

RELS 326: GANDHI'S MODERNITY (Spring 2013)
TR 10:50-12:05
Wilson Hall 1-125

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Variously billed as modern mystic, social reformer, and founder of the Indian nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi remains one of the most enigmatic personalities of the twentieth century. In this advanced undergraduate seminar, we will use Gandhi to ask the question, "What is modernity?" What political, cultural, and social forms mark the modern period as distinct from its predecessors, and in what sense should modernity be understood as "Western"? Drawing on both British and Indian cultures to articulate his distinctive set of political and religious ideals, Gandhi was very much concerned with such questions. The core of the course is the list of recommended books that follows as an appendix to Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1909). Setting out to answer the question, "What would Gandhi read?" the course traces the multiple currents of thought that his wide reading brought together. It also considers how Gandhi's produced his life, and his body, through textual practices.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To learn in depth about select topics in modern Hinduism
- To learn critical methodologies in religious studies, especially how to combine textual, historical, and theoretical methods of cultural analysis
- To develop basic research skills
- To practice skills in writing, discussion, and oral presentation

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **10 % Participation:** This is first and foremost a discussion-based seminar, and so regular, thoughtful, and informed participation will be a major course requirement. In order to contribute successfully to our conversations, you will have to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading. This means not only having read material and read it well, but also having reflected on the material before coming to class. The quality and the quantity of your contributions will be noted and will determine your final participation grade.
- **10 % Discussion Questions:** In order to facilitate discussion, you are required regularly to bring a discussion question to class. Questions must be typed and handed into the professor at the end of class, to receive a grade of $\sqrt{+}$ / $\sqrt{/}$ / $\sqrt{-}$, depending on the quality of the questions. High-quality discussion questions will consist of several sentences; express complete thoughts; and indicate clear engagement with the text, generally quoting it directly. Students must turn in fifteen questions total during the semester.

- **40% Short Papers:** Two short (5pp) essays (20% each) will offer readings of *Hind Swaraj* and related texts. Essay #1 will weigh on the question of how *Hind Swaraj* defines and critiques modernity. Essay #2 will ask how *Hind Swaraj* draws on or departs from one of the books listed in its first appendix, with particular attention to how the two texts theorize the political and/or the religious.
- **10 % Final Paper Process Work:** Starting after the break, you will be required to submit a series of assignments preliminary to the final research paper. These include a topic proposal, a bibliography, an abstract, an outline, and a presentation. The presentation will be weighted most heavily in determining your grade on this course requirement.
- **30 % Final Research Paper:** A 15pp final paper will do two things. First, for about 10 pages, it will interpret Gandhi's *Autobiography* as a work that sets out to theorize the political and/or the religious (i.e. as a companion text to *Hind Swaraj*). Second, for about 5 pages, it will analyze a post-1947 appropriation of Gandhi in order to ask what the legacy of Gandhi's political-cum-spiritual project has been for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance:** Due to the dense and cumulative nature of our conversation, even a single absence will put you behind in the course. I understand that due to illness and other emergencies some students may need to miss one or two meetings. In order to accommodate such emergencies, each student will be permitted two discretionary absences. Missing more than one week, even for valid reasons, will be detrimental to your performance in the course. Consequently, each additional absence will reduce the final grade one third (A becomes A-, etc.). Chronic or extreme tardiness will be counted as absence.
- **Late Papers and Assignments:** All assignments should be turned in on time. If an assignment is turned in late, its final grade will be lowered by one letter per day. Thus, the highest possible grade for a paper turned in one day late would be a B. Papers turned in one minute after the deadline will be considered a full day late. Extensions will not be granted unless arrangements have been made at least one week in advance.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. All references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the *Student Academic and Conduct Guidelines*, or make an appointment to see the instructor to discuss the problem. Any student caught cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise engaged in academic dishonesty will fail the course and be reported to the Dean of Students.
- **Discussion Guidelines:** Religion is by nature a contentious subject matter, and thus promises to keep our conversations lively. Our task in this class will be to analyze religion as a cultural phenomenon, not to tout our own beliefs or disparage those of others. Critical thinking is a must, and it is likewise imperative that everyone approach religious texts and traditions with appropriate respect.

