

## **Approval: 9<sup>th</sup> Senate Meeting**

**Course Number: HS 263**

**Course Name: Popular Culture in Modern India: A Historical Perspective**

**Credits: 3-0-0-3**

**Prerequisites: Consent of the Instructor**

**Intended for: UG**

**Distribution:**

**Semester:**

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

By discussing the works of several scholars working on different manifestations of popular culture, this course aims at making students question the world around them, so that they can trace the origins and meanings of the culture they consume and create. The course will begin with definitions of terms such as 'High' and 'Popular' culture, with the help of which various themes shall be contextualized in the historical framework of mid 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century India. The element of culture that is studied will, thus, be connected to larger histories – for instance, what can cricket tell us about caste and class in India? What does our food have to do with migration and invasion? Does a new technology in the realm of music change its content? How do Indian films reflect economic liberalization? Do our calendars only tell us the date?

### **COURSE**

#### **MODULES**

##### **1. History of Cricket (8 contact hours)**

Unit 1: Race and Sport in Colonial India: Parsi cricket in India

Unit 2: Caste and Cricket in Colonial India: A Case Study of Palwankar Baloo

Unit 3: Class and Cricket: A Case Study of Maharaja Ranjitsinhji

##### **2. Popular Musical Traditions and Technology (4 contact hours)**

Unit 1: Oral Musical Traditions: A Survey (Bhands, Qawalls )

Unit 2: 'The Guru and the Gramophone' – Technology and Changes in Consumption of Music

##### **3. Popular Visual Culture (10**

contact hours) Unit 1:

What is Visual Culture?

Unit 2: Posters of National Leaders in the Colonial Period

Unit 3: Maps of India in Calendar Art

Unit 4: Cartoons and their impact: R.K. Laxman's Common Man

#### **4. Popular Films' History (07 contact hours)**

Unit 1: Colonial Anxieties Regarding Film in India  
Unit 2: 'Nation-building' Cinema of the 1950s  
Unit 3: The Idea of the 'Secular' in Indian Films  
Unit 4: Changing Portrayals of the Villain in India

#### **5. Advertisements after Economic Liberalization (03 contact hours)**

#### **6. Food History (10 contact hours)**

Unit 1: Food in Ancient and Medieval India  
Unit 2: Migration Patterns and Changes in Food Consumption  
Unit 3: What is 'Authentic' Indian Cuisine?

#### **Prescribed Texts:**

1. A.R. Venkatachalapathy, *In Those Days There was No Coffee: Writings in Cultural History*, Yoda Press, New Delhi, 2006.
2. Rohit Wanchoo and Mukesh Williams, *Representing India: Literature, Politics, and Identities*, Oxford University Press India, New Delhi, 2008.
3. Dilip M. Menon (ed.) *Cultural History of Modern India*, Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2011.

#### **Suggested Readings:**

1. Vasudha Dalmia and Rashmi Sadana (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012.
2. Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001.
3. Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, Picador, New Delhi, 2002.
4. Peter Manuel, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London, 1993.
5. Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods': The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India*, Reaktion Books, London, 2004.
6. Sumathi Ramaswami, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2010.
7. Ravi S. Vasudevan (ed.) *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001.
8. William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertizing and Globalization in Contemporary India*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2003.
9. Rachel Dwyer, *Picture Abhi Baaki Hai: Bollywood as a Guide to Modern India*, Hachette, New

- Delhi, 2014.
10. K.T. Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.
  11. Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*, Vintage, London, 2006.
  12. John Thieme and Ira Raja (eds.), *The Table is Laid: An Anthology of South Asian Food Writing*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.
  13. Utsa Ray, *Culinary Culture in Colonial India: A Cosmopolitan Platter and the Middle-Class*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015.
  14. Arjun Appadorai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.30, no.1, 1988.
  15. Douglas Haynes et al (eds.), *Toward a History of Consumption in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010.
  16. R.K. Laxman, *Brushing up the Years: A Cartoonists History of India, 1947-2004*, Penguin Viking, New Delhi, 2005.
  17. R.K. Laxman, *The Best of Laxman: The Common Man Casts his Vote*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2005.
  18. Abu Abraham, 'Why does Kerala produce so many cartoonists?' *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No 2/3, Summer-Monsoon 1995, pp. 60-64.
  19. R.K. Laxman, 'Freedom to Cartoon, Freedom to Speak,' *Daedalus: Another India*, Vol. 118, No 4, Fall 1989, pp. 68-91.