

ANTH 87: Social Justice in South Asia

Tu 5:00-5:50 pm * Dr. Saiba Varma * s2varma@ucsd.edu

Office hours: 4-6 pm Tuesdays * Office hours sign up [here](#)



Land Acknowledgement

UCSD was built on the unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego community. We are honored to share this space with them and thank them for their stewardship of Mat Kulaaxuuy (statement borrowed with thanks from the Association of Native American Medical Students at UCSD). *[Please note land acknowledgements do not absolve settlers of the responsibility of decolonization and returning stolen land to indigenous people.]*

South Asia Studies Minor

This course counts towards the newly created South Asia studies minor at UCSD. The South Asian studies minor is an interdisciplinary minor that incorporates courses from various departments that center around the cultural, economic, and political processes occurring in and out of South Asia. By approaching this region—which includes the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India,

Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka—from diverse perspectives, the South Asian studies minor allows students to integrate a regional specialization into their program of study. Often students take three or four classes in South Asian studies out of interest but have no idea that those courses count towards a minor! A South Asia studies minor is an excellent complement to a degree in Anthropology, Global Health, International Economics, Human Biology—or any other major because it demonstrates deep regional and historical knowledge, rather than simply breadth of knowledge. Given that South Asia is one of the most geopolitically and economically significant regions in the world, a minor in South Asian studies is a huge asset. It will be extremely attractive to employers and future careers in law, public policy, medicine, public health, education, social work, nonprofit work, international development, and many other fields. If you would like more information about the South Asia studies minor, please contact Dr. Prashant Bharadwaj, Director of the Minor via email at pbharadwaj@ucsd.edu. To learn more about South Asia related programming at UCSD, visit the [South Asia Initiative](#) page.

Introduction

The topics we have in this course on past and present social justice struggles in South Asia and in the diaspora will spark discussion and debate. I ask that we approach respectfully and mindfully. The goal is for us to be challenged, to unlearn many of the things we have learned, and to forge a new path forward.

This course will be based on *your* participation and engagement and will largely be discussion based. To receive a “P” in the course, you must sign up to lead discussion for at least one of the readings or videos. Leading discussion means you should come prepared with a few questions that you can ask the class.

GUIDELINES FOR LEADING DISCUSSIONS

Before you begin:

- **Summarize the video/text:** Since you and your partner(s) are leading the discussion, it is imperative that you have a good grasp of the material.
- **Consider your goals:** What do you think the main takeaway of the video or reading is? What knowledge do you want the class to come away with? What is the goal of your reading/discussion (The most effective discussions usually have a clear direction and goal and have a procedure to meet that goal)?
- **Think about timing:** Your discussion activities should last about 30 minutes total.

Creating discussion questions:

- Treat discussion questions like mini-research questions.
- Ask open-ended (what, why, who, what) rather than yes/no questions that encourage brainstorming and creativity.

- Avoid asking leading questions (suggesting why something might be the way it is).
- Link the reading or video with other issues/themes/concerns we have been talking about, creating a comparative framework.
- Think about the theme of the week
- Be creative! You can choose to divide up the class into small groups, pairs, or stay in a large group. You can use different kinds of activities during your discussion (does not just have to be verbal)!

Facilitating discussion:

→ **Facilitation is about seeing what the group needs to move forward and providing guidance and empowering the group.**

- You should feel free to probe into a comment or idea, such as ‘why did you say that?’ or ‘could you be more specific’? You should ask for clarification if something is not clear.
- Refer back to earlier comments which might tie the discussion to a previous student’s contributions.
- Be comfortable with silence – You must be willing to wait once a question is posed. Don’t step in and answer your own question. If you are not getting the answer to your question, it probably needs to be rephrased or move on and return to it later.
- Give positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- If only a few students are dominating the discussion, encourage quieter members in the class to respond. You can seek out their opinion directly or refer back to their point and ask them to elaborate on it.
- Shift perspectives: If everyone seems to agree, it may be less likely that a single or few students who feel differently will speak up. To get these students to participate, you can ask if “there might be another viewpoint that could be missing from the discussion.” Or, if everyone is in agreement, you can ask for the implications (the so what?), ask for specific examples or details to enrich the discussion.
- Occasionally summarizing the discussion is helpful in case it goes off track (which you can point out).

Behaviors to avoid:

- Judging or criticizing ideas or feelings (at the same time, you should feel free to question inaccuracies. You can do so by asking, “does anyone have a different answer?”)
- Asserting your own ideas too strongly
- Making decisions for the whole class
- Making lengthy comments

Participation

You must attend at least 6 of 10 class sessions, ideally synchronously. If you are attending asynchronously, to earn your participation grade, you should post a 100-150 word comment or response based on the lecture on our course's canvas site (on the discussion board).

All classes will take place on zoom. It is highly recommended that you attend as many classes synchronously as you can to get the most out of this course and the discussions.

During class:

- Minimize distractions by trying to find a quiet place (if possible), putting your phone on silent, and closing other applications besides Zoom and a document for taking notes.
- *Presence:* Many of the topics we will discuss are intended to generate discussion and debate—and it is through conversation that many of us learn! Presence is much more than being in class. It means carefully listening, engaging, and participating in discussions. You are invited to create an environment of mutual respect by listening and speaking with an open mind.
- **I very much appreciate you turning on your camera**, which greatly facilitates our conversations and can make the class feel more personal and intimate in a time when we are feeling isolated and disconnected from one another. While I understand it is not always possible to have your video on, please do turn your camera on when you can, especially when you are in your small breakout rooms. **Please also include your preferred pronouns in your zoom name.**
- Please restrict the chat function in zoom to materials relevant to the course.

Syllabus

Week 1: Tuesday, September 28

Introductions

Week 2: Tuesday, October 5

Situating South Asia in the World

Watch: [India's colonial history](#) (8 mins)

Read: [The World Oscillates between Crises and Protests](#) (Read Part I Debt and Despair and Country Report: India).

Keshav and Miguel

Week 3: Neoliberalism and Agriculture

Tuesday, October 12

Read: <https://thetricontinental.org/the-neoliberal-attack-on-rural-india-two-reports-by-p-sainath/>
Alexandra Bighouse + Xara Khan

Week 4: Farmer's protests

Tuesday, October 19

Why are India's Farmers Protesting? And Will They Succeed? (48 mins)

Vedika Harnathka +

Week 5: Student uprisings

Tuesday, October 26

Watch: [Student protests](#) - background (3 mins)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ootWMVJoSQU> (11 mins)

Read: [Interview with JNU student leader, Aishe Ghosh](#)

Tianli Jiang +

Week 6: Caste

Tuesday, November 2

Watch: [Life as an 'Untouchable' in India](#) (30 mins)

Isha Agarwal + Nila Srinivas

Week 7: Caste, anti-Blackness, and colorism

Tuesday, November 9

Read: ["To Truly Overcome Anti-Black Racism, We Must Also Challenge South Asia's Caste System"](#)

Watch: [Why India's Fair Skin Business is Booming](#) (13 mins)

Elianne Habata + Kriya Subramanyan

Week 8: Gender Justice

Tuesday, November 16

Watch: [Patriarchy and Violence: Why Women in Pakistan have to protest](#) (22 mins)

Amy Chen + Sneha Sairam + Huiran Shan

Week 9: Afghanistan: the aftermath of US Imperialism

Tuesday, November 23

Watch: [Afghanistan: what's next for those who stayed?](#) (25 mins)

Week 10: Partition Legacies

Tuesday, November 30

Watch: [Going Back to Pakistan: 70 Years after Partition](#) (25 mins)

Jamie Gatus + Simran Subramaniam