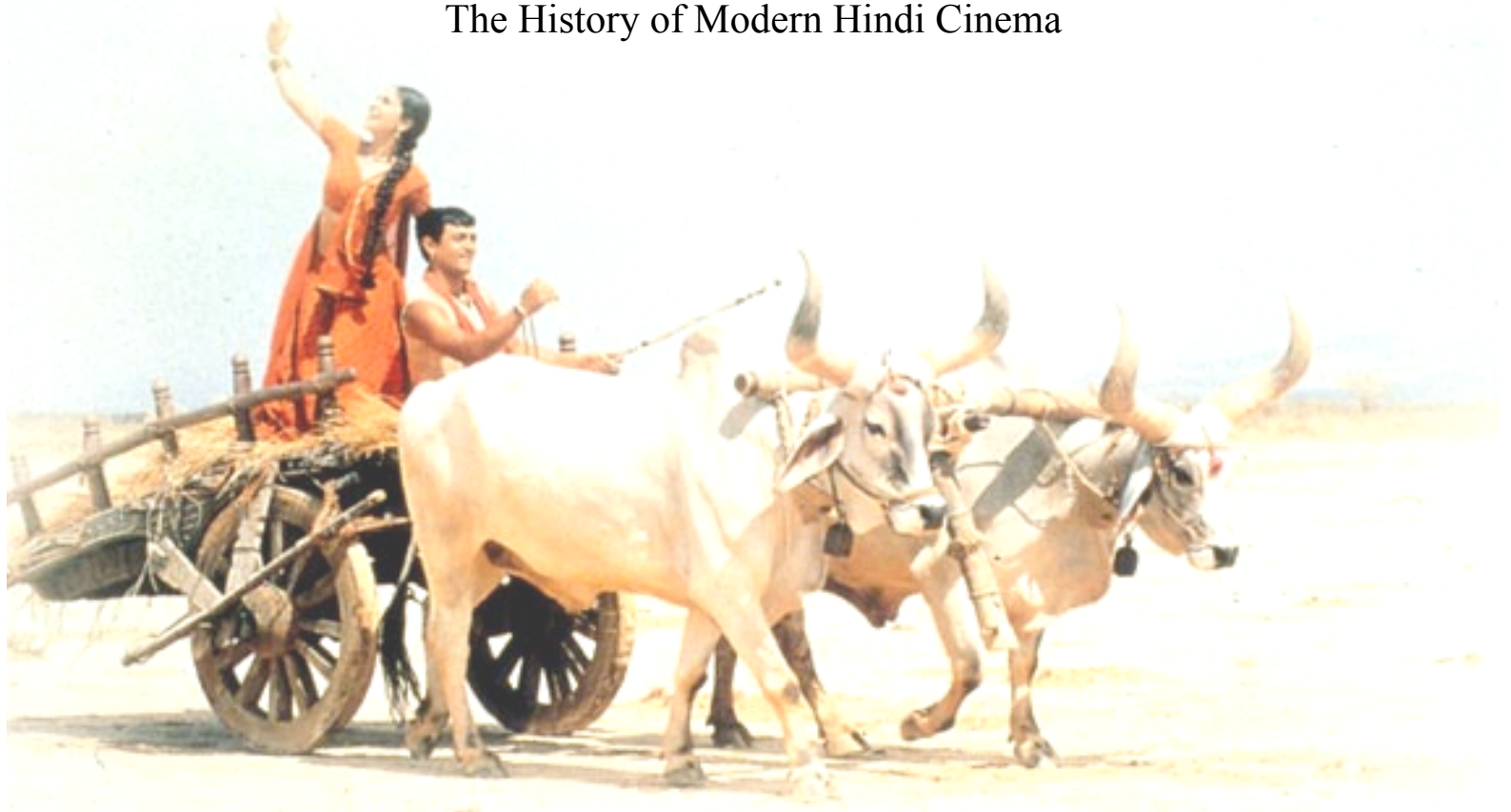


# *Screening India*

## The History of Modern Hindi Cinema



### **Course Description**

This course explores the history, music, and narrative conventions of popular Hindi cinema in India, commonly referred to as “Bollywood.” Bollywood movies, readily identified by their song-and-dance sequences and “masala”-style mixing of filmic genres, are among the most avidly watched films in the world. Focusing on films that engage major historical and cultural moments in sixty years of modern Indian nationhood, we will explore why Bollywood-style storytelling is so effective as well as examine how these filmic narratives both reflect and shape the culture and society in which they are created.

