

HCOL 185A (3 credits): Fall 2019
Visualizing History: India
U-Heights North 16, T/Th 10:05-11:20
Professor Abby McGowan
amcgowan@uvm.edu, 300 Wheeler House
Office hours: Wednesday 2-5, and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course we will explore India through its nineteenth and twentieth century visual culture, arguing that visual materials provide a compelling set of materials with which to investigate a culture, offering up different perspectives on the past than what is available from other sources. Whether integrating the global imagery of the 1920s Modern Girl (known for her flapper dresses and bobbed hair) in the Bollywood cinema of the era, or re-imaging the god Rama in more masculine poses in the late twentieth century to suit new, aggressive definitions of Hinduism, the visual world has provided critical tools with which to make political claims and articulate cultural identities. In this course we will explore how various visual materials have generated meanings in different historical contexts, and also how those materials are used for particular social, cultural or political ends.

The course will be divided into roughly three parts. In the first, we will explore British imperial representations that aspired to encompass the entirety of India—the place, people, culture, and history—through visual means, including exhibitions and museums, photography, illustrated publications and film. As self-conscious attempts to use selective material to stand in for a massively complex, multi-faceted whole, these various examples help to highlight the politics, technologies, and expectations that shape visual representations, and how those representations helped to shore up and contest colonial authority. This section will start with mid-nineteenth century exhibitions in Europe where India appeared as the glittering, exotic focus of displays related to the British empire; our attention will be on how particular objects came to stand in for a place and people. From exhibitions we will turn to the technology of photography to see how official British ethnographic photography projects from the late nineteenth century sought to define representative examples of India's peoples. Expanding our scope geographically, we will then explore how India appeared in the British popular press in the early twentieth century, using examples from the *Illustrated London News* and other empire-oriented publications. Finally, we will round up this section with a focus on films made in the 1930s through 1950s, including both feature films as well as documentaries that sought to represent different facets of India. In this section we will draw on readings from anthropology, history, and art history to situate our examples in a broad intellectual context.

In the second section of the course we will look at how Indians have represented themselves, drawing on and adapting new visual and print means to make arguments, build audiences, and develop markets. We will start out with a broad look at the visual culture of popular posters, whether oriented towards politics or trying to encourage new social ideas or consuming habits. Next we turn to the Indian press, exploring the emergence of both new forms of expression as well as new magazines and journals that spoke to an emerging, cosmopolitan, urbane public. We then turn more specifically to advertising culture to see how Indian advertisers took on global commodities and cultural forms (like the Modern Girl) to build demand in local markets. Focusing on both broad themes of gender, nation, and religion that informed ads, and specific campaigns designed for

particular products, we will situate advertising strategies within the cultural and political context of late colonial India.

Finally, in the third section of the course, we will take the breadth of knowledge and methodologies learned over the course of the semester to offer our own visual interpretations of the past. Here we will be focusing specifically on advertisements as a way to explore daily life and everyday politics in different moments of time. Working with the *Times of India* (which is fully archived online, available through the UVM library) from the 1900s through the mid-1940s, students will work in groups to create a visual narrative of particular decades, exploring what advertisements can tell us about markets, desires, consuming practices, and political choices in late colonial urban India.

Course learning objectives:

- To develop scholarly methodologies for analyzing, interpreting and talking about visual evidence from the past.
- To build a deeper knowledge of the politics and cultures of visual attempts to represent diverse cultures and peoples.
- To understand the visual culture of India in the late colonial period.
- To strengthen research skills in working with primary source materials.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements include active participation in discussion, four short papers, two longer (5-7 pages) summative papers, an initial research summary, a research proposal, a research presentation, and a final research paper. Classes will be structured around regular discussion, so please be prepared to talk about the readings listed for each day of the class. It is your responsibility to check the syllabus to see what is scheduled for each day and come to class prepared accordingly. Readings are all available on Blackboard, listed by the day for which they are assigned.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Participation	20%
Two short papers (each 7.5%)	15%
First summative paper	15%
Second summative paper	20%
Research proposal	5%
Research presentation	5%
Final research paper	20%

NOTES ON REQUIREMENTS

Participation: You are expected to read the materials listed for that day and to come ready to talk about them. If you are not comfortable talking in a large group, you are welcome to submit a written response to the readings; details on how to do this will follow.

Two short (2-3 page) papers: These papers will focus on the readings assigned in the first part of the semester, asking you to think about a week’s worth of reading in an integrated way.

Two summative papers (5-7 pages): Due at the end of each of the first two parts of the semester, these papers function as take-home midterms. Specifically, you will be asked to pull together the materials within each part of the semester, integrating ideas, readings, themes, and methodologies.

