



ANTH 0700 Introduction to Modern South Asia
Department of Anthropology, Brown University

Course Instructor: Brian A. Horton

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Course Timing: Tues 4-6:30 PM

Location: CIT Center (Thomas Watson CIT) 227

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2 – 4PM.

Course Description

How can we encounter places that are constantly in flux, places whose borders are under persistent revision and contestation? Moreover, how might we come to terms with places beyond narrow readings of history, culture, and perhaps even geography as stable, marked boundaries of “us” and “them” or “here” and “there?” In this semester-long course, we will attempt to encounter a region called South Asia through not just its histories and cultures but also through a string of different concepts that simultaneously make and unmake the region as both a stable object of study as well as place on a map. Through attending to issues ranging—but not limited to—caste, Partition, ethnic conflict, nationalism, gender, kinship, liberalization, postcoloniality, development, diaspora, and queerness, this course seeks to help students think about South Asia through divergent histories, cultures, and concepts. I must also admit that this course will always be partial and incomplete in its approach to the subject matter. Rather than being an exhaustive inquiry into the history of the region, it is a cursory introduction into some of the key themes, questions, and debates that have animated academic discussions. Students will also be encouraged to develop their thinking and work from this course into a proposal for a research project. This course will ultimately help students explore how themes, conversations, and material from this course can connect to their own research interests. There are no prerequisites to this course but it will be both reading and writing intensive.

Course Goal and Objectives

The overarching goal of this course is to enable students to critically reflect on the region of South Asia as well as problematize singular narratives of history, culture, and place. To do this, students will be expected to meet the following objectives:

- To gain a fuller comprehension of the major themes, debates, and discussions through course readings and materials.
- Develop strong oral presentation skills through weekly class participation, engaged seminar discussions, and a final course presentation
- To cogently articulate major themes and concepts through short reflections and response papers
- To construct original research proposals for fellowship applications by directly engaging with the literature as well as finding spaces where the existing literature can be expanded and challenged

Course Policies and Expectations

Classroom Culture: While this is an introductory course on South Asia, we will cover a range of topics including but not limited to caste, violence, discrimination, gender, sex, sexuality, race, class, nationality, identity. As your instructor, it is my promise to you that I will do my best to make our classroom space inclusive of all regardless of background, ability, or perspective. As a student, it is important to remember that our work is dialogic—conversational—and collaborative. We will be each other’s interlocutors, discussion partners, and teachers. To this end we must create an intellectual space that is predicated on listening, rather than just hearing. To listen is not just to hear other people’s voices, but to internalize, to reflect, to witness, and to acknowledge what your peers have said. I will do my best to warn students of potentially triggering or upsetting content. Some of the readings, ideas, comments, and discussions may make you uncomfortable or upset. However, this should not make you reluctant to respond or engage in class participation or discussion. Rather, consider how to formulate your ideas and responses in ways that demonstrate solid listening skills and an engagement with the texts and course materials. Help create a respectful listening and speaking space by *waiting for others to finish speaking, acknowledging what others have said, and giving all students access to the discussion^[1] space*. And please make use of office hours as spaces to further discuss any issues, concerns, or discomfort you might have.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism. You and you alone are responsible for your work in this course. Cheating, lying, stealing, and sabotaging the learning of others are unacceptable behaviors. Facilitating the abilities of others to engage in this behavior is also equally unacceptable. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this (or any other) course. In the instance of any violations, the University’s Codes of Student and Academic Conduct will be followed. For more information please consult [Brown University’s Code for Student Conduct](#) and [Academic Code](#).

Attendance and Preparation: This is a seminar-style course that will meet weekly for approximately 3 hours. The participation of all students is integral to the successful execution of this course. Please read all the assignments for a given week and come to class prepared to discuss. Participation means that you are attentively listening to other students, engaging with the course materials, and participating in the discussion.

Absences and Make-ups. Participation counts for 15% of your grade. It is essential that you are present for all classes. However, I understand that extenuating circumstances may and often do arise. In the event that you are going to miss a class please email me at least 24 hours prior to

class detailing the reason for your absence. I will respond within 24 hours and we will make necessary accommodations for missed course notes, assignments, and so on.

Disabilities. If you need or think you might need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact Students and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) by email (SEAS@brown.edu) or phone (401-863-9588) to request a SEAS Registration form and Documentation Guidelines. I will abide by the recommendations and requirements established by the SEAS office.

Written Assignment expectations.

Written assignments must be turned in by the deadlines established in the syllabus or in class. In the event of any extensions or postponements I will announce via email or in class any adjustments to the schedule. In the event of extenuating circumstances, such as illness, requiring an extension, I must be contacted prior to the deadline in order to make necessary adjustments.

