



M.A. (DLB)0680: Cinema and Society In India

JSIA Elective Fall 2025

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 weeks

Credit Hours: 4 (3 hours teaching + 1 Office Hour)

Meetings: TBD

Location: TBD

Prerequisites: A keen interest in Bollywood and an active desire to participate in discussions around cinema and cinema related themes.

Equivalent Courses: NA

Exclusive Courses: NA

Instructor Information

Instructor: Bhavika Behal

Email: bhavika.bhal@jgu.edu.in

Office: 7B, Ground Floor, South block, Old FOB

Office Hours: based on prior appointments

Biography: Bhavika Behal completed her MPhil from the University of Cambridge. Her specialisation includes South Asian visual cultures with a special emphasis on representation of minorities via mediums such as films, photographs and documentaries. She completed her BA and MA in Political Science from the University of Delhi where she remained amongst the high scorers throughout. She achieved an AIR-26 in the nationwide entrance examination (DUET) for Masters at the University of Delhi.

Course Description

This course will study India through the lens of Hindi film industry, popularly known as Bollywood. It will engage with socio-political issues such as gender, class, caste, and nation-building and how they shape perceptions and aspirations of the Indian society. The course is divided into three broad sections. The first section explores the twin stories of cinema and nationalism. It analyses how the popular visual medium grappled with the question of the ever-evolving Indian identity in different forms. The second section deals with the challenges and dilemmas of the LPG era. This section shall raise questions about conflicts between modernity and Indian values. The third section deals with 'change' and how it is orchestrated through cinema. The movies and readings take up anxieties around issues such as homosexuality, feminism, etc., and analyse the role of cinema in normalising or challenging them. The recent rise of the study of visual cultures will provide new and intriguing materials for you to understand and interpret age-old ideas of citizenship, kinship, and conflict.

Intended Outcome

- The course will provide students the necessary skills to analyse and understand visual materials in light of socio-cultural developments in India.
- Chronologically understand socio-political changes to situate the nations present in its cinematic past and understand the relevance of historical themes through cinemas pertaining to politics, globalisation, migration and identity.
- The course will push for reconsideration of concepts related to imperialism, nationhood, civil society, identity and belief systems, etc.
- Gain necessary skills to conduct sociological research using films as a primary source.

Note:

- **Please note that you are required to watch the assigned movie in your own time before class. The class is heavily discussion-based, with the film serving as the primary text for analysis. If you have not watched the movie, it will be difficult to engage with the class format and discussions meaningfully. Your active participation is expected, and familiarity with the film is essential to contribute effectively.**

Grade Definition

Letter Grade	Grade Value	Total Course Marks		
O	4	75% and above	Outstanding	Comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, thorough synthesis of information, Ability to critically analyze existing materials and originality in thinking and presentation.
A+	3.6	70%-74.99%	Excellent	Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability.
A	3.2	65-69.99%	Very Good	Very Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to synthesize ideas and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	2.8	60%-64.99%	Good	Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B	2.4	55%-59.99%	Adequate	Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	2	50%-54.99%	Marginal	Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials and,

				poor critical and analytical skills.
F	0.0	Below 50	Failure	Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is expected. Cheating or plagiarism will result in immediate failure irrespective of the circumstances.

Keyword Syllabus: NA

Course Material: All assigned readings will be made available to students through online platforms.

Scheme of Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation breakup:

Final essay: 50%

Written exam: 30%

Essay Progress: 10%

Class participation and discussion : 10%

Assignment Guidelines:

Assignment Prompt:

This assignment is designed to refine your research, analytical, and writing skills while deepening your understanding of how Bollywood cinema shapes and reflects socio-political discourse in India.

It will be divided into two classroom based assessment – details for the same will be given in class.

Class participation: Class participation is **10% of your grade**, but more importantly, it enriches your learning. This course thrives on discussion—your insights, questions, and debates bring cinema’s socio-political impact to life. Engaging actively deepens understanding, sharpens critical thinking, and makes learning collaborative. Your voice adds value—so speak up and participate!

Written exam: Final examination conducted at the end of the semester.

