

Asian American Studies 98/198 (2 Units)
Activism and Politics in the South Asian Community
Wednesday 5-7PM, 160 Dwinelle

*****THIS SYLLABUS IS STILL UNDER REVISION AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE*****

Facilitators: Kiren Gopal; Aroma Sharma; Kishan Barot
Faculty Sponsor: Professor Khatharya Um
Faculty Advisor: Professor Jane K. Singh

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to engage students in active discussion over issues concerning the global South Asian community in hopes that concrete and logical opinions may be formed. While raising awareness is certainly an important aspect of the course, course facilitators urge students to seriously assess the issues at hand and develop their own political thought. As discussion may become very heated, students are urged to be respectful and rational in their responses. No experience or prior knowledge is necessary for this course – we encourage individuals of all backgrounds, interests, and majors to enroll. This Decal is a project of the Association of South Asian Political Activists (ASAPA, <http://asapa.berkeley.edu/>)

Course Format: Information will be presented in both lecture and discussion format. Depending on the topic, there will also be guest speakers, film screenings, and perhaps even optional field trips. Course facilitators will attempt to bring something different to the course each and every week, and **students will have the opportunity to decide on the topics they would like to see covered for the last three weeks of the course by voting on the issues that interest them the most.** The readings are fairly short and simple in language. Students are expected to come to class having read all the respective readings for that class topic and to have questions and/or comments for discussion. Lastly, if students have any concerns or particular interests, they should not hesitate to contact the course facilitators.

Course Readings: We will try our best to minimize costs and avoid a course reader. All course readings will be available online at <http://asapa.berkeley.edu/decals>.

Grading: Students will be graded on class attendance (15%), participation in discussion (40%), and a final research paper (45%). Active participation is a must, and missing more than three classes will result in a grade of “NP.” For the research paper, students will be asked to write on a topic relating to activism in South Asia of their choice. The paper (Due December 6) is to be 2-3 pages in length and should incorporate course readings, lectures, and outside research.

Course Outline

September 13 – Introduction and Art as Activism: Fieldtrip to the Berkeley Art Museum to tour the *Edge of Desire* exhibit. Afterwards, there will be an introduction to the course, its goals and class topics.

September 20 – Post-September 11th Racism: Documentary showing, followed by discussion.

September 27 - Queer South Asians and South Asian Americans: Guest speaker from TriKone will discuss his/her experiences as a queer South Asian American. The treatment of LGBTIQ in South Asia will also be investigated.

October 4 - South Asian Americans as the “Model Minority”: South Asians have been receiving a lot of praise recently concerning their contributions to American economy, politics, and culture. What are the political implications of all this praise?

October 11 – Nonviolence: Professor Michael Nagler will speak on nonviolence and peace in South Asia.

October 18 – Communalism at Home and Abroad: Documentary showing of *Final Solution* followed by discussion of the politics of communalism.

October 25 - Pre-Birth Sex Selection in South Asia: Guest speaker from Narika will speak about her research in gender selection. Pressure and violence towards women to have a boy will also be investigated.

November 1 - Feminist Movements in South Asia: Guest speaker will speak about movements in South Asia and its Diaspora.

November 8 – India as an Emerging World Power: Documentary screening followed by discussion.

November 15 - Environmental Justice in South Asia: Guest speaker will speak, followed by discussion.

November 22, 29, and December 6: Each week’s topic TBD by class through a vote. Possible issues include the following (list not exclusive): Maoist movement in Nepal; Pakistan and the war on terror; Language politics in South Asia, the Sri Lankan civil war

FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 6