

Introduction to South Asia

A- 1: Border and Belonging in South Asia

Duration: Fridays, 11 am – 1 pm; 20 January – 24 February 2017

Credits: 1

Course Instructor: Dr Mallika Shakya

Note: The course is limited to a maximum of 25 students on a first-come-first-served basis. The course will not be offered if a minimum of ten students have not opted for it.

Rationale

This course will look critically at the imaginations of border as the frontier between self and others as well as between the home and the world. How do nations set their cognitive boundaries? Is it different from the way societies set boundaries on caste, ethnicity, regionality and gender? What are the social science frameworks available to consider intersectionality and multiculturalism? This course will consider how social and political borders are formed, and the need to responsibly form borders. Borders are often considered corporeal but they may also manifest as a public psyche applied miles away from the actual corporeal location. Or further still, borders sometimes gives rise to borderlands that carry their own distinct identities, thus seamlessly weaving sub-nations into national and pan-national territories. The question of geography and politics are important but equally significant are the issues of literary poeticism and social aesthetics. The course will revolve around the question of South Asia: What can we do to humanize national borders of politics and aesthetics in a way that one respects the space of the other for interaction and engagement.

Class 1: The idea of nation and border – is there a pedagogy involved?

Class 2: Corporeal vs emotional borders

Class 3: Everyday politics in the borderlands

Class 4: Regions above the divide of borders (a)

Class 5: Regions above the divide of borders (b)

Class 6: Regions above the divide of borders (c)

Method of evaluation:

1. Group work and class presentation: 40 marks
2. Multiple choice questions: 60 mark

A tentative reading list:

1. Selected readings from the Subaltern Studies especially on pedagogical nationalism
2. Van Schendel, Willem. 2007. 'The Wagah Syndrome: Territorial Roots of Contemporary Violence in South Asia.' in A. Basu and S. Roy (eds.). *Violence and Democracy in India*.
3. Aggarwal, Ravina. 2001. 'At the Margins of Death: Ritual Space and the Politics of Location in an Indo-Himalayan Border Village.' *American Ethnologist*. 28 (3): 549-573.
4. Dixit, Kanak Mani. 2012. *The Southasian Sensibility: A HIMAL Reader*. HIMAL and Sage: New Delhi. (selected chapters)
5. Rushdie, Salman. 1981. *Midnight's Children*. Jonathan Cape: NY.
6. White, Carmen. 2007. 'Living in Zion: Rastafarian Repatriates in Ghana, West Africa.' *Journal of Black Studies*.