Assignment Formatting: All written assignments must include the following: 11 point font, Times New Roman, One inch Margins on all sides, double spacing, and page numbers at the bottom centered. A bibliography for reflections and the midterm is not necessary because we will only be using sources from within the course. For the final conference paper you will be asked to include one. All quotes and paraphrasing however must include the author name, year, and page number in parenthesis, Ex. (Horton 2014: 234).

Course Requirements

Close Reading: Some texts will be much harder than others to read. I promise to be conscientious of how much I assign, but as a student it is also your obligation to read thoroughly and closely. There are no required texts for purchase, everything will be available on the canvas site. Although I have provided digital copies of the texts, it might be useful to annotate the texts either on your device or print and annotate. This will help you slow your reading and process your thoughts. There are terrific note taking software packages available for free, such as Evernote. As you read ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the main argument in the text?
- Who and what bodies of literature are the authors engaging with?
- How can these ideas be applied? Can they?
- How do the readings compare to other texts from this course?
- Are there practical similarities you can draw between the text and other current events/historical moments?

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

All articles and book chapters will be put up online for students to access. If there are any files that is missing from canvas please let me know ASAP so that I can upload it. Students are expected to retrieve all journal articles and book chapters from the Canvas website. Journal articles will be listed under the files subsection and be sorted in chronologically, based on when we will read them.

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. Colonialism, Post Colonialism and the ‘Birth of Modern South Asia’

September 12th Introduction

Bose, Sugata & Jalal, Ayesha

2014 “South Asian History: An Introduction.” *Modern South Asia: History, Politics, and Political Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1-8.

September 19th 1st Empire, Colonialism, and the Orientalists

Cohn, Bernard

1987 The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia. In *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford U.P. pp. 224-54.

1996 “The Command of Language and the Language of Command.” *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 16 – 57.

Mani, Lata

1987 Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India. *Cultural Critique* 7(2), 119 – 156

Saïd, Edward W.,

1994 “Geography, Empire, Culture,” *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books 4 – 14.

Macaulay, Thomas B. (In Class)

1835 Minute on Indian Education

September 26th Problems of Modernity: Subaltern and Postcolonial Studies

Gandhi, Leela

1998 “Preface”, “After Colonialism, and Postcolonialism in the New Humanities” *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. New York City: Columbia University Press, pp. viii-22, 42-63.

2011 “The Pauper’s Gift: Postcolonial Theory and the New Democratic Dispensation. *Public Culture*. 23(1): 27— 38.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh.

2000 “The Idea of Provincializing Europe” and “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp 3—47.

Further Reading

Chatterjee, Partha

1993 “The Nation and Its Outcasts”. *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 173 – 200.

Des Chene, Mary

2007 ‘Is Nepal in South Asia? The Condition of Non-Postcoloniality. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 12(2): 207-223.

Dirlik, Arif

1994 "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism" *Critical Inquiry*, 20(2), pp. 328-356

Loomba, Ania,

1998 "Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies' Colonialism/ Postcolonialism. New York: Routledge, pp. 231

1998 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Colonialism/ Postcolonialism. New York: Routledge, pp. 231

Nandy, Ashis

1983 *Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. Oxford: Oxford

Ramanujan, A.K.

1989 "Is There An Indian Way of Thinking?" *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 23: 41-58.

Ranjit Guha,

1988 "Preface", "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India," "The Prose of Counter Insurgency." in Guha, Ranajit and Spivak, Gayatri (eds) *Selected Subaltern Studies Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 35 – 89. University Press.

October 3rd Partition and Its Aftermath**Manto, Saadat Hasan**

1954 "Toba Tek Singh"

Guha, Ramchandra

2008 "The Logic of Division". *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. New York: Harper Perennial, 41-51.

Zamindar, Vazira F-Y

2007 "Muslim Exodus from Delhi" and "Hindu Exodus from Karachi." *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press, 29 - 77.

Butalia, Urvashi

1998 "Honor" and "Children". *The Other Side of Silence: voices from the Partition of India*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 137-233.

See the 1947 Partition Project: <http://www.1947partitionarchive.org/>

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT: Using the partition archives and any of the course readings so far, write a brief reflection. Consider questions of memory, dispossession, violence, repatriation, the problems of nation, etc.

EXTRA

Watch: *Pinjar* (2003) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvFlSc_OVh0&t=398s

Further Reading**Bose, Sugata & Jalal, Ayesha**

2014 "The Partition of India and the Creation of Pakistan" and "Nineteen Forty-seven: Memories and Meanings." *Modern South Asia: History, Politics, and Political Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 165 – 201.

