

Understanding Bollywood, Knowing India: Hindi Cinema since 1960

Course number: 3625

Instructor: Ila Nagar

Instructor email: nagar.5@osu.edu

Instructor's office: 320 Hagerty Hall

Instructor's Mailbox: 300 Hagerty Hall Accessible 8am-5pm Monday-Friday

Office Hours: Monday 11.00am-12.00pm and by appointment

Course webpage: <https://cllc.asc.ohio-state.edu/bollywood/>

GE Categories

Cultures and Ideas

Goals:

Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

Diversity: Global Studies

Goals:

Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

Each assignment for the course is designed to provoke students into thinking about how human thought develops and is materialized in different cultures. The course material, lectures, and discussion questions will force students to understand how culture and representation work. The readings will guide students to develop their thought processes and assumptions about India.

Students will be continually confronted with ideas that are meant to question their existing world view.

Course Description

This course will explore topics related to life in India from the lens of Hindi language cinema which is also known as Bollywood. Bollywood offers a unique window into culture and modern India. Using Bollywood as its medium, this course will explore social class, gender, sexuality, Indian diaspora in the West, family structure, marriage, politics, caste, language (with special focus on portrayal of people who speak languages other than Hindi), religion, globalization etc. and how these relate to lived experiences of people in Indian society.

In an effort to understand the popularity of mainstream Bollywood cinema this course will problematize what is real and what is represented in film. Every week students will watch a film that focuses on one or more of the themes that have shaped contemporary Indian society and read an article or chapter related to the broader issues covered in the film. The lectures for this course will make the students aware of the particular issues presented in the film and reading(s) assigned for the week. The discussion sections will allow students to critically analyze the issues raised in the lecture. In other words, the lecture will point students in the directions in which they need to think regarding any particular film or reading and the discussion sections will further explore the questions that arise from the ideas presented in the lectures.

Prerequisites:

None. The course does not assume any prior knowledge of Hindi language and anyone with an interest in film and culture can take this course.

Required texts and where they are available

Chapters from various books and journal articles will be made available on the course webpage. Students will be expected to access and print all materials and to have them available in the class meetings for which they are assigned.

All films will have English subtitles and will be available to stream through the media center for the week they are assigned and during the finals week. Students are expected to watch each film that is assigned in the course of the semester.

Submitting Assignments: All assignments must be submitted in class or should be left in the instructor's mail box (in Hagerty 300) before noon on the day they are due.

Class Requirements and Assignments

<u>Movie Quiz</u>	20% of final grade	4 per semester
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Each quiz will have ten short answer questions about specifics of the lectures, discussion sections,

films, and readings. See assignment schedule/course guide below for information about material covered in each quiz. Student responses should not be longer than 50-75 words.

Written responses 35% of grade 4 per semester

Initial prep for writing responses

Response 1 Due January 21th 7% (35 points)

Summary of handouts from the Center for the Study and Teaching for Writing
(<https://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center/handouts>) due in class.

Response 2 Due January 28th 7% (35 points)

Write a 500 word essay on what you know about Bollywood and how it has influenced your life. If this is your first introduction to Bollywood, write about how cinema interacts with the human experience and how it has interacted with your experience as a human. Also write about what you think you will learn from this course outside of the obvious material that is listed in the syllabus.

Response 3 Due February 18th 7% (35 points)

We have talked in class about the pitfalls that binaries can create. Pick a reading and a film and comment on how the reading helped you understand or break down the binaries (or established ideas about some socio-cultural phenomenon) that the film (or a scene in the film) presented.

Response 4 Part 1 due March 22nd, Part 2 due March 24th 7% (35 points)

Prepare a quiz that has ten short questions. The questions should not be about content, they should be about concepts. This is a two part assignment. Students bring the 1st draft of their question class on a Tuesday, March 22nd and have it looked over by a classmate. Based on the suggestions made by the classmate and the instructor, students rewrite the quiz and submit the final version on Thursday, March 24th

While writing the quiz, keep in mind what you want the students to answer. What is your real question? What are you assessing and how?

Response 5 Due April 14th 7% (35 points)

Identify the main thesis of two course reading and to outline 3 reasons you believe it and 3 reasons you doubt it. The idea behind this assignment is to encourage students to think more analytically and complexly (rather than just going with your gut reaction). This assignment should be about two single spaced pages long

Video response 15% of final grade 1 per semester

Students work in a group with three other students and come up with a video response to two readings and two films that most interest them. The video response is not just a response that is recorded; it should be a well thought of response in a format that is thought provoking. For

example, it can be a scene from a movie you recreate as a group by altering what you see as a problem with the scene, or it could be panel discussion among five film critics about the content and message of the film(s) in question. Discuss your idea about video responses with the instructor.

