

Soc190.7 The Politics of South Asian Migration to the Global North

Meeting Time: Tuesdays, 12:00-2:00. 205 Dwinelle

Instructor

Dr. Parul Baxi

Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 - 5:00 pm.

Location: Caffé Strada. 2300 College Ave, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Appointment Sign in: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/lbvef>

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Course Overview

In the last few decades, international migrations have transformed the world economy and in many countries, fierce debates are ongoing over immigration. Underlying these debates are questions on citizenship, borders, equality, rights, inclusion, legality, and justice. This seminar engages with these questions by focusing on migration from South Asia, especially, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Historical forces of colonialism have shaped migrations from Asia to the US, Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa since the early 19th century, but major waves of South Asian immigrants to the US began after the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Today, South Asians are among the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States.

Public narratives tend towards binary depictions of South Asian immigrants as either “model minorities” in some contexts or dangerous outsiders in others. In this seminar, we dissect these binaries and examine the peculiarities of South Asian immigrant experience in the context of global capitalism. Substantive thematic areas of focus include labor markets, gender, assimilation and identity, transnationalism and citizenship, and the politics of border control.

The seminar is divided into three sections. The first offers an understanding of the global history of South Asian migration and focuses on South Asian immigrants’ experiences in the US and Europe. The second investigates South Asian immigrants’ influence on US politics and economy. The third traces the intersections between migration, development, and transnationalism, and examines transnational migrant organizations and activism. In the end, we discuss the phenomenon of return migration with immigrants leaving the US to pursue lives in native lands. The course draws upon theoretical and empirical works at the intersections of migration, globalization, citizenship, and South Asian diaspora studies that illustrate how the politics of migration transforms host and sending societies.

Readings

All readings required for the seminar are uploaded online on the bCourses site. If you would like to dive deeper into the themes we cover, I recommend the following books.

Bald, Vivek. 2013. *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. Harvard University Press.

DasGupta, Monisha. 2006. *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States*. Duke University Press.

Dhingra, Pawan. 2012. *Life Behind the Lobby: Indian American Motel Owners and the American Dream*. Stanford University Press.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. 2004. *The Namesake: A novel*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Rana, Junaid. 2011. *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian diaspora*. Duke University Press.

Course Design

The course is focused on an often-eclipsed area in immigration studies that involve South Asian migration histories, experiences, and politics. As a seminar, the course is designed differently from a traditional lecture course. While at times, I will offer a mini lecture to clarify important concepts or to contextualize the readings within broader academic debates, the majority of our time in weekly meetings will be spent in discussions and in interactive activities. Our goals are to analyze the readings critically, draw connections between existing scholarship and identify gaps, and generate new research questions. The aim is to ensure that you leave this seminar with a firm grasp on the key issues and debates in the area of South Asian immigration.

Assignments and Grades

Attendance and Class participation (15%) + Discussion leaders (10%). 125 points.

We meet for two hours each week and cover a substantial amount of material. Our discussions build upon materials covered and each week we draw on connections between past and present readings. Attendance is therefore crucial. You are allowed one excused absence. But for each additional absence your attendance and participation grade will decrease by a full letter grade. You are responsible for notifying me in advance, if you have any challenging situations that affect your attendance. If you need to miss a class for medical reasons, please provide a doctor's note.

To obtain full credit you must actively participate in class discussions. Participation means more than just being present in class. It implies actively taking part in seminar discussions, raising questions, making comments, and is an important component in seminars. Each one of us brings a multitude of opinions and perspectives, and sharing these creates a richer classroom environment. We may not always agree in our interpretations of the material. However, consensus is not the goal of the course and an open discussion facilitates learning.

Discussion Leaders

Each week, two students will set the stage for our discussion by presenting their comments and questions on the week's reading(s). [Each of you will get a chance to lead discussion once]. Your presentations must be no more than 10-15 minutes. Do not summarize the readings. Instead focus on what you found important about them, including highlighting connections or contradictions found across the readings as a whole.

Your presentations must have two components:

- a) Identified themes of interests
- b) Questions for discussion

You may approach these presentations with creativity and innovation (consider using examples from the news and current events as a lens to critically engage with the materials).

- Provide the class with a one-page handout or present a power point. If you are using power point, limit your presentation to 4 slides.

- You must email me an outline of your presentation before 5 pm on Monday, the day before our scheduled class meeting.

Discussion Etiquette:

Discussions on immigration often tend to invoke strong opinions. Please be courteous and respectful of one another. I expect everyone to let others talk, listen carefully, think seriously about new or challenging ideas, and respond constructively. Listen before speaking; do not interrupt each other [I will call out interruptions]. Even when you strongly disagree with someone, be mindful of the fact that our identities, social location, and life experiences shape our responses. Disrespectful comments aimed at a particular racial, ethnic, gender, class, religious, political, or sexual orientation group will not be tolerated. Our goal is to create an inclusive learning space.

Weekly reading responses (30%). Total 10. 150 points.

Each week on Tuesday evenings you will receive a short prompt that will guide your readings for the following week, and help you prepare for the next seminar. Starting Week 2, you must submit a reading

response (1 page, double -spaced) on the assigned readings for the week. Responses are due Monday, by 5 pm online on the course site. Responses must engage with the themes of the readings (rather than pick some specific detail alone to question) and should demonstrate thoughtful and critical engagement with the materials. We will collectively engage with these responses during our seminar and they will serve as a resource for your final papers. Responses will be graded on full credit, partial credit and no credit basis. I will offer written feedback on alternative weeks. You may skip one week without penalty. In the week that you are serving as a discussion leader, you are not required to submit a reading response. Instead you must submit your presentation outline via email to me before 5 pm on Monday.

Final Research paper (45%). 225 points.

The topic of the research paper can be chosen from any of the themes we cover in this course regarding South Asian immigration including, history of South Asian immigrations, labor migrations, assimilation and identity, citizenship and race, gender, economic incorporation, political incorporation, transnationalism and development, and south Asian immigrant politics and activism. If you would like to choose a topic that we have not covered, let me know. You may draw from required resources listed on the syllabus but I encourage you to find additional academic sources (books, book chapters, journal articles) on your topic. You must use references from at least five external academic sources for your final papers.

The research paper project is divided into the following phases. I will provide detailed guidelines for each stage.

Topic and Research question	5%
Draft paper	10%
Paper workshop and panel presentation	5%
Final paper	25%

Overall Course Grade Design- 500 points

The table below summarizes the overall grading design for the course.

Particulars	Weightage (%)	Points
Participation Attendance In-class participation Leading Discussion	25%	125
Weekly Reading Responses	30%	150
Final Research Paper Topic Statement Draft Paper workshop and panel presentation Final Paper	45%	225
Total	100%	500

Important Deadlines

February 11	Tuesday	Research Topic statement due
April 14	Tuesday	Draft due
April 28	Tuesday	Paper Workshop and Panel Presentation
May 11	Tuesday	Research Paper Due

Class Policies

E-mail: Please put “Soc 190” in the subject lines of all emails. This will enable a timely response. In general, I will respond to your emails within 24 hours. E-mail is best used to communicate in brief if you require clarification in a few lines. For time-sensitive issues, please e-mail me as early as possible. For discussions and detailed explanations on the course material, visit me during office hours, or ask questions during class or group discussions. If you ask me a question that is answered on the syllabus, I will direct you back to the syllabus.

Office hours

Visit often during office hours. You can sign up for appointments at the following link. <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/lbvef>. If office hour timings clash with your class schedules, and you need to meet with me, let me know in advance [at least a few days] and I will do my best to schedule an appointment with you at another time on a Tuesday. If you are facing a difficult personal situation let me know as soon as possible. Do not wait until the last minute. I recommend you visit office hours at least once during this semester to introduce yourself. If you are hesitant speaking out in class and would like to discuss strategies for active participation, please visit.

Personal Pronouns: Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Late Papers: Assignments submitted late will be docked 5 points each day. Exceptions to this rule will be made only for documented emergencies or for pre-planned, excused absences for school-related travel or religious observance. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible and submit the appropriate documentation in advance or alongside the late assignment. (Letters from medical professionals must be written on an official letterhead).

Special Accommodations: if you have a documented need for DSP accommodations I will be glad to make the necessary arrangements for you.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to complete their own work in this course. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to comply with the rules of conduct and behavior set forth by the University of California, Berkeley: <https://sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct>. Any act of plagiarism will lead to disciplinary action.

On-Campus Help with Writing: The Student Learning Center (SLC) provides writing specialists and tutors with whom students can work on an individual basis for assistance with writing assignments. For more information visit <https://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>

Grading: If you would like to discuss a grade you receive on an assignment, please approach me only after 48 hours have passed since you have received your assignment back. You must approach me no sooner than that, and no later than 1 week after it has been returned to you. If you would like to contest a grade you must make this request in writing explaining why you believe you deserve a better grade. Your letter must provide evidence of factual error or must explain with evidence why you feel the grader has overlooked a detail in your paper.

Classroom Etiquette

Professionalism: Each one of us brings varying perspectives in the classroom and often we may not agree with each other. We will agree to disagree respectfully. We must respect each other’s beliefs and points of

view in the classroom and during the discussion. Intolerance, prejudice, or derogatory comments will not be tolerated.

Technology: Laptops/tablets must be used only for taking notes and during class time you must not be connected to the Internet. If I find that laptops are being used for any other purpose, I will ask you to surrender them at the desk till the end of class. Please turn off cell phones or place them on vibration or silent mode. I have the same policies for cell phones as for laptops. If used inappropriately, I will hold them for you till the end of class.

Arrivals/Departures: In general, if you are later than 20 minutes to a seminar, you will get a 0 for participation that day. If you need to leave early or are going to arrive late, please inform me in advance.

Calendar of Readings

All required readings are posted online. Optional readings are listed as additional resources for those of you with interest in particular topic areas and are not required. Changes, if any, to this reading schedule will be made in advance. Be sure to regularly check for announcements on bourses and your email.

I

Week 1. January 21. Introductions & Setting the Theoretical Agenda

Brown, Judith M. 2006. "Traditions of Stability and Movement." Pp. 1-20 in *Global South Asians: introducing the modern diaspora*. Vol. 1. Cambridge University Press.

Week 2. January 28. South Asian Migration Pre-1965

Bald, Vivek. 2013. "Between Hindoo and Negro." Pp. 49-93 in *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. Harvard University Press.

Leonard, Karen Isaksen. 1992. "Early Days in the Imperial Valley." Pp. 37-61 in *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Optional Reading

Lal, Brij. V. 2017. "Kunti's Cry: Indentured women on Fiji plantations." Pp. 127-145 in *The Subaltern Indian Woman: Domination and Social Degradation*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Takaki, Ronald. 1989. "From a different shore. Their history bursts with telling." Pp. 3-18 in *A history of Asian Americans: Strangers from a different shore*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Week 3. February 4. South Asian Migration Post-1965

Waldinger, R. 2011. "Immigration: The New American Dilemma." *Daedalus*, 140(2): 215-225.

Rudrappa, Sharmila. 2009. "Cyber-Coolies and Techno-Braceros: Race and Commodification of Indian Information Technology Guest Workers in the United States." *USFL Rev.* 44: 353-372.

Banerjee, P. 2010. "Transnational subcontracting, Indian IT workers, and the U.S. visa system." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 38(1): 89-110.

Van Der Veer, Peter. 2005. "Virtual India: Indian IT labor and the nation-state." Pp. 276-90 in *Sovereign bodies: citizens, migrants, and states in the postcolonial world*. eds. T. H. Blom, and Finn Stepputat, Princeton University Press.

Banerjee, Pallavi, and Lina Rincón. 2019. "Trouble in Tech Paradise." *Contexts* 18 (2): 24-29.

Optional Readings

Banerjee, Pallavi. 2019. "Subversive Self-Employment: Intersectionality and Self-Employment Among Dependent Visas Holders in the United States." *American Behavioral Scientist* 63(2): 186-207.

Kennedy, A. 2019. "The Politics of Skilled Immigration: Explaining the Ups and Downs of the US H-1B Visa Program." *The International Migration Review* 53(2), 346-370.

Week 4. Feb 11: South Asian Immigrants in the US Racial formation

Visweswaran, Kamala. 1997. "Diaspora by design: flexible citizenship and South Asians in US racial formations." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6(1): 5-29.

Zhou, Min, and Carl L. Bankston III. 2020 "The model minority stereotype and the national identity question: the challenges facing Asian immigrants and their children." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43 (1): 233-253.

Junn, Jane. 2007. "From Coolie to Model Minority." *Du Bois Review* 4(2): 355-373. [Pp.355-357; 367-370].

Anjana, Mudambi. 2019. "South Asian American Discourses: Engaging the Yellow Peril-Model Minority." *Dialectic.*" *Howard Journal of Communications*, 30(3): 284-298.

[Browse] *The New York Times*. 2015. Room for Debate. "The Effect of Seeing Asian American as a "Model-Minority." <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/10/16/the-effects-of-seeing-asian-americans-as-a-model-minority>.

*****Research Topic due**

Optional Readings

Prashad, Vijay. 2000. *The karma of brown folk*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Shankar, Shalini. 2008. *Desi land: Teen culture, class, and success in Silicon Valley*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

II

Week 5. Feb 18. South Asian immigrants: Assimilation and Identity. I

Lahiri, Jhumpa. 2004. *The Namesake: A Novel*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt [Pp. 48-71; 97-124].

Manohar, Namita. 2008. "Sshh...!! Don't Tell My Parents": Dating among Second-Generation Patel's in Florida." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 39(4): 571-88. [Pp.18].

Zhou, Min, and Roberto G. Gonzales. 2019. "Divergent Destinies: Children of Immigrants Growing up in the United States." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45: 383-399. [Pp.383-388].

Optional Readings

Karam, Rebecca A. 2020. "Becoming American by becoming Muslim: strategic assimilation among second-generation Muslim American parents." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43(2): 390-409.

Week 6. Feb 25. Race, Labor, and South Asian Immigration Post 9/11

Bhatia, Sunil. 2008. "9/11 and the Indian Diaspora: Narratives of Race, Place and Immigrant Identity." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29(1): 21-39

Rana, Junaid. *Terrifying Muslims: Race and labor in the South Asian diaspora*. Duke University Press, 2011. [Pp. 5-17; 74-93].

Puar, Jasbir K., and Amit S. Rai. 2004. "The Remaking of a Model Minority: Perverse Projectiles Under the Specter of (Counter) Terrorism." *Social Text* 22(3): 75-104. [Pp. 79-83].

Bald, Vivek. 2015. "American Orientalism." *Dissent* 16(2): 23-34.

Optional Readings

Zolberg, Aristide R., and Long L. Woon. 1999. "Why Islam is Like Spanish: Cultural Incorporation in Europe and the United States." *Politics and Society* 27(1): 5-38.

Maira Sunaina. "Citizenship and Dissent in the Diaspora. Indian Immigrant Youth in the United States after 9/11.

Ismaili, K. 2010. "Surveying the many fronts of the war on immigrants in post-9/11 US society." *Contemporary Justice Review* 13(1): 71-93.

Week 7. March 3. Modes of Incorporation. South Asian Immigrants and legal status

- Flores, René D., and Ariela Schachter. 2018. "Who are the "illegals"? The social construction of illegality in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 83(5): 839-868.
- Loan, Thi D. 2017. "Out and Asian: How Undocu/DACAmented Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Youth Navigate Dual Liminality in the Immigrant Rights Movement." *Societies* 7(3): 17. [Pp.15].
- Kim, Soo Mee, and Aggie J. Yellow Horse. 2018. "Undocumented Asians, Left in the Shadows." *Contexts* 17 (4): 70-71.
- Gleeson, Shannon, and Roberto G. Gonzales. 2012. "When do papers matter? An institutional analysis of undocumented life in the United States." *International Migration* 50(4): 1-19.

Optional Reading

- [Listen] KQED. 2017. The California Report "When you are undocumented and Asian you're Invisible." <https://www.kqed.org/news/11478931/when-youre-undocumented-and-asian-youre-invisible> [clip online].
- SAALT. 2019. *Demographic Snapshot of South Asians in the United States*. [See pg. 2 for figures on undocumented South Asians.]. <https://saalt.org/south-asians-in-the-us/demographic-information>.
- Yam, Kimberly. 2018. "Jose Antonio Vargas: Don't Ignore Asian-Americans in Unauthorized Immigration Debate." *The Huffington Post*. October 18. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/jose-antonio-vargas-dear-america_n_5bbcec9ae4b028e1fe422736.

Week 8. March 10. Gender and Class in South Asian Immigration

- George, M. Sheba. 2005. "Home: Redoing Gender in Immigrant Households." Pp. 77-117 in *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gurung, Hamal Shobha. 2015. "Shifting Gender Roles in Public and Private Domains." Pp. 84-112 in *Nepali Migrant Women: Resistance and Survival in America*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Optional Readings

- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 2011. "Gender and migration scholarship: an overview from a 21st century perspective." *Migraciones Internacionales* 6 (1): 219-233.
- Lutz, Helma. 2017. "Care as a fictitious commodity: Reflections on the intersections of migration, gender and care regimes." *Migration Studies* 5(3): 356-368.

Week 9. March 17. Economic Incorporation: South Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs

- Dhingra, Pawan. 2012. *Life behind the lobby: Indian American motel owners and the American dream*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. [Introduction, Pp.1-24; Chapter 3, Pp. 50-87].
- Rangaswamy, P. 2007. South Asians in Dunkin' Donuts: Niche development in the franchise industry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(4): 671-686.

Optional Readings

- Mavrommatis, George. 2015. "South Asian tales: ethnic entrepreneurship and narratives of spatialized transnational identities emerging in an East London (UK), inner-city area." *Diaspora Studies* 8(2): 89-103.
- Zhou, Min. 2004. "Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergences, Controversies, and Conceptual Advancements." *International Migration Review* 38(3): 1040-1074.

Week 10. March 24. Spring Break

Week 11. March 31. South Asian Immigrants, Politics and Activism

- Gupta, Monisha Das. 2006. "Know Your Place in History: Labor Organizations." Pp. 208-254 in *Unruly immigrants: Rights, activism, and transnational South Asian politics in the United States*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Maulik, Monami. 2011. "Our Movement Is for the Long Haul: Ten Years of DRUM's Community Organizing by Working-Class South Asian Migrants." *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 4 (3): 455-467.

Maruoka, Etsuko. 2008. "Wearing 'Our Sword': Post-September 11 Activism Among South Asian Muslim Women Student Organizations in New York." *Social Justice* 35(2): 119-133.

Optional Readings

Brettell, Caroline B. 2005. "Voluntary organizations, social capital, and the social incorporation of Asian Indian immigrants in the Dallas- Fort worth metroplex." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 853-883.

Khan, Rohma A. 1999. "Cab Fair: Taxi Driving and South Asian Labor Activism in New York City, 1985-1999." *Labor History* 59(6): 676-691.

III

Week 12. April 7. Transnationalism, Development and Remittances

[In-class clip] Dilip Ratha. 2014. TED Global. "The Hidden Force in Global Economies. Sending Money Home."

Schiller, Nina Glick, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. 1995. "From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration." *Anthropological quarterly* 68(1): 48-63.

Agarwala, Rina. 2016. "Divine Development: Transnational Indian Religious Organizations in the United States and India." *International Migration Review* 50(4): 910-950.

Judith. Shaw. 2010. "Making housemaid remittances work for low-income families in Sri Lanka." *Development in Practice* 20 (1): 18-30.

Optional Readings

Clemens, Michael A. 2013. "What Do We Know about Skilled Migration and Development?" MPI Policy Brief, No. 3. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/what-do-we-know-about-skilled-migration-and-development>

Zapata, Gisela P. 2018. "Transnational migration, remittances and the financialization of housing in Colombia." *Housing Studies* 33(3): 343-360.

Week 13. April 14. Transnationalism II. Social Remittances

Levitt, Peggy, and Deepak Lamba-Nieves. 2011. "Social remittances revisited." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37(1): 1-22.

Gallo, E. 2013. "Migrants and their money are not all the same: Migration, remittances and family morality in rural south India." *Migration Letters* 10(1): 33-46.

Borchgrevink, Kaja, and Marta Bivand Erdal. 2016. "The circulation of transnational Islamic charity." Pp. 259-280 in *Migration and social remittances in a global Europe*. Nowicka, Magdalena, and Vojin Šerbedžija (eds). London: Palgrave Macmillan, London.

*****Research Paper Drafts Due**

Optional Reading

Bose, P. (2008). Hindutva abroad: The California textbook controversy. *The Global South*, 11-34.

Levitt, Peggy. 2009. "Roots and Routes: Understanding the lives of the second generation transnationally." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies*. 35(7): 1225-1242.

Week 14. April 21. Narratives of Return

Baas, Michiel. *Transnational Migration and Asia: The Question of Return*. 2015. Amsterdam University Press. [Introduction, Pp. 1-19 and Chapter 4, Pp. 55-72].

Bhatt, W., & Roberts, B. 2012. "Forbidden Return": Return Migration in the Age of Restriction." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 10(2): 162-183.

Sabharwal, Meghna, and Roli Varma. 2016. "Return migration to India: Decision-making among academic engineers and scientists." *International Migration* 54(4): 177-190.

Optional Readings

Alberts, Heike C., and Helen D. Hazen. "There are always two voices...International Students' Intentions to Stay in the United States or Return to their Home Countries." *International Migration* 43(3): 131-154.

Xavier, Constantino. "Experimenting with diasporic incorporation: The overseas citizenship of India." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 17(1): 34-53.

Week 15. April 28.

*****Paper Workshop and Panel Presentations**

Reading/Review/Recitation Week, Monday, May 4- Friday, May 8.

***** Final Research Papers due on May 11 by 2 pm.**