

Course title and number: Women and Gender in Modern South Asia
WS 355/HIST 355 3 Credits

Course Description:

This course examines the history of women and gender in modern South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will both analyze the historical processes that transformed women's lives and consider how women themselves negotiated or subverted these processes in their own interest. Major themes and topics include: the transformation of gender through colonialism and nationalism, the emergence of women's movements, women's labor and globalization, and gender in South Asian diaspora.

Course Prerequisites: WS110 OR WS 150 OR AACS 150

Course Objectives:

1. Investigate the relationship between ideologies of gender and important historical changes in modern South Asia.
2. Examine the history of colonialism, nationalism, labor, and globalization from a gender perspective.
3. Critically consider South Asian women's history, with a focus on feminism and women's movements.
4. Explore difference of class, caste, nationality, religion, and sexuality as they shape gender ideologies and women's experiences.
5. Require written and oral presentations that demonstrate critical thinking.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the relationship between ideologies of gender and historical changes in modern South Asia.
2. Learn methods for examining the history of colonialism, nationalism, labor, and globalization from a gender perspective.
3. Know about South Asian women's history, with a focus on feminism and women's movements.
4. Be able to analyze differences of class, caste, nationality, religion, and sexuality as they shape gender ideologies and women's experiences.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking through written and oral presentations.

Topical Outline of the Course Content:

1. *Introduction to the South Asian region (Weeks 1-2)*
Topics include: a general overview of the geography and pre-colonial history of the South Asian subcontinent with a focus on women's roles and status.
2. *Gender, Colonialism, and Modernity (Weeks 3-5)*
Topics include: the impact of colonial rule on indigenous patriarchy, on gender ideologies, on women's labor, and on sexuality and the family.
3. *Feminism, Nationalism, Independence, and Partition (Weeks 6-8)*

Topics include: the development of feminist movements, the relationship between feminism and nationalism, and the gendered violence that accompanied independence and the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan.

4. *Independence for Women? Gender and Post-Colonial South Asia (Weeks 9-11)*

Topics include: the legal, political, economic and social status of women in the various countries of South Asia, the relationship between gender and development, and the impact of religious fundamentalism on women.

5. *Gender, Globalization, and the South Asian diaspora (Weeks 12-15)*

Topics include: women's labor in a globalized context, emigration and immigration, and diasporic communities in the U.K. and U.S.

Teaching Methods and Student Learning Activities:

- Lectures
- Small group discussions
- Plenary discussions
- In-class presentations
- Essays (responses to the reading)
- Research paper

Student Assessment:

Students will be evaluated based upon the following:

- Attendance in class
- Participation in discussion
- Oral presentation on reading and research
- Written assignments (essays and research paper)

Suggested Reading and Texts

Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from Partition of India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992.

Kumar, Radha. *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800-1990*. London: Verso, 1993.

Sangari, Kumkum, and Sudesh Vaid, ed. *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Sunder Rajan, Rajeswari. *Signposts: Gender Issues in post-independence India*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999.

Stree Shakti Sanghatana. *'We were Making History': Women and the Telegana Uprising*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989.

Tharu Susie, and K. Lalita, ed. *Women Writing in India 600 B.C. to the Present*, volume 2
Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991.

Women of South Asian Descent Collective, ed. *Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian Diaspora*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1993.

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