Research proposal: In a formal proposal (three pages, plus bibliography) you should identify the theme you will focus on for your research paper.

Research presentation: During the exam period for our class, you will make a 10-minute presentation about your research to the class as a whole.

Final paper: In this paper (approximately 15-20 pages), due at the end of finals period, your job is to explore a key theme in the ads of the decade you have been working on. Specifically, you should place that theme in a larger context, analyzing who the ads were aimed at, what ideas/concerns/anxieties/desires were being targeted with the ads, and how those ads reveal something specific and important about the decade in which they appear.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Academic honesty: Please be advised that I take academic honesty seriously and personally, and will expect you to uphold the highest standards of honesty in this class. Plagiarism or other offenses against the university's policies will result in an F for the class. For a full explanation of the university's policies see: <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Deadlines: All written work must be turned in at the assigned time, *in class*, on the day that it is due. Late papers will be penalized a half of a letter grade per day. In other words, if you submit an A paper (which comes with a numerical grade of a 95) a day late, it will now drop to a 90. If it is two days late, it will be an 85 or a B. Late penalties are capped at two full letter grades (or 20 points), though, so it is always, *always* better to get something in, even late, than to skip an assignment.

No laptops used in class without permission: To minimize distraction to other students, I do not permit the use of laptops in class except for digital projects. If you want to use a laptop to take notes, please come see me.

Student learning accommodations: If you have a documented disability and are interested in utilizing accommodations please contact the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office (access@uvm.edu). If you are working with SAS, I encourage you to meet with me soon to discuss accommodations so that we can make a plan for this course.

Religious holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes so that we can come up with a plan for making up work missed while you are out.

Course evaluations: I will ask you to complete an anonymous and confidential evaluation of the course at the end of the term. I encourage you to offer your full and frank assessment in that evaluation, as your comments will help me refine the course for the next time I teach it.

SCHEDULE AND MAIN TOPICS

All readings are available on Blackboard. Any changes to the course readings listed below will be announced well in advance.

Tuesday, 8/27: Introduction

Thursday, 8/29: Why the visual matters

Reading:

Pinney, Christopher, *Photos of the Gods*, Reaktion Books, 2004: 7-12.

Week 2: Representing India: Exhibition practices

Tuesday, 9/3: International exhibitions

Reading:

Carol Breckenridge. "The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (1989): 195–216

Saloni Mathur. "Living Ethnographic Exhibits: The Case of 1886." *Cultural Anthropology* 15, no. 4 (2001): 492–524.

Thursday, 9/5: Indian displays

Reading:

Tina Choi, "The Late-Victorian Histories of Indian Art Objects," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41 (2013): 199-217.

Peter Hoffenberg, "Promoting Traditional Indian Art at Home and Abroad," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 37 (2) Summer 2004: 192-213.

Week 3: Representing India: Photography in colonial practice

Tuesday, 9/10: Documentation practices

Reading:

Christopher Pinney. *Camera Indica*. University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 17-71

9/10: PAPER 1 DUE: How did the depiction of India in exhibitions, museums and journals in the nineteenth century provide ideological justification of British colonial control?

Thursday, 9/12: MUSEUM SESSION (meet at the entrance to the Fleming Museum)

Museum session: Working with curator Andrea Rosen, we will examine nineteenth century British photographs of India in the collection of the Fleming Museum.

Reading:

Maria Antonella Pelizzari, "From Stone to Paper: Photographs of Architecture and the Traces of History," in *Traces of India*, Yale Center for British Art, 2003: 20-59

Week 4: Representing India: Journalism

Tuesday, 9/17: The British daily press

Reading:

David Finkelstein and Douglas Peers. "A Great System of Circulation" in Finkelstein and Peers, eds., *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media*. St Martin's Press, 2000: 1-22.

Chandrika Kaul. *Reporting the Raj*. Manchester University Press, 2017: 1-53

Thursday, 9/19: Gendered concerns

Reading:

Antoinette Burton, "Institutionalizing Imperial Reform: *The Indian Magazine* and Late-Victorian Colonial Politics," in Finkelstein and Peers, eds., *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media*. St Martin's Press, 2000: 23-50.

Nupur Chaudhuri, "Issues of Race, Gender and Nation in *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* and *Queen*, 1850-1900," in Finkelstein and Peers, eds., *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media*. St Martin's Press, 2000: 51-62.

9/19: PAPER 2 DUE: How was photography used in support of British colonial rule in nineteenth century India?

