Aims and Objectives

Bollywood – a portmanteau of two words ‘Bombay’ and ‘Hollywood’ – is one of the most prolific film industries in India producing more than 1000 films a year. A vibrant form of cultural media that is integral to the politics and social life of people in India, Bollywood cinema’s influence also extends beyond India to many parts of the world. Students will be provided with the necessary skills to analyse important social and political developments in India and its diaspora through the study of the historical growth and development of the Bollywood film industry and Bollywood cinema. In particular, by studying the content and meaning of selected films, this module will introduce students to key social, economic, political and cultural issues in India, as well as explore important concepts in the humanities and social sciences such as nationalism, gender and sexuality, diaspora and globalisation. The course will thus facilitate the development of a nuanced understanding of how Bollywood cinema is shaped by the wider social environment, and in turn the impact these films have on audiences and the wider Indian culture and society.

Course Requirements

1. This course is rooted in a set of required readings of approximately 60 pages of text assigned for each seminar session. Students are expected to be familiar with this material before class to facilitate in-class discussion.

2. There is a strong visual dimension to the course. In addition to lecture and tutorial readings, we have selected several films (some to be viewed during lectures and also available on IVLE) for each of the topics. The films constitute a legitimate and crucial dimension of the course material, and will be integrated into seminar discussions.

3. There are four elements in the assessment of performance for the course:

   Class Attendance and Participation (10%): There will be various formats for class discussion (question/answer; discussion in smaller groups, mock debates on the readings, etc.). Though students should not feel pressurized to participate in all of these formats, they should find at least one format in which they should feel comfortable. There will be ad-hoc writing activities that will be added to the final grade.

   Class Test (20%): It will be a 1 hour in-class exam which may include a short essay, as well as open-ended questions.

   Student Presentations 30%: Each group will be assigned a particular week and theme to review a movie and make a presentation on. Students will need to analyse the visual narrative components of the film chosen keeping in mind the social constructs, film conventions and practices. They may refer to the suggested readings, lectures delivered and also do their own research by referring to other sources for their presentation. These sources must be listed in the handouts/slide presentations. Each presentation should also have leading

   Note: All presentations/handouts must be uploaded on the university module weblink in the designated folders for your discussion groups. These presentation slides/handouts must be uploaded by 8pm on the day before your presentation and will be counted towards the overall grade of the presentation.
A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first seminar to assign the presentation topics to two or more students, depending on the topics to be covered and the size of the class.

Assignment- ‘Experiencing Bollywood’ (40%): This will an individual assignment that requires students to watch a Bollywood film in a Singapore Cinema Hall and will consist of two parts – a) Fieldwork and b) Reflection. For the Part A, students should use participant observation as the basis of their fieldwork as follows:

- **The pre-movie experience**: The cinema premises itself (the space, how is it marked out as different from the area outside, the posters, the food/paraphernalia on sale, staff services and the organisation of ticket sales, the dress of the audience, is it a family event etc. etc.)
- **During the movie experience**: The experience of watching the movie in that space (who makes up the audience, the behaviour and reaction of the audience at certain junctures of the film etc.)
- **Post-movie experience**: taking note of aspects of audience behaviour (are they for example engaged in deep discussions of the movie etc.).
- The assignment does not require you to interview people or administer surveys.

For part B, students are expected to draw upon the film to reflect on the themes covered in the course. For example, students are to think about how the setting of the film, ideas about gender and sexuality, nationalism. You can either weave in both Part A and Part B together or have them as separate sections as both will require you to critically reflect on the film as well as the film watching experience by making references to relevant sources.

Students are expected to watch the movie during Week 3 and frame their ideas over the classes in week 4 and submit their essays in week 5. The word limit for the essay will be 1800-2200 words. Please include a reference in the essay; it is not included in the word count. The cinema going experience should be a new one and should not rely on an experience that you may have had in the past. In the process of your observation, you should be ‘alert’ to social and cultural ‘patterns’ that may be evident in your the viewing experience. This will aid you in developing arguments in your account.

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Seminars: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 10am-1pm  
Consultation hours: Thursday 1.30 pm – 2.30 pm
SCHEDULE FOR SEMINAR

WEEK 1: The Nation and Diaspora through Bollywood

WEEK 1a: 24 June
Introduction to Bollywood cinema

Readings:


Supplementary Readings


Various Movie Clippings

NO GROUP PRESENTATION

WEEK 1b: 25 June
Tracing the changing nation through movies

Readings:


Movie:

- Lagaan
- Clips from Roja
- Airlift

NO GROUP PRESENTATION
WEEK 1c: 27 June
Bollywood and Indian diaspora

Readings:


Supplementary Readings


Movie:

- Pardes
- Clips from Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ)

Film for Group Presentation: Swades

WEEK 2 Theme: Public Culture and Bollywood

WEEK 2a: 1 July
Hero-culture in Bollywood and Youth Audiences

Readings:

- TBA

Movie:

- Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara
- Clips from 3 Idiots

Film for Group Presentation: TBD

Week 2b: 2 July

Romance in Bollywood cinema

Readings:

• Banaji, Shakuntala (2006). Reading 'Bollywood': The Young Audience and Hindi Films. Palgrave Macmillan: (pp. 104-129)

Movies:

• Hum Aapke Hain Kaun
• Kuch Kuch Hota Hai

Film for Group Presentation: Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Ghum

Week 2c: 4 July

In-Class Test

Audience in Bollywood Cinema

Readings:

• TBA

ASSIGNMENT DISCUSSION/ NO GROUP PRESENTATION

WEEK3: STAND DOWN WEEK- NO CLASS

WEEK4 THEME: Gender and Religion in Bollywood

Week 4: 15 July

Gender and Sexuality in Bollywood

Readings:

• Chaterjee, Sushmita (2016) 'English Vinglish' and Bollywood: what is 'new' about the 'new woman'? , Gender, Place & Culture, 23(8).

Movies

• Dostana
• English Vinglish

Film for Group Presentation: Pink

Week 4: 16 July

The body in Bollywood
Readings:


Movies:
- Dum Laga Ke Haisha
- Aitraaz

Film for Group Presentation: The Dirty Picture

Week4: 14 July
Religion in Bollywood Cinema

Readings:

Supplementary Readings

Movies:
- Jodha Akbar
- PK

Film for Group Presentation: My Name is Khan

WEEK 5: SINGLE THEMED CLASSES

WEEK 5A THEME: Dance and Music in Bollywood

Week 5a: 17 July
Dance and Music in Bollywood

Readings

**Movies:**
Selections from movies

**Film for Group Presentation:** *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam/ Taal*

**WEEK 5B/5C THEME:** Framing the 'Other' in Bollywood

**Week 5b: 19 JULY**
*Others in B/Hollywood cinema*

**Readings:**


**Movies:**

• *Black*
• *Dil Se*

**Film for Group Presentation:** *Taare Zameen Par*

**Week 5C: 21 July**
*‘New’ Bollywood Cinema*

**Readings:**


**Movies**

• *Maqbool*

**Film for Group Presentation:** *Margarita with a Straw/ Lipstick under my Burkha*