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WGS 295.01: Special Topics - Love in Bombay Cinema

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Love in Bombay Cinema

LSH 295 ST/ SSEA 295/ WGS 295

3 credits

Fulfills requirements for the Liberal Studies major, the Asian Studies option, the South & South-East Asia Studies minor, the Women's Studies option, the English major and the Film Studies option

Dr. Vanita, Professor, Liberal Studies

Tuesday, Thursday 1.40-3.00

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Goal

To acquire an introductory understanding of (a) the grammar and conventions of popular Indian cinema (b) some patterns of representation of romantic love in Bombay cinema from the 1960s to the present

Texts

Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change by K. Moti Gokulsingh and Wimal Dissanayake.

1. *Mughal-e Azam* [The Mughal Emperor], 1960
2. *Guide*, 1965
3. *Teesri Kasam* [The Third Vow], 1966
4. *Amar Prem* [Immortal Love], 1971
5. *Aandhi* [Storm], 1975
6. *Kabhi Kabhi* [Sometimes], 1976
7. *Ek Duije ke Liye* [For One Another's Sake], 1981
8. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* [The True Lover will Take Away the Bride], 1995
9. *Cheeni Kum* [Less Sugar], 2007
10. *Dostana* [Friendship], 2008
10. *Love, Sex aur Dhokha* [Love, Sex and Betrayal], 2010
11. *Vicky Donor*, 2012
12. *Fire*, 1998

Clips from other films will be shown in class

Requirements

Students are required to

- (a) attend classes regularly. More than three absences not explained to my satisfaction will result in halving your grade for attendance and class participation, and more than five absences will result in a zero for attendance; leaving early or coming late without explanation will be treated as an absence. Explanations (preferably in advance of the absence) must be backed up with documentation, communicated to me in writing and accepted by me.
- (b) keep up with the assigned reading, bring the text to class, and participate in discussion
- (c) view the prescribed film each week in the library. At least one copy of each film is available. In some cases, I have put my own copies in as well so more than one copy is available. All the films are on 2.5-hour reserve and must be viewed in the library. You can view them individually or you can view them in groups of up to 6 in the Listening and Viewing Room in the library.
- (d) once a week, write a thoughtful **typed** question or comment on the previous week's film or on the text you are reading for that week, use it in class discussion and hand it in at the end of the class. Handwritten questions will not receive credit. Attendance may sometimes be given on the basis of these questions. **If you are ever unable to hand in a question, it is your responsibility to tell me this and to have yourself marked present.**
- (e) take quizzes. Quizzes can be made up within the week (not more than twice in the semester), but not later. To make up a quiz, contact me in person or on email to make an appointment.
- (f) take a mid-term exam
- (g) **Check UM email regularly**, especially the day before class. I send out notifications and changes by email. UM policy forbids me to write to you on any email address other than the UM one. The best way to communicate with me is by email.

Grades

Class attendance and participation will be worth 25%, typed questions/comments 15%, quizzes 25%, the mid-term exam 20%, in-class tests 15%.

Essays must (a) address the topic (b) have a clear thesis/argument (c) support the argument with textual evidence (d) and adhere to the conventions of academic writing, including correct grammar and syntax.

Quizzes are designed to test (a) knowledge of the prescribed texts (b) assimilation of information communicated in class and plenary lectures.

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind, in any assignment, will result in your failing the class and may also result in other penalties such as expulsion from the University (for further details, refer to the section on Academic Misconduct in the Student Conduct Code).

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to complete the work as I have outlined it, please notify me in the first week of class.

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with any changes and to obtain any hand-outs given in class in her/his absence. Readings indicated for a certain class are to be read in advance of that class, e.g. come to class on August 29, having read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 9-17, and bring with you a typed comment/question on it.

August 27 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. xi-xiii, 9-17. Background information on Indian society, culture, history, religion, and the cinema industry. Go through glossary.

