

Introduction to South Asia
A-2: Melodramatic South Asia in Cinematic Imagination

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

Credits: 1

Course Instructor: Dr Dev Pathak

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

How does South Asia appear in contemporary popular cinema in the region? Or, in other words, what are the key motifs underpinning cinemas in South Asia?

This course outlines a case of South Asia through select cinematic narratives to arrive at the idea of a melodramatic region, in sync with performative traditions, interventions of modernity, and historical encounters. The answers to the above question thus enlist various recurrent emotions that cinemas have played within the region. To name a few, they could be love, loss, and revenge! These motifs could be embedded in the national frameworks, but cinemas in the region narrate emotions crossing the territorial boundaries too. The crossing over of boundaries as well as affirmation of the same thereby becomes two poles between which emotions unfold.

Against this backdrop, this curated course adopts an interactive pedagogy to watch and talk through cinemas, to make sense of the following key issues pertaining to melodramatic South Asia:

- *Melodrama and Myths*
- *Within and Without Nation*
- *Politics of Identities*

In sync with the interactive pedagogy, the course will curate four film-screenings:

- *Bajrangi Bhaijan (Hindi)*
- *Tetash Ekti Nadir Naam (Bangla)*
- *Ramchandra Pakistani (Urdu)*
- *Kabuli Kid (Pashtun and English)*

Evaluation

Each student will select a film from his/her own country, in the light of the discussions in the class. S/he will make a presentation for 10 minutes on the selected film. Eventually, each student will write and submit a review of the selected film in 300 words.

Allocation of marks:

Presentation on the selected film: 50 percent

Written review of the film: 50 percent