Khan, Yasmin

2007 *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. New Haven: Yale University

Pandey, Gyanendra

2001 *Remembering partition: violence, nationalism, and history in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Singh, Khushwant

1981 *Train to Pakistan*. New York: Grove Publications

October 10th Post-Partition, Perpetual War, and the AFSPA

Mookherjee, Nayanika

2015 “The Looking Glass Border”, *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971*. Durham: Duke University Press: 1-30..

Kikon, Dolly

2009 “The predicament of justice: fifty years of Armed Forces Special Powers Act in India”. *Contemporary South Asia* 17(3), 271–282.

Guha, Ramchandra

2008 “A Valley Bloody and Beautiful”. *India After Gandhi: The History of the World’s Largest Democracy*. New York: Harper Perennial, 74-96.

Menon Nivedita and Nigam, Aditya

2007 “When Was the Nation?” *Power And Contestation: India Since 1989*. London, Zed Books, 135 – 165.

Saikia, Yasmin

2004 “Beyond the Archive of Silence: Narratives of Violence of the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh.” *History Workshop*: 58 (1), pp 257 – 287.

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (In Class)

Further Reading

Jalal, Ayesha

1995 *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Bose, Sugata & Jalal, Ayesha

2014 “The Partition of India and the Creation of Pakistan” and “Nineteen Forty-seven: Memories and Meanings.” *Modern South Asia: History, Politics, and Political Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 165 – 201.

II. Religion, Caste, and Class

October 17th Sanskritization, Urduization, and Religious Fantasies

Dumont, Louis.

1980 “From System to Structure” and “Hierarchy: The Theory of the Varna” in *Homo Hierarchicus*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 33-91.

Charlsey, Simon

1998 "Sanskritization: The Career of an Anthropological Theory." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*: 32(1), pp. 527—549.

Ramberg, Lucinda

2014 "Yellamma, Her Wives, and the Question of Religion". *Given to the Goddess: South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion*. Durham: Duke University Press, 71-110.

Gold, Daniel

2013 "Sufis and Movie Stars: Charismatic Muslims for Middle Class Hindus". *Lines in Water: Religious Boundaries in South Asia*, ed. Tazim Kassam and Eliza Kent. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press pp. 39-56.

Dwyer, Rachel

2010 "I am Crazy About the Lord: The Muslim Devotional Genre in Hindi Film." *Third Text* 24(1), 123-134

Further Readings

Ahmed, Manan Asif

2014 "Advent of Islam in South Asia." *History of Pakistan*, Roger Long (eds). Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Ahmed, Irfan

2011 "Immanent critique and Islam: Anthropological reflections." *Anthropological Theory*: 11 (1), pp. 107 – 132.

Illiah, Kancha

1996 "Childhood Formations" and "Hindu Gods and Us; Our Goddesses and Hindus." *Why I Am Not a Hindu*. Kolkata: Samya Publishers.

Khan, Naveeda

2012 "Scenes of Aspiration" and "Skepticism in Public Culture" *Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 21-55,145-171.

Östör, A., Fruzzetti, L., & Barnett, S. (Eds.).

1982 *Concepts of person: kinship, caste, and marriage in India*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Srinivas, MN^[1]_[SEP]

1966 *Social Change in Modern India*. Vol. 1963. Berkeley: University of California Press.

October 24th Humiliation: Dalit Political Thought and Caste Questions

Ambedkar, BR

1937 *Annihilation of Caste with A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi*

Gandhi, Mohandas K.

1936 "A Vindication of Caste". *Harijan*

Guru, Gopal

2009 "Theorizing Humiliation." *Humiliation: Claims and Context*, ^[1]_[SEP] Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-19.

Rao, Anupama

2011 "Violence and Humanity: Or, Vulnerability as Political Subjectivity", *Social Research* 78(1), 607 – 632.

Akbar, Prayag

2017 Caste Lives On and On. *Aeon*.

Watch: *Sairat* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlf4xIwYprk>

Further Reading

Abbe J. A. Dubois

1817 *Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs of the People of India; and of Their Institutions, Religious and Civil*. London: Longman.

Deshpande, Satish

2006 “Exclusive Inequalities: Merit, Caste And Discrimination In Indian Higher Education Today.” *Economic and Political Weekly*,

Dirks, Nicholas B.

1992 “Castes of Mind”. *Representations* 37, Winter, pp. 56-78.

Menon Nivedita and Nigam, Aditya

2007 “The Recalcitrance of Caste.” *Power And Contestation: India Since 1989*. London, Zed Books, 15 – 36

Mines, Diane & Lamb, Sarah

2010 “Seven Prevalent Misconceptions about India’s Caste System. *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press: 153 – 154.

