. Thurs. May 5  
Student Presentations

**Wed. May 11  Research Papers due by email before 4:00 pm.**

***Credits for images on first page, from left:***

Krishna and the serpent Anantha-Shayi on a Victorian-era advertisement for Kaloojee Valajee tobacco.  
Online. Available: www.tasveergharindia.net/cmsdesk/essay/100/index.html

“Jain couple posing in front of the Taj Mahal”, chromolithograph reprinted from Christopher Pinney essay  

Sudhir Patwardhan, 2007, Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas, 72” by 96”. Image taken from *Matters of Art* journal online. Available: www.mattersofart.net/features/features156.html

Film poster for *Mother India* (Mehboob Khan, Hindi, 1957).