August 29 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 17-24. Background continued: the grammar and conventions of Indian cinema; the star system; background for *Mughal-e Azam*; *Devdas* and ideas of love.

SEE *MUGHAL-E AZAM*

September 3 Discussion of *Mughal-e Azam*. Themes: love legends; early nationalism; the Muslim social. **Quiz** on background of Indian cinema.

September 5 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 25-31. Background for *Guide*. Love versus family, parents, duty; courtesans; divorce and adultery.

SEE *GUIDE*

September 10 **Quiz** on materials covered so far and *Mughal-e Azam*. Discussion of *Guide*. Dance traditions that influence cinema.

September 12 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp.39-44. Pluralistic culture, Hinduism and everyday life, rural vs. urban life. Background for *Teesri Kasam*.

SEE *TEESRI KASAM*

September 17 Discussion of *Teesri Kasam*. Review of materials covered so far. Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, 95-107. Cinematography, playback singing, music.

September 19 Background for *Amar Prem*. Religious devotion, women's status; mother and son. **In-class written test.**

SEE *AMAR PREM*

September 24 Discussion of *Amar Prem*. **Quiz** on materials and films covered since Sep. 10. Ideas and traditions of romance and eroticism; censorship and ways of getting around it.

September 26 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp.44-53. Background for Indian politics, and for *Aandhi*.

SEE *AANDHI*

October 1 Discussion of *Aandhi*. Patterns of representing tragic love, married love.

October 3 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp.77-94. Background for *Kabhi Kabhi*. Themes: women's movement, women film stars and directors; the rise of Amitabh Bachchan.

SEE *KABHI KABHI*

October 8 Discussion of *Kabhi Kabhi*. Themes: types of masculinity; challenging double standards; generational change; male bonding.

October 10 Review

NO FILM THIS WEEK

October 15 **Mid-term exam**

October 17 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 55-75. Background for *Ek Duije Ke Liye*. Communities, languages, regions. Love-suicide in life and cinema.

SEE *EK DUUJE KE LIYE*

October 22 Discussion of *Ek Duije ke Liye*. The idea of the star-crossed lovers. Cp. *Bobby*, *Qayamat se Qayamat Tak*, *Veer Zaara*, *Ishaqzaade*.

October 24 Background for *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*. Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 109-16. Thrillers vs. family drama. New ideas of the nation. NRIs in cinema.

SEE *DILWALE DULHANIYA LE JAYENGE*

October 29 Discussion of *Dilwale Dulhaniya*. Themes: arranged marriage & love-marriage; parents, siblings, extended family, community. Reinventing rituals. Clips from *Hum Aap ke Hain Kaun*, 1994.

October 31 Background for *Cheeni Kum*. Male and female stardom. Controversies about films in the 1990s. **Quiz** on materials covered since mid-term exam.

SEE *CHEENI KUM*

November 5 Discussion of *Cheeni Kum*. New types of relationships. Age difference, disabilities, cross-dressing, transgender, same-sex.

November 7 Background for *Dostana*. The Karan Johar phenomenon, LGBT movement. Continue discussion of homosexuality in cinema.

November 12 Screening in class of *Dostana*

November 14 Continue *Dostana*

November 19 Discussion of *Dostana*. **In-class written test.**

November 21 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 116-27. Background for *Love, Sex aur Dhokha* and *Vicky Donor*. New realism; social injustice; new media and technology; new forms of violence and of liberation; new roles for women.

SEE *LOVE SEX AUR DHOKHA*

November 26 Read *Indian Popular Cinema*, pp. 141-45. Discussion of *Love Sex aur Dhokha*. Remakes and rewritings of earlier themes.

November 28 **Thanksgiving**

December 3 Screening of *Vicky Donor* in class

December 5 *Vicky Donor* continues. Discussion of *Vicky Donor*. **Quiz** on materials covered since October 31.

December 10 Film *Fire* dir. Deepa Mehta

December 13 Continue *Fire* and discussion