Omvedt, Gail

2012 *Understanding Caste: From Buddha to Ambedkar and Beyond*. London: Orient Blackswan.

Rao, Anupama

2009 *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Subramanian, Ajantha

2015 “Making Merit: The Indian Institutes of Technology and the Social Life of Caste.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*: 57 (2), pp. 291-322

Vajpeyi, Ananya

2012 “Gandhi” and “Ambedkar”. *Righteous Republic: The Political Foundations of Modern India*. Harvard University Press.

****TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE ON CANVAS MONDAY OCTOBER 30th 12PM****

October 31st Violence, Peace and Intimacy in the Everyday

Manto, Saadat Hasan

1954 “Khol Do”

Thiranagama, Sharika

2011 “Introduction” and “The House of Secrets: Mothers, Daughters, and Inheritance” In *My Mother’s House: Civil War in Sri Lanka*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1-41; 78-106.

Khan, Naveeda

2006 “Of Children and Jinn: An Inquiry into an Unexpected Friendship During Uncertain Times.” *Cultural Anthropology*: 21(2), pp.236—264.

Ring, Laura

2006 "Introduction: Zenana Revisited". *Zenana: Everyday Peace in a Karachi Apartment Building*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1-40

Further Reading

Das, Veena

2006 *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: UC Press.

Dionne Bunsha

2007 *Scarred: Experiments with Violence in Gujarat*. New Delhi: Penguin India. [Excerpts]

Pandey, Gyanendra

1992 "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today." *Representations*: 37(1), pp. 27-55

Sen, Atreyee

2007 *Shiv Sena Women: Violence and Communalism in a Bombay Slum*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Shani, Ornit

2007 *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Excerpts]

Singh, Bhrigupati

2015 *Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Valentine, E. Daniel

1996 *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropology of Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Varshney, Ashutosh

2001 Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: India and Beyond. *World Politics* (53), 362 – 98.

November 7th Passions of the Tongue: Language and Representation

Cohen, Lawrence.

1995 "Holi in Banaras and the Mahaland of Modernity." *GLQ* 2, no. 4: 399–424.

Prakash, Gyan.

2010 "From Red to Saffron". *Mumbai Fables*. New York: Harper Collins, 204 -250.

Ramaswamy, Sumathi

1997 "Introduction" and "One Language, Many Imaginings." *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891 – 1970*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1 – 79.

III. Globalization, Transnationality, and New Directions

****AT LEAST TWO REFLECTIONS MUST BE HANDED IN BY TODAY****

November 14th Aspiration, Liberalization, and "Love"

Ahearn, Laura

2001 "Developing Love: Sources of Development Discourse in Nepali Love Letters." *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, & Social Change in Nepal*. University of Michigan Press, 141 - 191.

Appadurai, Arjun^[L]_[SEP]

2004 The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition. *In Culture and Public Action*. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, eds. Stanford, Calif.; Washington, D.C.: Stanford Social Sciences; World Bank.

Karim, Lamia

2011 “Introduction” and “The Structural Transformation of the NGO Sphere.” *Microfinance and its Discontents: Women in Debt in Bangladesh*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp xii – 34.

Lukose, Ritty A.

2009 “Romancing the Public”. *Liberalization’s Children*. Durham: Duke University Press, 96 – 132.

Further Reading

Menon Nivedita and Nigam, Aditya

2007 “Globalization I” and “Globalization II.” *Power And Contestation: India Since 1989*. London, Zed Books, 61 – 103.

November 21st Global Flows: Diaspora and Transnationality

Afzal, Ahmed

2014 “I Have a Very Good Relationship with Allah: Pakistani Gay Men and Transnational Belonging”. *Lone Star Muslims: Transnational Lives and the South Asian Experience in Texas*. New York: New York University Press, 124-151.

Mankekar, Purnima

2015 “Unsettling.” and “Moving Images: Reconceptualizing Indianness in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge. *Unsettling India: Affect, Temporality, Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1-71.

Prashad, Vijay

2012 “Letter to Uncle Swami” and “The Day Our Probation Ended”. *Uncle Swami: South Asians in America Today*. New York: New Press, 1-48.

Further Reading

Bald, Vivek

2013 “Bengali Harlem”. *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. Durham: Duke University Press 160 – 190.

Gopinath, Gayatri

2005 “Queer Homes in Diasporas.” *Impossible Desires: Queer Desires and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Prashad, Vijay

2000 The Karma of Brown Folk, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. [Excerpts]

Mathew, Biju & Prashad, Vijay

2000 “The protean forms of Yankee Hindutva.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: 23(3), pp. 516-534.