Week 5: Representing India: Film

Tuesday, 9/24: NO CLASS—INSTRUCTOR AT A CONFERENCE

Thursday, 9/26: Empire films, film in empire

Reading:

Richard Osborne, "India on Film, 1939-47," in Grievson and MacCabe, eds., *Film and the End of Empire*, Palgrave, 2011: 55-71

Babli Sinha, *Cinema, Transnationalism and Colonial India*. Routledge, 2013: 91-115

Peter Sutoris. *Visions of Development*. Oxford University Press, 2016: 29-58

Week 6: Indian representations: Popular posters

Tuesday, 10/1: The politics of posters

Reading:

Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods*, Reaktion Books, 2004: 106-144.

Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Artful Mapping in Bazaar India," available online at:

<http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/artful-mapping-bazaar-india.html>

10/1: SUMMATIVE PAPER DUE: The British generated important representations of India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through exhibitions, museums, photographs, the press, and film. In your essay, you have two assignments. First, identify and explain four or five key themes that were shared across different media in British representations of India in this period. Second, explain how those themes helped to support British rule over the subcontinent.

Thursday, 10/3: Posters and everyday life

Reading:

Richard Davis, "Temple in a Frame: God Posters for and of Worship," available online at:

<http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/temple-frame-god-posters-worship.html>

Philip Lutgendorf, "Chai Why?" available online at:

<http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/chai-why-advertisements-consumption.html>

Abigail McGowan, "Modernity at Home," available online at:

<http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/modernity-leisure-autonomy-woman.html>

Week 7: Indian representations: Journalistic histories

Tuesday, 10/8: News and caricatures

Reading:

Amelia Bonea, *The News of Empire*. Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 204-265

Ritu Khanduri, *Caricaturing Culture in India*. Cambridge University Press 2014, pp. 45-92

Thursday, 10/10: Selling film, selling the city

Reading:

Reading:

Debashree Mukherjee, "Creating Cinema's Reading Publics," in Ravi Sundaram, ed., *No Limits*. Oxford University Press, 2013: 165-198.

Gyan Prakash, "Blitz's Bombay," *Seminar*, 528 (August 2003): 172-181.

Week 8: Indian representations: Advertising cultures

Tuesday, 10/15: Gendering desires

Reading:

The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group. "The Modern Girl Around the World: Cosmetics Advertising and the Politics of Race and Style," in *The Modern Girl Around the World*. Duke University Press, 2008: 25-54.

Priti Ramamurthy. "All-Consuming Nationalism: The Indian Modern Girl in the 1920s and 1930s," in *The Modern Girl Around the World*. Duke University Press, 2008: 147-173.

Thursday, 10/17: Advertising at work

Reading:

Douglas Haynes. "Selling Masculinity." *South Asia* 35 (4), Dec 2012: 787-831.

Arvind Rajagopal. "The Commodity Image in the Post-Colony," available online at:

<http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/commodity-image-postcolony.html>

Arvind Rajagopal. "Early Publicity in India: Trademark, Branding and Advertisement," in Jain, ed. *The Story of Early Indian Advertising*. Marg, 2017: pp 88-99

Week 9: Ads in practice

Tuesday, 10/22: Company stories

Reading:

Sabeena Gadihoke. "Selling Soap and Stardom: The Story of Lux" available online at:

<http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/soap-stardom-lux.html>

Jyotindra Jain. "Commodity Aesthetics: Soap and Cigarette Advertising in Colonial India" in Jain, ed. *The Story of Early Indian Advertising*, Marg, 2017: pp 50-59

Ravi Vasudevan. "From Advertising to Public Education: Notes on Burmah-Shell in India," in Jain, ed. *The Story of Early Indian Advertising*, Marg, 2017: pp. 114-119

Thursday, 10/24: *LIBRARY SESSION (meet in the digital classroom at the Howe Library)*

Library session: Working with Daisy Benson, the library liaison for history, we will learn to work with the databases for the *Times of India*, *New York Times*, and the *Times of London*.

10/27 (SUNDAY), by midnight, submitted via email: *SUMMATIVE PAPER DUE:* Indian advertising took off in the early twentieth century, developing a distinctive form and set of idioms.

In your paper, you have two tasks. First, identify three key themes that had broad resonance in advertisements in this era. Second, explain how those themes reflect political, social, journalistic, and cultural trends of the time.

Week 10: Identifying advertisements

Tuesday, 10/29: Global/local contexts

Assignment for class #1: Set up an account on Pinterest before class. In class we will explore how to use Pinterest to save and organize advertisements from your decade.

