

Course Plan

DEVDas: BOLLYWOOD & "POSTCOLONIAL" SOUTH ASIA

University Studies 7 (87638)

Class: Thursday's 11-11:50AM in SSL 119

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"Office" Hours: Student Center Starbucks, Thursday's 12-1PM

UTeach Faculty Mentors: Professor Beheroze Shroff & Professor Lucas Hilderbrand

Week 1: Introductions! 04/5/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the seminar, each other, and be given a list of key narrative, cinematic, and cultural motifs to look out for during their viewings of *Devdas*.

Schedule:

- Icebreakers!
 - We will sit in a circle and each student who is willing and able will say their names, preferred gender pronouns, year/major, and an interesting fact about themselves. (20 minutes)
- Seminar Introductions
 - We will then watch the trailer for *Devdas* (5 minutes)
 - We will go over the syllabus and expectations (10 minutes)
 - I will let students know about the extra credit screenings of *Devdas* on campus and ask them if they have any questions. (15 minutes)
- (Students will be let out about 30 minutes early)

Week 2: *Devdas* the Novel and Colonial Context 04/12/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Now after having viewed *Devdas* (2002), students will be briefly introduced to colonialism in South Asia and begin to understand the context of the *Devdas* Novel (1917) to compare it to the film.

Schedule:

- Lecture
 - Colonialism (10 minutes)
 - *Devdas* the novel (10 minutes)
- Discussion/Group activity
 - We will compare and contrast the novel with the 2002 film either together as a class or in groups (20-30 minutes)

Week 3: Courtesans, Class, and Classical Dance 04/19/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will begin to understand the role of courtesans, dance, and "Devadasis" in South Asian society and discuss their relation to the themes of wealth, marriage,

sexuality, alcohol, and socioeconomic class to prepare ourselves for greater depth next week.

Schedule:

- Lecture
 - Courtesans (10 minutes)
 - Excerpts from “Woman and the Burden of Postcoloniality” - Sumita Chakravarty
 - South Asian Classical Dance (20 minutes)
 - Screening of videos
 - Storytelling (preserving culture)
 - Priyanka Chopra’s [Interview](#)
 - *Amrapali*
 - [Court Dancer Competition](#)
 - *Mughal-e-Azam* and *Bajirao Mastani*
 - [“Mohe Panghat Pe”](#) (3:05) → [“Mohe Rang Do Laa!”](#) (3:21) → [“Kahe Ched Mohe”](#)
 - [“Pyar Kya To Darna Kya”](#) → [“Deewani Mastani”](#) → [“Maar Dala”](#)
 - [“Teri Mehfil Mein Qismat”](#) → [“Pinga”](#) → [“Dola Re”](#)
 - [Kali Babu](#) confronts Chandramukhi and Paro
 - Discussion
 - We will informally discuss the role of “gender” in constructing these problematic ideologies (20 minutes)

Week 4: Wealth and Power 04/26/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will learn about wealth in terms of power in the socioeconomic class structures of British-ruled South Asia and the pursuit of wealth as a means of proving oneself and family to society

Schedule:

- Lecture
 - Classism and Casteism (20 minutes)
- Discussion/Group work
 - We will make charts/maps of each character and unpack what barriers they face in achieving their goals
 - If we split into groups, each group will be assigned a particular character and we will reconvene at the end (30 minutes)

Week 5: Religious Symbolism and Cinematic Form 05/3/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will learn to use the film and its religious allusions to problematize the idea of associating honor and nationalism with the policing of women and femininity. Students will learn about the “gaze,” particularly the “male gaze,” and analyze ways in which the film submits the female characters to it.

Schedule:

- *Interactive Lecture*
 - We will use the motif cheat sheet I provided for the students on the first day to discuss what the religious and cultural motifs of the film mean and how they operate in creating narrative (20 minutes)
- Discussion
 - We will split into two big groups, one for Paro and the other for Chandramukhi, depending on who the students feel face the most challenges/complications in the film
 - The students will work with each other to figure out what stands out in their female character (20 minutes)
- Film Poster
 - I will assign the Film Poster and students will use what they learned in the discussion and lectures to get a better understanding of what they want to create (5-10 minutes)

Week 6: Toxic Masculinity 05/10/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will understand “toxic masculinity” in order to understand the discourses of sexism better and how it affects *all* genders.

Schedule:

- Lecture
 - Toxic Masculinity (10 minutes)
 - Feminism of South Asia (10 minutes)
- Discussion/Group Work
 - We will look at the male characters and do what we did with the female characters last week or break into groups for Devdas, his father, Chuni Babu, Kali Babu, and Paro’s husband (20 minutes)
- Answer questions about Film Poster (5 minutes)

Week 7: Devdas (1955) 05/17/2018 (50m) (Film Poster Due)

Objectives

- Students will be given a break from lectures by talking about their favorite songs and dance scenes from the film and discuss why they like it. They will learn about the appeal of grandeur cinema in creating nationalism and national identity.

Schedule:

- Screenings (20 minutes)
 - Songs/Scenes from 1955 *Devdas*
 - Corresponding songs/scenes from 2002 *Devdas*
- Lecture (10 minutes)
 - Grandeur of Bhansali films
 - Nationalism and national identity in Bollywood Cinema
 - Using Sumita Chakravarty reading
- Discussion (20 minutes)
 - Candid open discussion about cinemas and nationalism
- Collect Film Posters

Week 8: Intersectionalities and Classism: 05/24/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will use our accumulated knowledge to unpack classism in the film and relate it as intersectional to the earlier topics of the course including characters' professions, the film's sexism, and colonial occupation of South Asia.

Schedule:

- Combined Lecture & Discussion (30-40 minutes)
 - Lectures will summarize previous week's lectures to refresh students
 - Candid open discussion on the connections students are urged to make
 - Lecture on film's formal narrative elements that contribute to colonial concepts to help facilitate discussion
 - Ask students to point
- Return midterms and provide improvements for final (10 minutes)
 - Assign final essay prompt and answer questions

Week 9: Anti-Blackness 05/31/2018 (50m)

Objectives:

- Students will learn about the ancient histories of anti-Blackness in South Asian and relate it to colonial *and* postcolonial contexts.

Schedule:

- Lecture (30 minutes)
 - "Anti-blackness"
 - Gandhi and anti-blackness
 - Beauty standards in South Asian popular culture - including Bollywood
 - Pre-colonial encounters: Indo-Aryan migrations during 1500 BCE
 - Caste System
 - Dark skin and lower caste
 - "Dasa" - word for lower class, darker people, meaning "servant"
 - Connect to "Dev-das"
- Discussion (15 minutes)
 - Encounters with anti-blackness
- Answer questions on final essay (5 minutes)

Week 10: Final Thoughts 06/7/2018 (30m) (Final Essay Due)

Objectives:

- Students will be able to reflect on this seminar and use their new-found insight to be critical in the future!

Schedule:

- Collect final essays and provide donuts (5 minutes)
- Discussion about who they chose for the essay and why (20 minutes)
- Thank you's (5 minutes)