There are several objectives for this course. In one sense, it is an introduction to modern Bollywood cinema and we will watch several of the most significant (for both critics and popular audiences) films of the post-independence era. In another sense, we will also use these films as windows into postcolonial Indian culture and society, and through a chronological viewing, get a Bollywood-eye view of modern Indian history. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, we will “read” and interpret these films as cultural and aesthetic texts and think about the ways in which they make meaning through storytelling, music, and spectacle.

### **Films (in the order to be shown)**

Main Hoon Na (2004)  
Shree 420 (1955)  
Devdas (1955)  
Mother India (1957)

Guide (1965)  
Deewar (1975)  
Sholay (1977)  
Roja (1992)

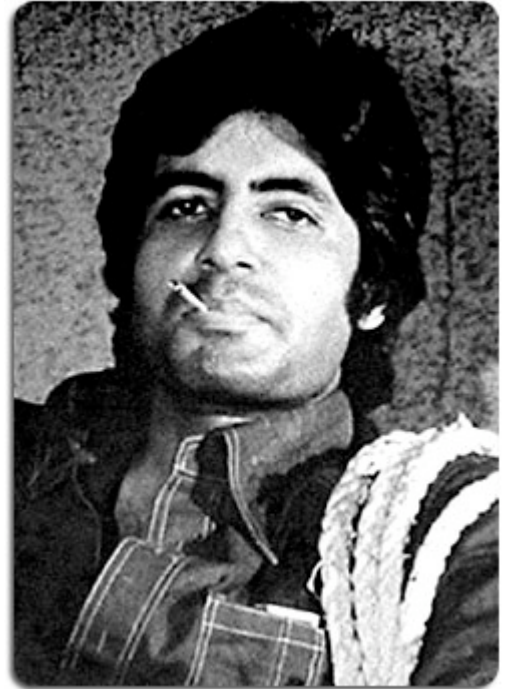
Dil Se (1998)  
Hum Aapke Hai Koun...! (1994)  
Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995)  
Lagaan (2001)

Veer-Zaara (2004)  
Rang De Basanti (2006)  
Om Shanti Om (2007)

### **Required Texts**

*The Bollywood Reader* (2008)  
ed. by Rajinder Dudrah and Jigna Desai

*Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* (2002)  
by Vijay Mishra



### **Schedule of Classes**



Week One: *Main Hoon Na*/I'm Here Now (Farah Khan, 2004)

Jan. 13 **Welcome and film discussion:**

**Why Should we Study Bollywood Cinema? (aside from the fact that it's *awesome*)**

Jan. 15 **"Bollywood" in local and global contexts**

- \* Suketu Mehta, "Bollywood Confidential" in the *New York Times*, Nov. 14, 2004
- \* Mishra ch. 1: Inventing Bombay Cinema (p. 1-?)
- \* Madhava Prasad, "Surviving Bollywood" in *Global Bollywood* (ed. Kavoori and Punathambekar, 2008) p. 41-51

Week Two (No film screening Monday, MLK Day):

Jan. 20 **watch film in-class: "Larger than Life: India's Bollywood Film Culture" (2005)**

Jan. 22 **Historical antecedents and the birth of Hindi cinema**

- \* Tejaswini Ganti, ch. 1 "Introduction" (p. 1-52)
- \* Rosie Thomas, "Indian Cinema: Pleasures and Popularity" in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 21-31)

Week Three: *Shree 420/Mr. 420* (Raj Kapoor, 1955)

Jan. 27 film discussion

- \* Rashmi Varma, "Provincializing the Global City" in *Social Text* 22/4, Winter 2004 (p. 65-89)
- \* Sanjay Srivastava, "The Voice of the Nation and the Five-Year Plan Hero: Speculations on Gender, Space, and Popular Culture" in *Fingerprinting Popular Culture*, ed. Lal and Nandy (p. 122-155)

Jan. 29 **Foundational myths: the Ramayana and the Mahabharata**

- \* Vijay Mishra, "Towards a theoretical critique of Bombay cinema" (ch. 3 in *The Bollywood Reader*) p. 32-44
- \* Gregory Booth, "Traditional Content and Narrative Structure in the Commercial Hindi Cinema" in *Asian Folklore Studies* 54/2 (p. 169-190)

Week Four: *Devdas* (Bimal Roy, 1955)