Participation 10% of final grade

To get the most out of this class, you must participate. Participation does not mean just coming to every class. It means that you will be an active discussant during discussion sections. To be a participant in class, students should raise questions that are relevant to the material, be a team player, and be courteous to others and other viewpoints.

Take home final exam 20% of final grade

The comprehensive final exam will consist of five essay questions based on films, readings, lectures, and discussions the students have familiarized themselves with during the semester. Since the readings are informed by films that the students have seen during the semester, the essay questions will challenge students to form connections between what they read in academic book and articles and what was presented to them in the form of films. Students will have one week to write the take home final exam.

Class attendance policy

If you miss more than one class in the course of the semester for any reasons other than medical or family emergencies (for which you will provide written proof), your grade will go down one full letter grade. Being late by more than two minutes will count as an absence. Leaving early for reason other than a family or medical emergency (for which you can provide written proof) will count as an absence.

Grade Calculation Summary

Movie quiz	20%	100 points	4 quizzes, 25 points each
Writing responses	35%	175 points	5 responses, 35 points each
Video response	15%	75 points	1 video
Participation	10%	50 points	
Take-home final exam	20%	100 points	
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Total	100%	500 points	

Grading scale

Grading scale: A (93-100) A- (90-92) B+ (87-89) B (83-86) B- (80-82) C+ (77-79) C (73-76) C- (70-72) D+ (67-69) D (60-66) E (below 60)

CONSULT COURSE GUIDE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Topical outline (indicated in bold), movie, and reading schedule

Week 1

Students learn about the course, expectations of students, and assignment schedule. Students are lectured on the **history, reach, and significance of Bollywood.**

Reading: Ganti 2004, pages 1-91

Weeks 2

Students learn about the **impact of Bollywood cinema on India, and on South Asia.** The impact is understood and explained specific to the sociological and political context of India and South Asia.

Readings: Durdah, 21-46, 65-96; Lutgenford, 227-256

Film: Clips

Week 3

Students continue to learn about the **impact of Bollywood cinema on India, and on South Asia.** The impact is understood and explained specific to the sociological and political context of India and South Asia. The discussion section will address ideology as experienced by communities in motion.

Readings: Prasad, 29-113

Film: Clips (*Purab aur Paschim, 1970; Dostana, 2008*)

Week 4

Almost every Bollywood film is a musical and is more than two hours long. Week 4 explores how Bollywood uses dance and music not just as vehicle of **commercial success of the film but also as a narrative device.** The discussion section will look at how songs are used differently in Bollywood cinema and how roles of male and female protagonists in cinema have changed as mirrored in their changing roles in songs and dances in films.

Reading: Morcom, 137-207

Film: *Upkar*

Week 5

Students understand **class interacts with mainstream Bollywood cinema.** The confrontation, unease, and social commentary that inherently accompany discussions of class are discussed.

Reading: Gehlawat, 84-114

Film: *Hum Hindustani*

Week 6

Gender and issues related to representation, access to resources, etc.

Reading: Nijhawan, 99-112, Sundar, 144-172

Film: *Amar Akbar Anthony*

Week 7

Religion and issues related to representation.

Reading: Dawyer, 12-62

Film: *Jai Santoshi Maa*

Week 8

Students will engage with **family, gender, nationalism, and marriage as parameters of virtue and tradition** within the Indian and South Asian context.

Reading: Uberoi, 138-179

Film: *Mr. India*

Week 9

Students learn about the **impact of Bollywood cinema on Indian and South Asian diaspora** living in the United States. The impact is understood and explained in terms specific to economic shifts from 1960s to 1990s.

Readings : Uberoi 180-206

Film: *Apne Paraye*

Week 10 SPRING BREAK

Week 11

Students learn about **the impact of Bollywood cinema on Indian and South Asian diaspora** living in the United States. The impact is understood and explained in terms specific to economic shifts since early 1990s. Changing attitudes, globalization, and impacts of India's economic liberalization in 1990s are discussed as forces that are mirrored on Bollywood cinema.

Readings: Sen, 145-169

Film: *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*

Weeks 12

Religious diversity, conflict, and coexistence with religious minorities or majorities has been a part of Indian and South Asian societies. This week confronts religious conflict and coexistence as represented in cinema.

Readings: Jain, 44-50

Films: *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer*

Week 13

India is a multilingual culture. In this week students learn the **relationship between language and culture as represented in the tensions between and perceptions of people of different linguistic backgrounds through cinema.**

Reading: Dissanayake, 395-407

Film: *Chennai Express*

Week 14

India struggles with old and new as it looks at **technology, diversity, globalization, and forces of cultural change.** During this week students learn about these tensions and changes that ensue but also see how these are represented in Bollywood cinema.

Reading: Kapur, 221-232

Film: *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*

Week 15 Closing remarks

Reading: Holtzman, 111-128

Academic misconduct statement: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Disability statement: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292- 3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.