

Carleton University  
Spring 2019  
6 May-18 June, 2019

Department of English

**ENGL 4976/5009: Issues in Postcolonial Literature/Studies in South Asian Literature**  
**Topic: Social Justice and the Graphic Narrative in Contemporary South Asia**

**Prerequisites: (for ENGL 4976) 4<sup>th</sup> year standing or permission of the department**

**Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:05 am-12:50 pm**

**DT 1816**

**Instructor: Sukeshi Kamra**  
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**Office:**  
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**Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30-3:00 pm.**

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The graphic narrative turn in South Asian societies has brought contemporary histories of violence, the global south megacity, precarious lives of the dispossessed, inter-regional politics, gender violence, and more into prominence in the sizeable South Asian popular culture market. There are limitations that form part of this story: publishers routinely market titles exclusively in South Asia, making it difficult to access these titles globally; English language production of graphic narratives dominates the market; and India dominates the scene, in terms of numbers of titles, in English, and circulation. The graphic narratives we will examine in this course have been chosen in large part because they are available in Canada (judging by Amazon Canada). They are, in the main, published by small, independent presses in India, and show the influence of local and global at every level—from the focus on social justice issues, that are a blot on a given nation's ambitions, and a de-normalizing of social and cultural norms to the ways in which the global south city is visualized and social, economic, and political facts are treated, these texts offer readers an opportunity to grapple with the specific ways in which global influences and approaches on the one hand and local traditions, cultural and social logic on the other inform leading works of the genre. Finally, it is worth noting that these works are performative in a sense. They do what they demand of the civil and political spheres of South Asian nations—a historicizing of forms of violence.

While the course will focus on the titles listed below, other titles not available in Canada will be made available in class and will, I hope, offset some of the limitations described earlier.

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Acquiring knowledge of South Asian and global south social justice issues identified in graphic narratives.
- Coming to an understanding of social, political, and cultural formations of the region through a study of an increasingly popular genre.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the genre of the graphic narrative, and its South Asian iteration.
- Demonstrating an ability to do a close reading of texts in oral and written assignments.
- Demonstrating, in short responses, an ability to identify an issue raised in a text and speak to the manner in which it is raised.
- Demonstrating, in essays, an ability to synthesize research with analysis of texts to produce a sustained argument.

## III. TEXTS

Kurian, Priya, Larissa Bertonasco & Ludmilla Bartscht. Eds. *Drawing the Line: Indian Women Fight Back*. New Delhi: Zubaan Books, 2015.

Ghosh, Vishwajyoti. *Delhi Calm*. Delhi: HarperCollins, 2010.

Guibert, Emmanuel, Didier Lefevre & Frederic Lemerrier. *The Photographer: Into War-Torn Afghanistan with Doctors Without Borders*. Trans. Alexis Siegel. New York & London: First Second, 2009 (fifth edition).

Sajad, Malik. *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir*. Great Britain: Fourth Estate, 2015.

Anand, S., Srividya Natarajan, Durgabai Vyam, Subhash Vyam. *Bhimayana: Incidents in the Life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*. New Delhi: Navayana Publishing Ltd., 2011.

The above-mentioned texts are available on Amazon Canada. Other graphic works will be made available in class for the purposes of consultation.

The study of the graphic narrative will be informed by recent scholarly works that, broadly speaking, deal with the media, popular culture, graphic narrative, in India. The three mentioned below will be made available in class for consultation purposes.

Dawson Varughese, Emma. *Visuality and Identity in Post Millennial Indian Graphic Narratives*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

König, Lion. *Cultural Citizenship in India: Politics, Power, and Media* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Nayar, Pramod K. *The Indian Graphic Novel: Nation, history and critique* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

## V. COURSE CALENDAR

- 7 May: Introduction; discussion of (scope of) course and assignments.
- 9 May: *Drawing the Line*.
- 14 May: *Drawing the Line*; chapter from Pramod Nayar on the graphic narrative in India
- 16 May: *Delhi Calm*.  
Reading # 1 due (one page; single spaced; 11 font)
- 21 May: *Delhi Calm*
- 23 May: *Bhimayana*  
Reading # 2 due (one page; single spaced; 11 font)
- 28 May: *Bhimayana*
- 30 May :  
Essay # 1 due (on a topic arising from the discussion of genre, texts, contexts; research essay).
- 4 June: *Munnu*
- 6 June: *Munnu*  
Reading # 3 due (one page; single spaced; 11 font)
- 11 June: *The Photographer*
- 13 June: *The Photographer*
- 18 June:  
Essay # 2 due (on an issue/issues raised in graphic narratives studied in class; research essay).

## VI. EVALUATION

### 3 one-page responses. 30%

- As we discussed in the first class, the following are the guidelines for the responses:

- The three responses must be on three different texts (they could be narratives from the same anthology);
- They must be on different subjects (example: representation of women; trauma and history; urban space; social justice);
- The responses must present an argument/offer a critical perspective on the chosen subject, as this subject is thematized in the narrative;
- The responses could be the place in which you develop/discuss an argument of one of your two essays;
- Each response is worth 10%; (vi) the one-page response must be single spaced and in 11 font;
- Email the response to [sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca](mailto:sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca). Please confirm that I have received your response if you have not heard back from me in two days.

### **2 essays: 55%**

- Essay 1 (research essay) ---25%; undergraduate: 6-7pp.; graduate: 9-10pp; double spaced, 11 font.
- Essay 2 (research essay)—30%. ; undergrad: 8-10 pp; graduate: 12-13 pp; double spaced, 11 font.
- Students will be expected to arrive at topics in consultation with me a minimum of 10 days before the assignment is due. This consultation can take place via the comments I will be providing on your one-page responses.

### **Seminar presentation: 15%**

- On one or more graphic narratives—narratives in anthologies are shorter and thus I will expect that you will use more than one if you are using anthologies;
- Must include research of the topic identified in the presentation (i) must include a researching of the political, social, cultural history which the graphic narrative engages; (ii) biography if that is a theme in the narrative [as is the case in a few texts]; (iii) concepts such as ‘honour killings; ‘eve teasing’; ‘casteism’; ‘communalism’ if these are areas of concern identified in the texts you will be discussing.
- Oral presentation of about a half hour on a topic common to one or more of the assigned texts and/or other texts made available in class.
- The oral presentation may form part of the argument and discussion in one of the two research essays.

If you are unclear about the directions presented above, please speak with me before you do a said assignment.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

- ◆ Submission of all assignments is necessary in order for students to pass the course.
- ◆ Unless otherwise arranged in consultation with me, late papers will incur a penalty of 1% of the total mark of the assignment per day. Weekends count as two days.

- ◆ Grading criteria: demonstration of engagement with the texts; sophistication of argument and expression; MLA style.
- ◆ Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
- ◆ Attendance and participation in class discussion are mandatory.

## VII. STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

## VII. REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

### **Pregnancy obligation**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details,

visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **Religious obligation**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. [carleton.ca/pmc](https://carleton.ca/pmc)

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>