Feb. 3 film discussion

- \* Ravi Vasudevan, "The politics of cultural address in a 'transitional' cinema: a case study of Indian popular cinema" in *Reinventing Film Studies* ed. Gledhill and Williams (p. 130-164)
- \* Poonam Arora, "Devdas: India's Emasculated Hero, Sado-Masochism, and Colonialism" in *Jouvert* 1/1

Feb. 5 **De-coding Bollywood melodrama**

- \* Mishra ch. 2 "Melodramatic Staging" (p. ?-59)
- \* Rosie Thomas, "Melodrama and the Negotiation of Morality in Mainstream Hindi Film," from *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World* (157-182)

Week Five: *Mother India* (Mehboob Khan, 1957)

Feb. 10 film discussion

- \* Mishra, ch. 3 "The Texts of Mother India" (p. 61-87)
- \* Parama Roy, "Figuring Mother India: The Case of Nargis," ch. 9 in *The Bollywood Reader* (p.109-121)

Feb. 12 **Viewing religion in Hindi cinema**

- \* Philip Lutgendorf, "A Superhit Goddess: *Jai Santoshi Maa* and Caste Hierarchy in Hindi Films" in *Manushi* no. 131 (p. 10-16, 24-37)
- \* Rachel Dwyer, "The religious and the secular in Hindi film" ch. 4 in *Filming the Gods* (p.132-161)

Week Six: *Guide* (Vijay Anand, 1965)

Feb. 17 film discussion

- \* Sumita Chakravarty, "The national-heroic image: masculinity and masquerade" in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 84-96)
- \* "The Changing Image of the Hero in Hindi Films," by Ashok Rao Kavi in *Journal of Homosexuality* 39: 3/4 (2000) p. 307-312.

Feb. 19 **Amitabh Bachchan and the "Angry Young Man" of the 1970s**

- \* Mishra, ch. 5 "The Actor as Parallel Text: Amitabh Bachchan" (p. 125-156)
- \* Fareeduddin Kazmi, "How angry is the Angry Young Man? 'Rebellion' in Conventional Hindi Films" in Nandy ed. *The Secret Politics of Our Desires* (p. 134-156)

Week Seven: *Deewar*/Wall (Yash Chopra, 1975)

Feb. 24 film discussion

- \* Ashis Nandy, "Introduction: Indian popular cinema as a slum's eye view of politics," in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 73-83)
- \* Jyotika Viridi, "Deewar/Wall (1975) – Fact, Fiction, and the Making of a Superstar in *Global Bollywood* (ed. Kavoori and Punathambekar, 2008), p. 223-239

Feb. 26 **Filmi geet I: playback singing**

- \* Neepa Majumdar, "The Embodied Voice: Song Sequences and Stardom in Popular Hindi Cinema" in *Soundtrack Available*, ed. Wocjik and Knight (p. 161-181)
- \* Sangita Gopal and Biswarup Sen, "Inside and Out: Song and Dance in Bollywood Cinema" in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 146-157)
- \* Rajinder Dudrah, "Singing for India: Songs in the Bollywood Film" ch. 2 in *Bollywood Goes to the Movies* (p.47-64)

Week Eight: *Sholay* ("Flames," Manmohan Desai, 1977)

March 3 film discussion

- \* Priya Jha, "Lyrical Nationalism: Gender, Friendship, and Excess in 1970s Hindi Cinema" in *Velvet Light Trap* no. 51 (p. 43-53)
- \* Sheila Nayar, "Invisible representation: the oral contours of a national popular cinema" in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 158-171)

March 5 **Cracks in the nation: domestic terrorism in the films of Mani Ratnam**  
**PAPER DUE**

Week Nine: *Roja* (Mani Ratnam, 1992) and *Dil Se* ("From the Heart" Mani Ratnam, 1998)

March 10 film discussion - *Roja*

- \* Nicholas Dirks, "The Home and the Nation: Consuming Culture and Politics in *Roja*" in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 134-145)
- \* Tejaswini Niranjana, "Integrating Whose Nation? Tourists and Terrorists in *Roja*" in *Economic and Political Weekly* (p. 79-82)

March 12 film discussion – *Dil Se*

- \* Ananya Jahanara Kabir, "Allegories of Alienation and Politics of Bargaining: Minority Subjectivities in Mani Ratnam's *Dil Se*" in *South Asian Popular Culture* 1/2 (p. 141-159)
- \* Anustup Basu, "The Music of Intolerable Love: Political Conjugality in Mani Ratnam's *Dil Se*" in *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* (ed. Gopal and Moorti) p. 153- 178

Week Ten: *Hum Aapke Hai Koun...!* (Who Am I to You!?, 1994)

March 17 film discussion

- \* Shohini Ghosh, “*Hum Aapke Hai Koun...!* Pluralizing pleasures of viewership,” in *Social Scientist* 28: 3/4 (March-April 2000) p, 83-90
- \* Patricia Uberoi, “Imagining the Family: an ethnography of viewing *Hum Aapke Hai Koun*” in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 172-189)

March 19 **Filmi geet II: staging social transgression**

- \* Gayatri Gopinath, “Bollywood/Hollywood: Queer Cinematic Representation and the Perils of Translation” ch 4 in *Impossible Desires* (p. 93-130)
- \* Monika Mehta, “What is Behind Film Censorship? The *Khalnayak* Debates” in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 122-133)



**Spring Break!**

Week Eleven: *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* /The Lover will Take the Bride (Aditya Chopra, 1995)

March 31 film discussion

- \* Ashish Rajadhyaksha, “The ‘Bollywoodization’ of the Indian cinema: cultural nationalism in a global arena” in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 190-200)
- \* Nitin Govil, “Bollywood and the Frictions of Global Mobility” in *The Bollywood Reader* (p. 201-215)
- \* Mishra, ch. 8 “Bombay Cinema and Diasporic Desire” (p. 235-269)

April 2 **Nationalism and sport: the case of cricket**

- \* Ashis Nandy, “Tradition, Transgression, and Norms” ch. 1 in *The Tao of Cricket* (p. 1-51)

Week Twelve: *Lagaan/Tax* (Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001)

April 7 film discussion

- \* S. Anand (ed.), *Brahmans and Cricket: Lagaan’s millennial purana and other myths* (entire, to be handed out in class)
- \* Chandrima Chakraborty, “Bollywood Motifs: Cricket Fiction and Fictional Cricket” in *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 21: 3/4 (p. 549-572)

April 9 **India and Pakistan: reality and representation**

**PAPER DUE**

Week Thirteen: *Veer-Zaara* (Yash Chopra, 2004)

April 14 film discussion

- \* Srijana Mitra Das, "Partition and Punjabiyyat in Bombay cinema: the cinematic perspectives of Yash Chopra and others" in *Contemporary South Asia* 15/4 (p. 453-471)
- \* Rajinder Dudrah, "Borders and Border Crossings in Main Hoon Na and Veer-Zaara,": in *Fiming the Line of Control* (ed. Bharat and Kumar) p. 40-55

April 16 **Youth culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Hindi movie**

- \* Corey Creekmur, "Bombay Boys: Dissolving the Male Child in Popular Hindi Movies" in *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Boyhood*, ed. Pomerance and Gateward (p. 350-376)

Week Fourteen: *Rang De Basanti/Paint It Saffron* (Rakesh Omprakash Mehra, 2006)

April 21 film discussion

- \* Jasraman Singh Grewal, "*Rang de Basanti*: Morality and the Reservation Issue" in *Economic and Political Weekly* (p. 4114-4116)
- \* Sunny Singh, "Defining a Non-Pakistan-centric Post-Globalisation Self in Hindi Cinema 1996-2006 in *Filming the Line of Control* (ed. Bharat and Kumar) p. 111-127
- \* Aarti Wani, "Uses of History: A Case of Two Films" in *Film International* 5:1 (2007) p. 73-78

April 23 **The Future of Bollywood?**

- \* Ashis Nandy, "Notes Towards an Agenda for the Next Generation of Film Theorists in India" in *South Asian Popular Culture* 1/1 (p. 79-84)
- \* Ashok Raj, "The curse of globalised culture: the fall of Indian cinema foretold" in *Futures* no. 36 (p. 797- 809)

Week Fifteen: *Om Shanti Om* (Farah Khan, 2007)

April 28 film discussion

April 30 wrap-up!



### **Online resources for Bollywood films:**

Fabulous site for scholarly reviews of many Bollywood films:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~incinema/>

Sites for buying Bollywood films, music:

<http://store.nehaflix.com/index.html>

<http://www.indiaweekly.com/Main/>

For Bollywood gossip, news etc:

<http://www.bollywoodvillage.com/>

[http://magnamags.com/magna\\_stardust/](http://magnamags.com/magna_stardust/)

<http://www.bollywood-stars.net/>

<http://www.indiafm.com/>

Bollywood news/gossip/music podcasts:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/asiannetwork/lovebollywood/>

[www.podmasti.com](http://www.podmasti.com)