Sharma, Nitasha Tamar

2010 *Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and Global Race Consciousness*. Durham: Duke University Press.

December 5th New Directions, New Questions

Ahmed, Manan Asif

2013 “A Demon with Ruby Eyes.” *The Medieval History Journal*: 16 (2), pp. 1 – 35.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh

2009 “The Climate of History: Four Theses”. *Critical Inquiry*: 35 (2), pp. 197 – 222.

Dave, Naisargi

2014 Witness: Humans, Animals, and the Politics of Becoming. *Cultural Anthropology*: 29 (3), pp. 433 – 456.

Ramberg, Lucinda

2016 “Backwards Futures and Pasts Forward: Queer Time, Sexual Politics, and Dalit Religiosity in Southern India”. *GLQ*.

DECEMBER 12th EXAM WEEK CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Assignments and Grading

Assignments

Presence and Participation (15%)

Participation means that you are attentively listening to other students, engaging with the course materials, and participating in the discussion. Again, this is a seminar-style course, where we will cover significant ground in a short amount of time. The participation of all students is integral to the successful execution of this course. Please read all the assignments for a given week and come to class prepared to discuss.

In Class Presentation (10%)

You will be expected to lead class discussion at least once—depending on the final number of course participants. You will open up class by providing a brief summary of the texts. You are welcome to use powerpoint, media, paper, an activity, or nothing at all to make your point. What you must address in 15 – 20 minutes of time is an overview of the text(s), connections they might have to previous readings and course themes, and discussion questions for the class to begin with. This is not meant to be an intensive or pressurized exercise but rather a way for you to practice your presentation and speaking skills ahead of your final, to receive feedback from me, and to practice condensing dense/complex material into an understandable talk. I will of course guide you—when necessary—to make this a smooth process.

Three Critical Reflections (30%)

Over the course of the semester you are responsible for handing in three critical reflections. This is a chance for weekly reflection on the readings, through questions, critical commentary, moderate summary (with questions/commentary), analysis, opinion, or a creative combination of the above. You will hand them to me in class and you must write three of them. The goal is for you to demonstrate original/critical thinking in 2-3 pages. You must include a thesis and have an organized engagement with the text. You MUST hand in at least one before the midterm. You may attend one of the Center for Contemporary South Asia weekly academic talks and write about that in your reflection. You can find out more about CCSA here:

<http://watson.brown.edu/southasia/>

Take Home Midterm (15%): You will have a take home midterm exam. The midterm will consist of a few essay questions, based on course readings. The questions will be straight forward, not surprises, and if you have been putting in the work throughout the course and participating, then there will be nothing to throw you off. You will be allowed to use all notes and course materials to help you answer the exam questions.

Final Project Proposal (30%): In lieu of a final paper or exam you will put together a final research proposal. Given that many concentrators, end up applying to conduct research of some kind as part of their senior thesis or capstone, you will write a 6-8 page research proposal outlining a specific area of inquiry, a research question, methods, and perhaps most importantly, your interventions in the bodies of literature that we have discussed. There will be two portions to this: a presentation or ‘pitch of your proposal that you will make on **December 12th** and then the final proposal which you will mail to me on **December 15th**.

Grading Policy Statement and Grading Scale

In this course grades are both a reflection and evaluation of your written work, ability to express critical thought in writing and in speaking, and how well you demonstrate an understanding engagement with the course material. Grades are not reflections of you as a person or punishment; they are a mechanism for evaluating your performance throughout the course.

A Exceptional work. Demonstrates a comprehensive engagement with the text/course materials. Work masterfully articulates a clear understanding and synthesis of readings and presents ideas clearly and articulately. There is a strong, original thesis advanced and supported by relevant supporting information. The writing is clear, organized, and free of grammatical errors and typos.

B Strong work. Generally catches the significant details of the readings/course material. Expresses a clear thesis, though it might be obvious. Has supporting evidence that clearly attends to the main argument of the paper. The writing is clear, organized, and free of grammatical errors and typos.

C Acceptable work, but with some problems. The work might miss the central point of the assignment or question posed. It might also have a very vague thesis/main argument. Analysis is also probably lacking depth, clarity, and a connection to the main thesis. The paper is disorganized and the direction is not clear. The writing may be unclear, grammatically incorrect, and there may be some typos.

D Work with serious problems. The analysis is far more of a summary of the text, with little original thought or responsiveness to the prompt/question. Information cited from the text is factually inaccurate or communicates a gross misunderstanding and/or lack of engagement with the text and course materials. The paper has significant issues with clarity and organization. There are frequent grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors.

NC Unacceptable work.