

HIST 30291

‘A NATION IN THE MAKING’, 1800-1947

(‘A Nation in the Making’: Nationalist Consciousness And ‘Indian’ Imaginings)



Course Convener

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Course Content

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in their history, art, literature and culture, the people of the South Asian sub-continent were beginning to see an ‘Indian-ness’, an essence, that bound them together and made them different from the rulers. These were the earliest stirrings of the nationalist intelligentsia that fed the anti-colonial struggle and shaped the country’s destiny in 1947. However, precisely because it was imagined, the ‘nation-ness’ was also selective, preferential and exclusionary. The course will chart the contours of these ‘national’ imaginings, and critically analyse their content, throwing light on those processes that made the modern Indian nation available not to all, but certain select groups only. We will see how the complex workings of class, caste, communal, and gender divides contributed to numerous fractures and tortuous solidarities, which nationalist categories often tried to subsume. These will be linked to India’s current day problems in class discussions.

This course will study the cultural constructions of nationalism in colonial India. It would focus on those imaginings that helped the people of the subcontinent construct a ‘national’ identity for themselves. The course aims to equip students with: (1) A knowledge of the anti-colonial struggle in India between 1800 and 1947, and its political, social and cultural mappings. (2) An ability to apply recent theories of the ‘nation’ to a completely different terrain, that of the colony, and question some of the assumptions that feed western stereotypes of the nation-state.

Assessment

1 source analysis – 1200 words 40%; 1 Essay - 3000 words 60%

LECTURE THEMES

Week 1:

GENERAL BACKGROUND: COLONIAL PAST

GENERAL BACKGROUND: INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Week 2:

PROBLEMS WITH SOME CONCEPTS ON NATIONALISM

THE BENGALI BHADRALOK AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Week 3:

ARYAN HISTORIES AND HINDU PASTS I

ARYAN HISTORIES AND HINDU PASTS II

Week 4:

DIVIDED BY RELIGION/COMMUNITY: THE POLITICS OF THE COW AND MOSQUE

SEPARATE IDENTITIES: SEPARATE NATIONS: THE 1947 PARTITION

Week 5:

GENDER AND NATION

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: WOMEN AND THE 'NATION'

Week 6:

MIDDLE CLASS NATIONALIST LEADERSHIP AND THE 'PEOPLE'

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: SUBALTERNES AND THE 'NATION'

Week 7:

PEASANTS AND THE NATION

TRIBAL PEOPLE AND HILLMEN

Week 8:

ART AND NATIONALISM

SCIENCE AND NATIONALISM

Week 9:

LITERATURE: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CLASS AND COMMUNITY

DIVIDED BY LANGUAGE: THE POLITICS OF SPEECH AND REGION

Week 10:

CASTE CONFLICT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

INDICATIVE READINGS

1. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Political Economy* (Routledge: London and NY, 1998)
2. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993)
3. Crispin Bates, *Subalterns and the Raj* (Routledge, 2007)

VISUAL TASTERS, COURSE SUBJECT RELATED:

Watch the film *Gandhi* (1982) by David Attenborough

Watch the following YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cr9mmxFnXlo>

BBC 2 Documentary: Seven Days in Summer: Countdown to Partition, where Prof Ghosh appears as expert commentator.