AAS 392.2 Social Science Topics in Asian & Asian American Studies:

**Gandhi in His Time and Ours**

Spring 2014

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**TENTATIVE SYLLABUS**

**Course Description**

Mahatma Gandhi is hailed as one of the most respected and influential leaders the world has ever seen. His successful model of peaceful resistance to oppression brought about India's Independence from British colonial rule and set off the greatest social transformation in India's history. His ideas and practice continue to inspire countless social and political movements across the globe, from the U.S. Civil Rights Movement to environmental campaigns. Gandhi was an original thinker, a brilliant organizer, clever strategist, charismatic and courageous leader, and also a social reformer and spiritual guru. One of the most public figures, he also remains something of an enigma.

In this seminar, we will attempt to understand the secret of his appeal and effectiveness. We will analyze his ideas, including his critique of various models of civilization. Topics include: India during British colonial rule. The making of the Mahatma: Evolution of his character, personality, and formative influences; religious, moral, spiritual, and political. His major political and social campaigns in South Africa and India. His ideas and ideals, in theory and in practice: Truth, Integrity, Non-Violence, Human Rights, Personal Morality, Satyagraha (peaceful resistance), Social harmony, Simplicity, Sustainability. His vision of ideal world: His qualities as a leader. His relations with great figures of his time. His legacy and impact on the world: his relevance to today's issues: capitalism; socialism; globalization; development; environmental issues; global political movements; terrorism.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to describe the main events of Gandhi’s life, formative influences, values, strategies, and leadership qualities.

2. Students will be explain how Gandhi’s approach to conflict resolution and social, political change is different from other approaches.

3. Students will be able to explain the impact of Gandhi’s principles and practices on some major social, political, and ecological movements, such as the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., and around the globe.

4. Students will be able to explain the significance of Gandhi’s contribution to India’s Independence movement and the transformation of the caste system in India.
5. Students will explore the aspects of Gandhi’s personality and leadership that earned him the trust, respect and affection of hundreds of millions of people in India and around the world.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Attendance and Participation (15%) Complete and on-time attendance. Only medical and family emergencies are permitted. Three or more unexcused absences lead to automatic lower grade. The grade for class participation is based upon your effort and the quality of your contribution in the class, and not the quantity or volume of comments.

3. A midterm exam (30%)

4. A well-researched, organized 20-minute PowerPoint Class Presentation (25%)

5. A final Exam (30%). Students who obtain B+ and above in the midterm exam will be given the option of submitting a 10-page research paper in lieu of the final examination.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS BY WEEK**


2. Historical Background: Indian History, Social Structure, Religions, and Politics; British Colonialism in India and Africa


3. Gandhi in South Africa: The making of the Mahatma


5. Gandhi’s Ideas and Ideals, Part 2: Family, Society, Politics, Ecology -- Critique of Modernity and Modern Civilization

6. Gandhi’s Method: Satyagraha (Civil Disobedience or nonviolent non-cooperation) – analysis of theory and practice

7. Gandhi and India’s Independence Movement – Part 1 The Major Campaigns

8. Gandhi and India’s Independence Movement – Part 2 Strategies and Tactics

9. Gandhi’s Vision for India – Eradication of Untouchability; Empowerment of Women; Religious Harmony; Sustainable Development; His Relation to Nehru, Ambedkar, Jinnah, and Others

10. Gandhi’s Leadership Style -- Qualities of Leadership across different fields – business, politics, society, religion


12. Gandhi’s Impact on the World, Part 2: Political, Economic, Social and Ecological campaigns around the world; Gandhi and contemporary political conflicts
13. Criticisms of Gandhi and the relevance and applicability of his methods to contemporary issues

14. Conclusion: Gandhi’s Legacy

Readings:


Selected Chapters from the following books will be part of required reading:


Recommended Readings:

6. Ramachandra Guha. *India Before Gandhi, and India After Gandhi*


10. Henry David Thoreau. *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays* (Dover Thrift Editions) [Paperback]

Video Resources:

- *Gandhi* Directed by Richard Attenborough
- *The Making of the Mahatma* Directed by Shyam Benegal
- Documentary of Photographs and News clips [http://www.mkgandhi.org](http://www.mkgandhi.org)
- *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict.* (2 X 84 min)
- *Satyagraha (opera)* by Philip Glass: Clips on The Salt March, Amritsar Massacre, Civil Disobedience