

**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University – New Delhi**

Nationalism and Regionalism in South Asia

(Optional Course for MA)

Total Credits: 4

Objectives of the Course

This course is designed to chart the ways in which South Asian nationalism and regionalism have been understood by anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists from the beginning of the colonial encounter up to the present era of global integration. In order to do this, the course revisits the global discourse on 'nationalism' and then examines what meaning this has taken in South Asia. Special attention will be given to the intersectionalities of ethnicity, religion, language and gender which define nationalism in specific contexts. Followed is an investigation on the idea of South Asian regionalism (or the lack thereof) as understood and practised by ordinary South Asians in their everyday lives. A small package of films have been curated to enhance students' understanding of key concepts and issues as well as generate debates.

Is 'South Asia' a summation of the nationalism of eight South Asian nations? Or is there a popular South Asian sensibility beyond the political and economic apparati associated with SAARC? To answer this question, students should familiarize themselves with the modern history of nationalism and regionalism in South Asia which is linked to the rise of several nation states at the end of the colonial era. Nationalism and regionalism are not taken here as the static benchmarks with clear demarcations in between, but contested paradigms which can help interdisciplinary academic engagement on a series of loaded concepts.

This course focuses on the anthropological and sociological perspectives on nationalism, regionalism and their intersectionalities. The course will critically engage with classical theories and literary critiques both on nationalism and regionalism, while discussing the ethnographies of border and diaspora people. Comparative perspectives from geographies outside South Asia will be drawn in as relevant.

Selected chapters from the assigned books will be prescribed for class teaching. The remaining pages are suggested readings.

Unit-1: Theories on Nationalism. Situating traders in economy and society.

What is 'nationalism'? What do the words 'nation' and 'nation state' connote? Following the positivist discourse that lasted until the 1950s, meaning of the word 'nationalism' has shifted remarkably with the rise of a constructivist approach. The contemporary academic discourse in South Asia engages well with the global discourse but also contributes substantially to academia's search for alternative understandings about nationalism. Both local and global discourses on nationalism and alternative nationalism will be studied in depth in this unit.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Brennan, Timothy. 1989. *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, London: Macmillan.

Breuilly, John. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. London: Blackwell Publishing.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provinciliating Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Chatterjee, Partha. 1983. *Politics of the Governed: Reflections in Popular Politics in Most of the World*. Columbia University Press: NY.

Chatterjee, Partha. 2010. *Empire and Nation*. New Delhi: Columbia University Press.

Chatterjee. Partha. 1986. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. University of Minnesota Press: [This book is available in the library as part of the Partha Chatterjee Omnibus]

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. London: Blackwell Publishing.

Gellner, Ernest. 1994. *Encounters with Nationalism*. London: Blackwell Publishing.

Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. eds. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Loomba, Ania. 1998. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. Routledge: New York

McCrone, David. 1998. *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow's Ancestors*. London: Routledge

Nandy, Ashis. 2013. *Regimes of Narcissism, Regimes of Despair*. OUP: Delhi.

Pandey, Gyanendra. 2008. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. In The Gyanendra Pandey Omnibus. OUP: New Delhi.

Visvanathan, S. 2003. *Interrogating the Nation*. Economic and Political Weekly, June 7, 2003, pp. 2295-2302.

Unit 2: Intersectinoalities – Ethnicity, Religion, Language, Gender

Intersectionalities are important signposts through which we can comprehend what nationalism means for common people in their everyday lives. This unit points out the fact

that South Asian nations have had remarkably different experiences and trajectories vis-à-vis ethnicity, religion, language and gender. It then critically reviews the challenges posed by the rise of new identity regimes to the conventional theories and concepts of nationalism.

2.1 Ethnicity

Barth, Fredrik. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Brubaker, Roger. 2010. 'Ethnicity Without Groups.' In Montserrat Guibernou and John Rex (eds.). *The Ethnicity Reader*. Polity: Cambridge.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2009. 'Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism.' *Annual Review of Sociology*. 35: 21-42.

Burghart, Richard. 1984. 'The Formation of the Concept of Nation-State in Nepal.' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 44(1): 101-125.

Gellner, David; Johanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and John Whelpton. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*. Routledge: Oxford.

Hutt, Michael. 2005. *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and the Flight of Refugees from Bhutan*. OUP: Oxford.

Jenkins, Richard. 1997. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. Sage: London.

Lawoti, Mahendra and Susn Hangen. 2012. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict: Identities and Mobilization after 1990*. Routledge: London/NY.