- **Support Services:** Montana State University provides a variety of services to ensure that you thrive, academically and otherwise. If you have a particular physical or learning disability that requires special accommodation, please contact both me *and* the Office of Disability, Re-Entry, and Veterans Services (180 Strand Union Building; x2824). Otherwise, if you think that a health problem, a family emergency, or some other life event will adversely affect your academic performance, you should contact the Dean of Students for support (174 Strand Union Building; x2826).
- **Writing Guidelines:** Good writing is revised writing. The best writers generate multiple drafts and enlist the help of readers in order to produce a smooth final product: you are no exception. A top-level paper will not only demonstrate technical mastery (i.e. it will be devoid of grammatical and stylistic errors); it will also possess a clear organizational scheme that bolsters its major argument. Top papers will advance a strong thesis statement and will support that statement with ample citations from appropriate primary and secondary sources.

REQUIRED TEXTS

M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Cambridge)

M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Dover)

Leo Tolstoy, *Last Steps: The Late Writings of Leo Tolstoy* (Penguin Classics)

Hendy David Thoreau, *The Portable Thoreau* (Penguin Classics)

John Ruskin, *Unto This Last and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics)

Barbara Stoler Miller, trans. *Bhagavad Gita* (Bantam)

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (Dover)

N. B.: All required texts are available for purchase in the campus bookstore. On the schedule of readings, articles posted to electronic course reserves at the library website are indicated by (CR). Readings are to be completed *in advance* of the date on which they are listed.

GANDHI BEYOND GANDHI

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| R 1/10 | Preliminaries |
| T 1/15 | M. K. Gandhi, <i>Autobiography</i> , pp. vii-x
Robert J. C. Young, “Gandhi’s Counter-Modernity” (CR) |
| R 1/17 | Dilip Gaonkar, “On Alternative Modernities” (CR) |
| T 1/22 | Charles Taylor, “Two Theories of Modernity” (CR) |
| R 1/24 | Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” (CR) |

WHAT WOULD GANDHI READ?

- T 1/29 M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, Preface, Forward and Ch. 1-12 (pp. 5-63)
- R 1/31 M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, Ch. 13-20 and Appendices (pp. 64-123)
- T 2/5 Leo Tolstoy, *Last Steps*, pp. 3-64
Due: Essay #1
- R 2/7 Leo Tolstoy, *Last Steps*, pp. 65-83, 112-118, 151-165
Leo Tolstoy, "Letter to a Hindoo" (CR)
- T 2/12 Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*, in *Portable Thoreau*: "Economy" (pp. 199-210), "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For" (263-277), "Sounds" (288-302), "Brute Neighbors" (380-391), "Conclusion" (457-468)
- R 2/14 Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," "Life Without Principle," and "Last Days of John Brown" (all in *Portable Thoreau*)
- T 2/19 John Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, Preface and Essays 1-3 (pp. 155-203)
- R 2/21 John Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, Essay 4 (pp. 204-228); "Traffic" (pp.233-250)
- T 2/26 Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*, Ch. 1-5 (CR or googlebooks)
- R 2/28 Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*, Ch. 7-8, 10, 12 (CR or googlebooks)

READING THE SELF, WRITING THE BODY

- T 3/5 M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, pp. 1-50
Joanne Waghorne, "The Case of the Missing Autobiography" (CR)
Due: Essay #2
- R 3/7 M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, pp. 50-102
Javed Majeed, "Gandhi's Vulnerability" (CR)
- T 3/12 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
- R 3/14 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
- T/ 3/19 M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, pp. 103-153
- R/ 3/21 M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, pp. 154-203
Michel Foucault, "Scientia Sexualis," (CR) (53-63)
- T 3/26 Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part One, pp. 1-53
Max Weber, "The Protestant Ethic" (CR)

- R 3/28 Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part Two, pp. 55-72
Due: Topic Proposal
- T 4/2 M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, pp. 204-253
Joseph Alter, “Gandhi’s Body, Gandhi’s Truth” (CR)
- R 4/4 M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 254-305, 453-454
Due: Bibliography

ANTI-COLONIALISM AND THE ETHICS OF VIOLENCE

- T 4/9 *Bhagavad Gita*, Teachings 1-9
- R 4/11 *Bhagavad Gita*, Teaching 9-18
Due: Abstract
- T 4/16 M. K. Gandhi, “The Message of the Gita” (CR)
J.T.F. Jordens, “Gandhi and the *Bhagavad Gita*” (CR)
- R 4/18 Faisal Devji, “Brothers in Arms” (CR)
Due: Outline

GANDHI AFTER GANDHI

- T 4/23 William Mazzarella, “Branding the Mahatma” (CR)
In Class: Student Research Presentations
- R 4/25 Vijay Prashad, “Black Gandhi” (CR)
In Class: Student Research Presentations

- **The final paper is due via the D2L dropbox at the beginning of the scheduled final exam period: April 30, 2:00pm.**