Mother India: the Birth of a Modern Nation
Queens College Study Abroad

January 1-23 (or 27), 2011
Dr. Helen Gaudette and Sara Lizzul
3 credits, History 200

In this highly active traveling study abroad course in India, students will be immersed in modern Indian culture as they examine the country’s recent social, religious, and political history. This course is unique in its migratory nature, traveling to many Indian cities to enable students to develop a fuller understanding of life in India. Students will also have the opportunity to spend three days volunteering at the Pardada Pardadi Girls’ Vocational School (optional) in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh.

This course will study the birth of India as a modern nation by placing particular focus on the legacy of British Imperialism, India’s independence, and the partition in 1947. It will do so, in part, through the award-winning pedagogy “Reacting to the Past” game *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945*. During the game, students will recreate the debates held at Shimla, in the foothills of the Himalayas, which discussed the future of the Indian subcontinent and how it would define itself as a modern nation (or nations) once the British were gone. The students will become the invited leaders of various religious and political constituencies to work out the future of Britain’s largest colony. Students will debate questions such as: Will the British transfer power to the Indian National Congress, which claims to speak for all Indians? Or will a separate Muslim state—Pakistan—be carved out of India to be ruled by Muslims, as the Muslim League proposes? And what will happen to the vulnerable minorities—such as the Sikhs and untouchables—or the hundreds of princely states? As British authority wanes, smoldering
tensions among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs increasingly flare into violent riots that threaten to ignite all India. Towering above it all is the frail but formidable figure of Gandhi, whom some revere as an apostle of non-violence and others regard as a conniving Hindu politician. Students will struggle to reconcile religious identity with nation building—perhaps the most intractable and important issue of the modern world. Texts will include the literature of Hindu revival (Chatterjee, Tagore and Tilak); the Koran and the literature of Islamic nationalism (Iqbal); and the writings of Ambedkar, Nehru, Jinnah, and Gandhi.

**Course Locations:** India: Delhi, Mumbai, Shimla, Agra, and Amritsar

**Excursion Highlights:**

- **Mumbai:** Gateway of India, Bombay Fort, University of Mumbai, St. Thomas’ Cathedral, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (Victoria Terminus), Mani Bhavan (museum about Gandhi), Mahalaxmi Temple, and Haji Ali’s Mosque

- **Delhi:** Old Delhi’s Kashmiri Gate, the Red Fort, Jama Masjid Mosque, Gandhi Smriti (memorial), National Museum, Nehru Memorial Museum,

- **Shimla:** Viceregal Lodge and Botanical Gardens, Christ Church, Jakhu Temple, historical buildings of the Ridge.

- **Agra:** The Taj Mahal

- **Amritsar:** Sikh Golden Temple, Wagha border’s Changing of the Guard

**Dates:** January 1, 2011 – January 23, 2011 * With option to remain until January 27, 2010 to participate in a service project at Pardada Pardadi Foundation (Program dates are NY departure and return dates.)

www.pardadapardadi.org

**Course Requirements:** Students will explore northern India, and learn about its history, religion, and culture. They will develop the ability to combine classroom and experiential learning.

**Participation:** (30%) Participation in class discussions of the assigned readings and the game is at the heart and soul of this course so it is a crucial component of your grade. “Reacting” is an award-winning way of learning through role-playing and elaborate games. In the India game, students will be assigned a role as an historical figure with a “game objective.” At the heart of our game, is animated discussion and debating; you must persuade others that “your” views make more sense than those of your opponents. Your views will be informed by the important historical texts cited in your game objectives. You will have two ways of expressing your views: orally and in writing, and both will be graded and contribute toward your final grade.

Attendance in class and on all excursions, therefore, is mandatory.
Required Reading: please purchase the following three books before you leave for India to bring along with you,


Recommended Reading:


Journal/Notebook/Scrapbook: (20%) The journal will consist of hand-written notes, thoughts, comments, local newspaper articles, postcards, museum receipts, etc. Think of it as a written and visual record of all that you do, see, and learn about India. The journal will also include writing assignments given during various field trips throughout the nation and beyond. *Choose your notebook carefully! Get one that is a comfortable size for you, one you will not mind taking with you everywhere, one that makes you feel like writing! It should have at least 100 pages (you may find yourself writing more than you had ever imagined you would).

Research Project: (30%) This 8-page typed research project about the history of India will be due a few weeks after we get back home.

Final Exam: (20%) The final exam will be held on the last day of classes in Delhi, 1/21/11.
Tentative Schedule

Jan 1: Depart JFK
Jan 2: Arrive Mumbai, bus transfer to the hotel
Jan 3: Class, tour Mumbai
Jan 4: Class, tour Mumbai
Jan 5: Class, tour Mumbai
Jan 6: Class, tour Mumbai
Jan 7: Day off
Jan 8: Fly to Delhi
Jan 9: Day off in Delhi
Jan 10: Class, tour Delhi
Jan 11: Train/bus to Shimla
Jan 12: Class, tour Shimla
Jan 13: Class, tour Shimla
Jan 14: Bus to Amritsar
Jan 15: Tour Amritsar, Golden Temple and Wagha border
Jan 16: Train back to Delhi
Jan 17: Class, tour Delhi
Jan 18: Bus to Agra, tour Agra and see Taj Mahal
Jan 19: Class, afternoon off
Jan 20: Class, tour Delhi
Jan 21: Last Class, afternoon off
Jan 22: Day off
Jan 23: Fly home to NYC or take bus to Pardada Pardadi Girls Vocational School
Jan 24: Pardada Pardadi
Jan 25: Pardada Pardadi
Jan 26: Pardada Pardadi, Republic Day! Public holiday that commemorates the founding of the Republic of India in 1950
Jan 27: Fly home to NYC

**For before AND after our trip to India…..**

Suggested Literature:

Atiga Aravind, *The White Tiger*
Vikram Chandra, *Sacred Games*
Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss*
Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*
Gregory David Roberts, *Shantaram*
Vikas Swarup, *Six Suspects*
William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, and *The Age of Kali*
Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

Suggested Films:

*Earth, Water, and Fire*, a trilogy directed by Deepa Mehta
*Slumdog Millionaire*, directed by Danny Boyle
*Monsoon Wedding* and *The Namesake*, directed by Mira Nair
*Lagaan*, written and directed by Ashutosh Gowariker
*Gandhi*, directed by Richard Attenborough
*The Darjeeling Unlimited*, directed by Wes Anderson
*Born into Brothels*, documentary by Ross Kaufman and Zana Briski

Suggested Websites:

[www.eventsinindia.com](http://www.eventsinindia.com)
[www.incredibleindia.org](http://www.incredibleindia.org)
[www.indiamike.com](http://www.indiamike.com)
[http://www.culturalindia.net/index.html](http://www.culturalindia.net/index.html)