2.2. Religion and Language

Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld. 2004. eds. *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict*. Berghahn Books: NY and Oxford.

Chatterjee, Joya. 2007. *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India 1947-1967*. CUP: NY etc.

Chatterjee. Partha. 2010 (1999). *Empire and Nation*. Columbia University Press: Delhi.

McGilvray, Dennis. 2008. *Crucible of Conflict: Tamil and Muslim Society on the East Coast of Sri Lanka*. Duke University Press: Durham and London.

Nandy, Ashis; Trivedy, Shikha; Mayaram, Shail and Achyut Yagnik. 1995. *Creating a Nationality: The Ramjanmabhumi Movement and Fear of the Self*. OUP: Delhi.

Pandey. Gyanendra. 2008. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial north India*. OUP: Delhi. [This can be found in Gyanendra Pandey Omnibus in library]

Perera, Sasanka. 1998. *New Evangelical Movements and Conflict in South Asia: Sri Lanka and Nepal in Perspective*. Regional Centre for Strategic Studies: Colombo.

Stirrat, R.L. 1992. *Power and Religiosity in a Post-Colonial Setting: Sinhala Catholics in Contemporary Sri Lanka*. CUP: Cambridge.

2.3: Gender

Chakravorty Spivak, Gayatri (1990). 'Women in Difference: Mahasweta Devi's "Douloti the Bountiful"' in *Cultural Critique*. Winter 1989-90.

Chattarjee, Partha (1993). *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton University Press: NJ. (Chapter 5: The Nation and Its Woman; Chapter 6: Women and the Nation).

Loomba, Ania et al. 2006. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. Permanent Black/Orient Longman: India.

Ramaswamy, Sumati. 2008. 'Maps, Mother Goddesses and Martyrdom in Modern India.' *Journal of Asian Studies*. 67 (3): 1-35.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1993. 'Gender and Nation.' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 16 (4): 621-632.

Unit 3: Regionalism

This unit juxtaposes European literature on postnationalism with South Asian discourse on alternative nationalism. The concept of popular regionalism is then situated within this discourse, and then examined at two levels: a localised lens of border town studies and a pan-national lens of diaspora studies. Where relevant, comparative perspectives are drawn from other continental regions such as Africa's pan-African movement.

3.1 Postnationalism

Beck, Ulrich. 2002. *Cosmopolitan Vision*. Polity: Cambridge.

Calhoun, Craig. 2007. *Nations Matter: Culture, History and the Contemporary Dream*. Polity: Cambridge.

Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Verso: London.

Tagore, Rabindranath. 1920. *Nationalism*. London: MacMillan & Co.

3.2 On South Asia

Dixit, Kanak (ed.). 2012. *The Southasian Sensibility: A HIMAL Reader*. Sage and HIMAL: Delhi.

Nandy, Ashis. 1994. *Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self*. OUP: India.

Nandy, Ashis. 2005. 'The Idea of South Asia: A Personal Note on Post-Bangdung Blues.' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. 6 (4): 541-545.

Nandy, Ashis. 'South Asian Politics: Modernity and the Landscape of Clandestine and Incommunicable Selves.' *Macalester International*. Vol. 4: 223-247.

3.3 On South Asian borders and borderlands

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.

Baud, Michael and Willem van Schendel. 1997. 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands.' *World History*. 8 (2): 211-241.

Gellner, David. 2013. *Northern South Asia's Diverse Borders from Kachchh to Mizoram*. OUP: Oxford.

Shakya, Mallika. 2014. 'Marwari Traders between Hindu Neoliberalism and Democratic Socialism in Nepal-India Border Towns' In Keith Hart and John Sharp. eds. *The Human Economy: Global South Perspectives*. NY: Berghahn Books.

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*, pp. 36-82. Calcutta: Seagull.

Van Schendel, Willem. 2002. 'Stateless in South Asia: The Making of the India-Bangladesh Enclaves.' *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 61 (1): 115-147.

Van Schendel, Willem. 2007. 'The Wgah Syndrome: Territorial Roots of Contemporary Violence in South Asia.' In A. Basu and S. Roy (eds.). *Violence and Democracy in India*.

Note: This course will be complemented by a package of films. While most of the films in this package will be documentary films, some may be art or commercial films. The overall theme for this package of film is 'The Home and the World' following Rabindranath Tagore's work on the idea of nationalism in South Asia. This package of films were originally curated for a film festival shown in Hyderabad in July 2014 during the 12th annual conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR).