**Syllabus**

***Images of India: A Critical Exploration of the World’s Largest Democracy***

DeCal | Sociology 98/198 | Spring 2017

**Time:** Mondays from 6:30 to 8:00PM

**Place:**  TBA

**Instructors:** Sudeshna Barman ([sudeshna.barman@berkeley.edu](mailto:sudeshna.barman@berkeley.edu))

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**Office Hours:** TBA

**Enrollment:** Sociology 98 CCN: TBA (1 unit)

Sociology 198 CCN: TBA (1 unit)

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine several social, political, and economic issues affecting India today. Our analysis will include the root causes and history of the question at hand. We will examine the issue as it plays out in modern-day life, emphasizing potential solutions and the individuals and organizations working to effect these changes.

**Methods of Instruction:**

* Half-hour guest lecture featuring an academic or industry leader with direct experience and expertise in the issue.
* Half-hour lecture by instructors, presenting information on the causes and history of the issue, relevant background info, and structures exacerbating the problem. We will answer the following questions: *What* is going on? *Who* is this affecting, and *how* is it affecting them? *Why* is this happening?
* Half-hour small-group discussion or facilitator-mediated class-wide discussion responding to the week’s readings and lecture. We will also examine what is currently being done about the issue, talking about the individuals, nonprofits, and/or firms actively working to combat the problem, and debating possible solutions.

**Assignments, Grading and Evaluation:**

In addition to participation in class discussions, you will be expected to complete

* roughly 10 pages of weekly readings
* ONE group project
* ONE midterm (2-3 page written paper, double spaced)
* ONE final (3-4 page written paper, double-spaced)

Failure to turn in any of the three assignments will result in an automatic fail.

Throughout the course, you will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by attending various film screenings, lectures, and other community events.

Your grade in this class will be based on

* 20% Group Project
* 20% Midterm
* 20% Final
* 20% Attendance
* 20% Participation

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. One absence is permitted, but we ask that you let us know beforehand if you know you will be absent ahead of time. A second absence is permitted if you make it up by coming to office hours. A third absence is an automatic fail. Please note that we are prepared to make reasonable accommodations for any student with a disability or who otherwise requires special arrangements.

**Course Timeline**

**Week 1** (Jan. 30) Introduction and Logistics

* Special presentation by ASHA for Education
* Special presentation by the Institute for South Asian Studies (ISAS)

**Week 2** (Feb. 6) “Setting up an Analytic Cultural Framework”

* Brief history of the Indian subcontinent
* Modern cultural geography
  + Linguistic background
  + Ethnic background
  + Religious background
* Modern demographics and statistics
  + Economics
  + Politics

**Week 3** (Feb. 13) “Caste Conflict”

* History of the Indian caste system and caste in Vedic system
* Definition of schedule caste
* Separation of Brahman and other castes
* Social, political, and economic discrimination against people of lower castes
* Inter-caste marriages
* Possible solutions

**Week 4** (Feb. 20) “Ethnic and Racial Conflict”

* Prejudice and stereotypes faced by ethnic East Asians in the north.
* Marginalized aboriginal groups and schedule tribes
* Sri Lanka: relationship between ethnic Sri Lankans and ethnic Tamils
* Possible solutions

**Week 5** (Feb. 27) “Religious Conflict” **MIDTERM ASSIGNED**

* Overview of different religions in India (history, beliefs, practices)
* Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Christians
* Sikh-Hindu conflicts in Punjab
* Possible solutions

**Week 6** (March 6) “Religious Conflict” (cont.’d)

* Hindu-Muslim tensions prior to colonization and independence
* The British Raj and Hindu-Muslim tensions
* Partition and religious conflict
* Rioting from post-partition to today (Gujarat Riots)
* Conflict over religious spaces (Ayodhya temple)
* Social and economic discrimination against Muslims
* Kashmir
* Possible solutions

**Week 7** (March 13) “Women’s Rights” **MIDTERM DUE**

* History of women’s status: *purdah, sati*, polygamy among Brahman caste
* Background: Systems like arranged marriages
* Violent victimization (rape, gang rape, honor killings, acid attacks)
* Domestic violence
* Female infanticide, sex-based abortions
* Forced and intergenerational prostitution, trafficking
* Child marriages/forced marriages
* Dowry
* Stigma against widow remarriage

**Week 8** (March 20) “Women’s Rights” (cont.’d)

* Sexual harassment
* Reduced access to education, financial independence, property rights
* Reduced access to general and female-specific sanitation (menstruation taboo)
* Backlash against modern feminism
* Sexuality and LGBTQ+ issues in India
* Possible solutions
  + Former women’s rights movements and developments
  + Current women’s rights movements

**Week 9** (March 27) **WEEK OF SPRING BREAK**

**Week 10** (Apr. 3) “Poverty and Rural Development”

* Rural poverty v. urban poverty
* Intersectionality of poverty with education, health, sanitation, infrastructure, and women’s rights
* Possible solutions

**Week 11** (Apr. 10) “Access to Education” **FINAL ESSAY ASSIGNED**

* Poor or failing schools
* Paying for school
* Access to higher education
* Drop-out rates, literacy rates
* Possible solutions

**Week 12** (Apr. 17) “Access to Health, Sanitation and Infrastructure”

* Public health concerns (immunization, preventable diseases)
* Access to qualified doctors
* Overcrowded and unsanitary hospitals
* Poor Sanitation and Hygiene
  + Lack of sewers, waste disposal systems, central trash collection
  + Lack of electricity, running water, safe and reliable drinking water
* Poor Infrastructure (frequent blackouts, unreliable roads, bridges, and highways)
* Environmental concerns
* Possible solutions

**Week 13** (Apr. 24) “Tying it all Together: The Current State of The World’s Largest Democracy” **FINAL ESSAY DUE**

* Freedom of speech and censorship; the “anti-national” label
* Parallels between India and the U.S.
* The future of India

**DEAD WEEK: May 1-5**

**FINALS WEEK: May 8-12**