

Gandhi's India

LSHV 464-01

Monday 6:30-8:45

Dr. Ariel Glucklich

110 New North

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Introduction:

The course will survey the philosophical and cultural foundations of Gandhi's work and his political and social action. It will situate Gandhi in the explosive context of the national upheaval and social (including religious-sectarian) unrest that characterized the middle years of the twentieth century, and continues today. We will look at the way that Hinduism and Buddhism have treated conflict and the possibility of peacefully confronting differences in the world they knew in ancient and modern India. Particular focus will be given to issues involving class, gender and sectarian differences. Students will read some of the sacred texts that influenced the thought of Gandhi and explore Hindu ethics in some detail. Through texts, films, lectures and discussion, members of the class will develop an appreciation for Gandhi's unique intellectual synthesis and creativity, and will learn to look at contemporary South Asian issues through the lens of Gandhian ethics.

Books for Purchase:

M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography

Ritu Menon, Borders and Boundaries

Rohinton Mistry, A Fine Balance

R.K. Narayan, The Ramayana

Packet: A collection of readings purchased in class

Grading:

Your grade will be based on three papers (30% each) and class participation (10%).

Paper requirements are different for graduate and undergraduate students. The requirements are discussed at the end of the syllabus.

Note on Disability:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Schedule:

1/14—Introduction to the class: R. Attenborough's "Gandhi": Reality or Myth?

1/28—Religion and violence in ancient India

Packet: Vedas, Hindu Myths, Devi Mahatmya

2/4—What is a righteous war? The Ramayana

Narayan's Ramayana

2/11—The limits of religious violence and the birth of non-violence in India

Packet: Upanishads, Buddhist Scriptures

2/25—Modern Indian history: From Islamic synthesis to the end of colonialism

Packet: Kulke, A History; G. Richards, A Sourcebook

3/10—The Early life of Gandhi

An Autobiography, Part I; “Gandhi” documentary

3/17—The partition of India: violence against women

Borders and Boundaries; “Earth” a film

3/31—Gandhi’s later life and thought

An Autobiography. Parts II, III

4/7—Evaluating the life and thought of Gandhi

An Autobiography, Part IV, V; Packet: S. Wolpert, Gandhi’s Passion

4/14—Religion and society in India in light of Gandhi: The Dalits

Packet: P. Ashby, Modern Trends; J. Webster, Religion and Dalit Liberation;

4/21—Film: Caste at Birth; untouchability in India today.

4/28—Women and caste in India

Borders and Boundaries; Film: “Fire”

Conclusion to class: Gandhi, India and the West.

Assignments:

Undergraduate students will have to write three papers of six pages. Graduate students will write two 15-page papers with research requirements that will be discussed separately. The graduate papers may cover the topics below, or other ones, to be negotiated. The papers will be evaluated on form as well as content, so MLA or other style manuals have to be strictly used. All papers must be turned in on the dates indicated. More specific research and writing guidelines will be given separately in class. I am also willing to look at drafts for the first paper.

Paper 1 (due 2/25) Broad topic (you may fine-tune it): Discuss the relationship between religious thought and violence in ancient India. What are the religious sources of both violence and non-violence?

Paper 2 (due 4/14) Does Gandhian political and ethical thinking represent a complete innovation in Indian philosophy, or is it a natural outcome of traditional elements? Explain and give detailed examples.

Paper 3 (due one week after the last class): Discuss the conditions of Muslims, women or untouchables in India and explain how Gandhi would regard their situation today. Does his philosophy work today and can it be applied to help their situation?

Packet Table of Contents

Packet 1

1. *Rigveda*
2. *Hindu Myths*
3. *Devi Mahatmya*
4. *Upanishads*
5. *Kautilya Arthashastra*
6. *Dharmasutras*
7. S. Wolpert, *A New History of India*
8. *Buddhist Scriptures*
9. *Bhagavadgita*
10. H. Kulke, *A History of India*

Packet 2

1. Kulke contd.
2. G. Richards, *A Sourcebook of Modern Hinduism*

3. U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*
4. Gandhi, *Bhagavadgita*
5. S. Wolpert, *Gandhi's Passion*
6. P. Ashby, *Modern Trends in Hinduism*
7. J. Webster, *Religion and Dalit Liberation*