Assignment for class #2: Based on assignments to different decades (done in class on 10/22), select a single issue of the *Times of India* for a given day, in your assigned decade. Read that issue, as well as issues of the *Times* of London and the *New York Times* from the same day. Come to class prepared to discuss what the similarities and differences are across the three papers in terms of the following: themes/topics/stories; layout, visual effect; special sections devoted to particular areas of interest; ad content and subject?

Thursday, 10/31: Advertising strategies

Assignment for class #1: For class today, start to investigate ads for your decade from the *Times of India* (perhaps with each of you taking two-three years of your decade on which to focus), pinning in Pinterest anything you particularly like, find visually appealing, is odd or potentially surprising. In thinking about what to pin think about the following: What range/types of goods are being advertised? Who is the perceived audience for the ad? Are there different audiences? Which goods represent local manufacturers vs. global ones? What are the different visual strategies employed? What emotions are being evoked? In class today we will work through the Pinterest images to identify common themes: you will then choose two themes to pursue.

Assignment for class #2: Come to class prepared to explain to the class (based on your assigned reading) key issues or developments by decade. What were the major events, in your topic, which shaped the 1900s, 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s? How and why was Bombay changing?

Readings on Bombay (Assignments will be made in class):

Urban development: Sandip Hazareesingh, *Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity*, pp. 12-70
Civil society and social service: Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, pp. 157-233.
Home furnishings and house styles: Abigail McGowan, "Domestic Modern." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 75, no. 4 (2016): 424-46; and Nikhil Rao, *House but No Garden*, pp. 137-170

Popular culture and music: Naresh Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot*, pp. 9-31, 52-75

Nationalist politics: Jim Masselos, "Some Aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919" and "Audiences, Actors and Congress Dramas" in *The City in Action*, pp. 153-220

Week 11: Identifying thematics

Tuesday, 11/5

Assignment for class: For class today, come in with two Pinterest boards, each with at least 20 ads from your decade illustrating your chosen two themes. In class we will compare these new boards, to see what works and what doesn't, and how the themes collectively illustrate your decade. Each member of the group with then pick one theme on which to concentrate for the final project. We will also talk about how to annotate images using Thinglink.

Reading:

Nadja Durbach, "One British Thing: A Bottle of Welfare Orange Juice," *Journal of British Studies* 57 (July 2018): 564-567

Beverly Lemire, "One British Thing: Clay Pipes," *Journal of British Studies* 57 (Oct 2018): 755-759.

Tara Mayer, "One British Thing: Jodhpurs," *Journal of British Studies* 58 (April 2019): 394-398

Thursday, 11/7

Assignment for class: Make a new board within Pinterest with ten ads from all those collected from your decade, which best illustrate your particular theme. In class we will discuss the marketing strategies your group sees in ads from the decade you are working on.

11/7 RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE: In a formal proposal (three pages, plus bibliography) you should identify the theme you will focus on for your research paper. Your proposal should indicate both what kinds of ads you will be using for your analysis, what products they promote, what aspect of the larger context (cultural, economic, political, social, etc.) you will be exploring in the research, and what you think these ads can tell us about the time period in which they appeared.

Week 12: Putting ads in contexts

Tuesday, 11/12

Assignment for class: Part 1: Increase the number of ads on your thematic Pinterest board to at least 50, exploring the different expressions of your theme, how it changed over time, and areas of repetition. Part 2: Using Thinklink, annotate one of your ads representing your theme with at least five questions that you want to know/investigate about that image. In class we will share our Thinglinked images. Within each group, you will then identify shared questions to investigate, making sure that those questions work with what is up on your new thematic Pinterest boards.

Thursday, 11/14: *LIBRARY SESSION (meet in the digital classroom at the Howe Library)*

Library session: Working with Daisy Benson, the library liaison for history, we will identify ways to find more contextual information for our ads.

Week 13: Refining focus

Tuesday, 11/19

Assignment for class: Come to class prepared to make a five minute presentation on one ad. That presentation should do two key things. First describe the ad, analyzing the visual content and explaining what the ad is trying to do and how it is trying to do it. Second, explain why this ad offers an important insight into the time period in which it appeared. In class we will discuss research strategies and approaches.

Thursday, 11/21: *No class, individual meetings about research*

Week 14: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: Refining arguments

Tuesday, 12/3

Assignment for class: Come prepared with an outline of your main argument for your paper, to share with your decadal group.

Thursday, 12/5

Assignment for class: Come to class prepared to provide a two minute pitch the advertising firm would have needed to give the company in order to get your key ad in the paper. What is the ad supposed to accomplish? Why use this particular strategy to sell this product?

Week 16: Presentations

Presentations will be made during our scheduled exam period.

Final papers due Friday December 14, 5 pm