“When I was growing up in the nineties, no one on my favorite shows ever looked like me.” -- Manori Ravindran

There’s been a recent revolution in mainstream moviemaking and American and Canadian television (although, it has happened much earlier for BBC). Outside of Bollywood’s narrative formulas, more and more South Asians and South Asian descent actors are populating the film and television industry. In addition to acting, they are producing, directing, writing scripts, and creating their own television shows. Even so, it is still difficult to unpack the racial stereotypes of Indians from the subcontinent: Are they edgy characters or unsettling, exaggerated portraits inconsistent with reality? What are our narrative discourses around the subcontinent and South Asian immigrant culture? What has it looked like and what does the 21st century South Asian media culture outside of India want to accomplish? This class will explore the representations of South Asians in filmmaking and television from mid-twentieth century to the present day. We will watch Richard Attenborough’s Gandhi, several of Satyajit Ray’s films and figure out how they differ from Merchant Ivory Productions. We will discuss Peter Sellar’s character in The Party; we will explore Hanif Kureishi’s My Beautiful Laundrette, Jhumpa Lahiri & Mira Nair’s The Namesake, the Harold and Kumar trilogy and phenomenon, Gurinder Chadha’s Bend it Like Beckham, Danny Boyle’s Slumdog Millionaire, Salman Rushdie and Deepa Mehta’s Midnight Children, Umesh Shukla’s Oh My God, and television shows and series like The Far Pavilions (1984), The Mindy Project, Parks and Recreation, Community, and The Good Wife to figure out the range in characters and over-arching themes for South-Asians today. We will read critical race theory and contemporary South-Asian novels adapted for the screen. [This may be modified to add more films/books.]

Books:
Midnight’s Children, Salman Rushdie
The Namesake, Jumpha Lahiri

Films Screened:
The World of Apu, Satyajit Ray (1959)
The Party, Blake Edwards (1968)
My Beautiful Laundrette, Stephen Frears (1985)
Bend it Like Beckham, Gurinder Chadha (2002)
Slumdog Millionaire, Danny Boyle (2008)
Midnight Children, Deepa Mehta (2012)
Oh My God, Umesh Shukla (2012)
H&K Trilogy: Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle (2004); Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay (2008); A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas (2011)

Recommended Links:
http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2014/07/why-mixed-white-isn’t-white
http://aaww.org/abcd-a-short-history/

You will be expected to watch films, read assigned texts, and offer constructive criticism in the form of response papers (3 pgs.), presentations (10-15 minutes), group panel discussions/presentations, and a final end-of-the-semester research paper (10-15 pgs).

Grading Policy
35% in class participation, 20% weekly assignments/responses (on time!) 20% panels and presentations and 25% final essay. I expect full participation and will allow for only one absence*.

Students with Disabilities.
Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me after class or in my office hours. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator, so I can do my best to support you.

*Policy on absences and lateness:
The standard policy is that no more than three absences in a fourteen week term may result in a grade of “no-credit.” Please arrive on time for class and stay until dismissal. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If there is an emergency please speak to me about it as soon as you can.

All course work (unless stated otherwise) must be typed or computer printed on standard white 20-24lb paper, double spaced and with a minimum of 1-inch margins. Keep a copy (electronic or otherwise) of all material you submit to me or the class. We may also consider creating a blog or some kind of on-line community where you can share thoughts about film. I will look into creating a Moodle discussion site.

Aspects of student writing that will be assessed in writing assignments:
• voice that is consistent & appropriate to the audience & purpose;
• correct diction & sentence structure;
• sound judgments unified by a clear message;
• evidence or reasons supporting all judgments;
• logical linkage of judgments and evidence;
• transitions that connect a series of ideas and evidence;
• strong paragraph structure;
• correct spelling and punctuation;
• proper MLA style documentation

Scholastic Dishonesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F and may entail a variety of other sanctions up to and including expulsion from the University. FOR A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM SEE http://www.lib.umt.edu/services/plagiarism/index.htm. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO CONSULT THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA’S WEB SITE.

August 27, 2014:
Introduction
Screening of Gandhi
1hr and 30 minutes

August 29, 2014:
Screening of Gandhi
1hr, 41 minutes
Homework: https://www.academia.edu/1698012/Mahatma_Gandhi_vs_Attenboroughs_Gandhi
3 page response paper

September 3, 2014:
Discussion of Gandhi

September 5, 2014
Russell Peters: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGouMSqcw8o (first twenty-five minutes)
Screening: The Party (1hr. 39 min.)

September 10, 2014

September 12, 2014
*The World of Apu* (1hr. 45 min.)
Homework: three page response
Start reading *Midnight's Children* (Salman Rushdie)

September 17, 2014
Discussion of *The World of Apu*
Discussion of Satyajit Ray, Bengali Renaissance, excerpt of *Devi*
Handout

September 19, 2014
Screening of *Midnight's Children* (2hrs and 26 min. We may have to watch the ending on the 24th.)

September 24, 2014
Discussion of *Midnight's Children* book and film (book must be read by this date)

September 26, 2014
*My Beautiful Laundrette* (1hr. 37 min.)
Homework: three page response on *My Beautiful Laundrette*

October 1, 2014
Discussion of *My Beautiful Laundrette*

October 3, 2014
Screening of *Bend it Like Beckham* (1hr. 52 min.)
Start reading *The Namesake* (Jhumpa Lahiri)
Handout

October 8, 2014
Discussion of *Bend it Like Beckham*
Handout on *The Namesake*

October 10, 2014
Discussion of *The Namesake* (book)

October 15, 2014
Screening of *The Namesake* (2hr. 2 min.)

October 17, 2014
Discussion of book and film *The Namesake*

October 22, 2014
Presentations and midterm essays due

October 24, 2014
Presentations, continued.

October 29, 2014
Screening Shukla’s *Oh My God* (2hr. 5min.)

October 31, 2014
Discussion of Shukla's *Oh My God* (Bollywood's relation to Indian Accents)

November 5, 2014
screening of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2hrs.)
Homework: Ruth Vanita handout

November 7, 2014
Ruth Vanita guest visit, discussion of *Slumdog Millionaire*

November 12, 2014
Harold and Kumar trilogy screening (vote on which one we screen and which ones we watch on our own); *Indian Accents: Brown Voice and Racial Performance in American Television and Film*. Davis, Shilpa. 2013: “The (Asian) American Dream: *Harold and Kumar Go To White Castle* and the Pan-Ethnic Buddy Film”


November 19, 2014
*The Mindy Project, The Good Wife, Community, and Lost*

November 21, 2014
*The Mindy Project, The Good Wife, Community, and Lost*

November 26, 2014
Thanksgiving
Handouts assigned on Moodle
Work on presentations

November 27, 2014
Thanksgiving
Handouts assigned on Moodle
Work on presentations

December 3, 2014
Presentations (10-15 min. presentations)
December 5, 2014
Presentations (10-15 min. presentations)

December 10, 2014
Final Paper due (exam week)