Course contents

Timeline	Reading list	Movie	Theme
Week 1	Pinney,C. (2001) "Introduction: Public, Popular, and Other Cultures' in <i>Pleasure and The Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India</i> (1 st ed.) Oxford University Press.	NA	Introduction
Constructing Nationalism			
Week 2	Thomas, R. (1989) "Sanctity and Scandal: The Mythologization of Mother India," <i>Quarterly Review of Film and Video</i> 11:3. Roy, P. (1998) "Figuring Mother India: The Case of Nargis," in <i>Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India</i> pp.152-173.	Mother India (1957, dir. Mehboob)	Melodrama and Nation Building in Nehruvian India
Week 3	Nissim Mannathukkaren, "Subaltern, Cricket and the 'Nation': The Silences of "Lagaan", <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> (8 December 2001).	Lagaan (2001, dir. Ashutosh Gowariker)	Imagining Anti- Colonial resistance
Week 4	Mishra, V. (2001). "The actor as a Parallel text: Amitabh Bachchan" <i>Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire</i> (1st ed.). Routledge.	Dewaar (1975, dir. Yash Chopra)	The Angry Young Man
Week 5	Neelam Srivastava (2009) <i>Bollywood as National(ist) Cinema: Violence, Patriotism and the National-Popular in Rang De Basanti</i> , <i>Third Text</i> , 23:6, 703-716.	Rang De Basanti (2005, dir. Rakesh Om Prakash Mehra)	Protests

Constructing Modernity			
Week 6	Uberoi, P. (1998). The diaspora comes home: Disciplining desire in DDLJ. <i>Contributions to Indian Sociology</i> , 32(2), 305-336.	DDLJ (1995, dir. Aditya Chopra)	Constructing Modern Love
Week 7	Uberoi, Patricia. 2001. Imagining the Family: An Ethnography of Viewing Hum Aapke Hain Kaun...! In C. Pinney and R. Dwyer (eds) <i>Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India</i> , pp. 309–51. Delhi: Oxford University Press	Hum Aapke hai Kaun (1994, Suraj Bharjatya)	The New Indian Family
Week 8	Fair, C. C., & Mahajan, H. (2024). The killing fields of Punjab: representing the Sikh militancy in cinema. <i>Small Wars & Insurgencies</i> , 35(8), 1446–1466.	Maachis (1996, dir. Gulzar)	Understanding Secessions
Week 9	Gita Viswanath and Salim Malik, “Revisiting 1947 Through Popular Cinema: A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan”, <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> 44, no. 36 (5-11 September 2009), 61-69.	Veer Zara (2003, dir. Yash Chopra)	Reimagining Identities Beyond Boundaries
Constructing Change			
Week 10	Sinha, P. (2023). Scripting Disability as the ‘New’ Bollywood: Pitching, reflecting, researching and negotiating. <i>Media, Culture & Society</i> , 46(4), 725-744.	Taare Zameen Par (2007, dir. Amole Gupta)	Understanding Disabilities
Week 11	Sohomjit Ray (2013) Legibility, Erasure, and the Neoliberal Assimilation of Same-Sex Desire in Dostana, <i>South Asian Review</i> , 34:3, 159-174	Dostana (2008, dir. Tarun Mansukhani)	Imaging Indian Sexuality Abroad
Week 12	Banaji, Shakuntala (2014) Bollywood horror as an uncanny public sphere: genre theories, postcolonial concepts, and the insightful audience. <i>Communication, Culture and Critique</i> , 7 (4). pp. 453-471. ISSN 1753-9129	Bulbul (2020, dir. Avantika Dutt)	Unpacking Horror and Feminism
Week 13	Sonal Jha (2022) Unbecoming Men, <i>Third Text</i> , 36:3, 278-292. Debapriya Ganguly & Rajni Singh (2021) Reading patriarchal manhood, violence and love in Kabir Singh (2019), <i>South Asian Popular Culture</i> , 19:1, 15-32.	Kabir Singh (2019, dir. Sandeep Vanga Reddy)	Writing Grey Characters and Social Responsibility
Week 14	Sharma, E., & Malhotra, I. (2023). The biopolitics of transnational commercial gestational surrogacy in Mimi (2021). <i>South Asian Popular Culture</i> , 21(1), 139–142.	MiMi (2021, dir Laxman Utekar)	Agency in Rural India
Week 15	Revision		