

Soc. 313: Indian Cinema—Image, Text and Context
Fall 2004

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Course meets: Tuesdays 1:30-4:00pm in PNW 212

This course will provide an introduction to Indian cinema and to Indian culture and society through study of the films. The Indian film industry is the largest producer of feature films in the world. Bombay cinema, or 'Bollywood', India's national cinema, is now recognized as a culture industry with global impact. The films are watched throughout South Asia and are currently exported to over 100 countries.

In this class we will examine the films as formulaic entertainment as well as cultural narratives and commentaries on society exploring themes such as social change—modernization and globalization, the family and gender. The course will combine content analysis of film texts with study of the public culture of film reception and will necessarily involve extensive use of visual materials. While our primary focus will be on popular (Bollywood) cinema for the mass audience, we will also examine examples of India's 'art' cinema, 'middle' cinema and films made by diasporic South Asian filmmakers to bring out contrasts and similarities with Bollywood. The broader goals of this course are ethnographic and encourage an understanding of Bollywood and its public culture from the point of view of its habituated audiences.

There are no prerequisites although it is preferred that students have taken courses in either sociology, anthropology, South Asia or cinema and media studies.