

Carleton University  
Summer 2020  
4 May-16 June, 2020

Department of English

**ENGL 4976/5009: Issues in Postcolonial Literature/Studies in South Asian Literature**  
**Topic: the Terrain of the Present in South Asian Literature**

Online course

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

Instructor: Sukeshi Kamra  
Email: [sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca](mailto:sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca)

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The contemporary moment is nothing if not defined by social activism and movements. Inventing new ways of seeing, ways commensurate with the urgent issues that activism seeks to make legible, is crucial to the success of this endeavor. South Asian literature is replete with texts that frame the contemporary moment in compelling ways, encouraging readers to own issues at the doorstep-- environmental degradation, water security, economic, social, and political violence, gender violence, the megacity, changing familiar economics, shifts in social structures, and more. While immersed in the local, these texts do not forget the global. Indeed, you might say they invent ways for articulating the view that the local and global intersect in complex ways, circulating and creating the conditions for a seemingly inexhaustible set of economies--cultural, social, economic, and political. This brief overview is intended to introduce some of the concerns that are commonly encountered in literature produced by South Asian writers as they engage the knotty present in recognizably South Asian social and cultural vocabularies.

This on-line course will be conducted as a directed readings course, with each student responsible for undertaking an independent course of study under my supervision. This course is best suited to students with some background in postcolonial theory and South Asian literature and who are, moreover, prepared to conduct independent study.

- In the first two weeks (**May 4-May 15**), each student enrolled in ENGL 4976/5009 will (in consultation with me) put together (i) a reading list, of three South Asian literary texts, with

possible topics in mind (ii) a tentative list of secondary materials (three articles/books or more). My Carleton email ([sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca](mailto:sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca)) will be the primary mode of consultation. Feedback on assignments will be an additional mode of communication.

- Over the following two weeks (**May 16-May 29**), each student will be responsible for (i) discussing two of the primary texts and secondary materials with me, the assumption being that they will have read substantial portions of the same ; (ii) and submitting a one-page mini-essay on each primary text (for details on font etc see below). Each mini-essay is worth 15%. **Due Date for mini-essay 1: May 19; due date for mini-essay 2: May 24.**
- For the remainder of the course (**May 30-June 16**), students will write (i) a third one-page mini-essay (15%), preferably on the topic of the research paper, not a specific text; **due date: May 30** (ii) submit an annotated bibliography (20%); **due date: June 7** (iii) and following that a research paper worth 35% (min. 10 pages for undergraduate students; min. 13 pages for graduate students. For details on font etc see below); **due date: June 21.**

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Acquiring knowledge of South Asian and global south social, political, and economic, justice issues identified in the literature.
- Coming to an understanding of social, political, and cultural formations of the region through a study of a variety of genres, from the reflective (the essay) to the fictive (graphic narrative, short story, novel).
- Demonstrating an understanding of the genres mentioned above, and their South Asian iterations.
- 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

South Asian literary texts to be chosen in discussion with me. Students are welcome to discuss areas of interest with me and/or topics they wish to study and/or South Asian of interest in the first week of term. Students may choose novels, short fiction collections, collections of literary non-fiction, graphic novels and narratives. NOTE: the final list of primary texts and secondary materials proposed by each student must be approved by me.

## IV. EVALUATION

### **3 one-page mini-essays. 45%**

- The mini-essays must present an argument/offer a critical perspective on the chosen subject, as this subject is thematized in the text.
- Each assignment is worth 15%; (vi) the one-page response must be single spaced and in 11 font.
- Email the assignment 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.
- Due dates:
  - ◆ Mini-essay 1: May 19
  - ◆ Mini-essay 2: May 24
  - ◆ Mini-essay 3: May 30

### **Annotated Bibliography: 20%**

- Should have a minimum of 3 scholarly essays/books.
- Each entry should, at a minimum, (i) provide an overview of the argument presented in each essay/book; (ii) offer a substantive evaluation/critique of the same; (iii) and present a substantial paragraph on its relevance to the topic of the research essay.
- Due date: 7 June

### **Research essay: 35%**

- Students are expected to arrive at, and confirm the topic of the research essay with me on email, by 7 June.
- Due Date: 21 June
- The research essay must draw on a minimum of two primary texts and two secondary texts.
- Undergraduate students: The essay must be a minimum 10 pages (double spaced; 11 font; approx. 2500-3000 words).  
Graduate students: the essay must be a minimum of 13 pages (double spaced; 11 font, approx.. 3250-3500 words).

### **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 a full engagement with the texts and topic; 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.

- ◆ Students are expected to be in on-line contact with me at a minimum twice a week. Failure to do so could result in a failing grade in the course.

## 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: <https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/form-pregnancy-accommodation/>

### **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: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>

### **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. For more details, visit the Paul Menton Centre Website: [carleton.ca/pmc](http://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: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-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>