

Cinema of South Asia

South Asia is home to Bollywood as well as many regional cinemas, commercial and arthouse. Take a deep dive into mainstream (Bollywood/Bombay/Hindi) and regional cinemas covering a wide range of genres: drama and narrative, musicals, romance/romcom, social, arthouse, and more — a rich and revelatory visual feast of South Asian cinema that will inspire an appreciation of South Asian cultures overall.

Note: Most Bollywood films are long (2.5 hours+). Many South Asian films come with autogenerated subtitles. Please make notes and ask any question about the filmmakers, producers, set, design, camerawork, genealogy of stars, actors, playback singers, and the industry as a whole.

I do not expect you to finish each film listed here. As long as you are enjoying the show, we should be able to generate discussions!

Schedule

6 June

Introducing Bollywood: Now and then

Films

Youtube links given below; some may be available on Amazon Prime.

Note: Among the following, the spaghetti western *Sholay*, postcolonial historical drama *Lagaan*, and romcom *Bunty aur Babli* will give you a good foundation for all the elements of Bollywood.

1. Ramesh Sippy, *Sholay* (Flames, 1975, Hindi). Spaghetti western, 3 hours 15 mins.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8WFC7cs5SU>
2. Shekhar Kapoor, *Mr. India* (1987, Hindi). Sci-fi comedy, 2 hours 15 mins)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uWsE0-WqzU>
3. Yash Chopra, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The One with Heart Will Take Away the Bride, 1995, Hindi). Romcom, 3 hours 9 mins)
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=dilwale+dulhania+le+jayenge
4. Aamir Khan, *Lagaan* (Tax, 2001, Hindi). Postcolonial history, 3 hours 3 mins)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbX-3eZRzsl>
5. *Bunty aur Babli* (Bunty and Babli, 2005, Hindi). Romcom, 2 hours and 50 mins). Amazon Prime
6. Anurag Kashyap, *Gangs of Wasseyapur* Part I (2012, Hindi.) Gangster, 2 hours 40 mins).
7. *Bombay Talkies*, 2013

13 June
Bombay cinema: origins

Films:

1. Dadasaheb Phalke, *Raja Harischandra* (King Harischandra), 1913
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwSGcgIsbcs>
2. Mehboob Khan, *Anmol Ghadi* (The Priceless Watch, or Priceless Hours), 1946
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJyKPP6AvGA>
(Mehboob Khan, *Mother India* 1957 is available on Lumiere)
3. Guru Dutt, *Pyasa* (Thirsty), 1957
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJK45r-j6TU>
4. Satyen Bose, *Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi* (What Runs is Called a Vehicle), 1958
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZL4-S6jta_k
5. K. Asif, *Mughal-e-Azam* (The Great Mughal), 1960
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0bgWdA4dk8>
6. Abrar Alvi (Produced by Guru Dutt), *Sahib Bibi aur Ghulam* (Master, Mistress, and Servant), 1962
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjJWkG8fYQA>
7. Bimal Roy, *Bandini* (The Imprisoned Woman), 1963
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCP-ZV4ZJqE>
8. Kamal Amrohi, *Pakeezah* (The Pure One), 1972
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSSkoXv239s>

Highlighted films recommended viewing

20 June
Parallel cinema: homage to art, literature, and the everyday

Films

1. Ritwik Ghatak, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (Cloud-Capped Star, 1960, Bangla)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9gOfGGmTHc>
2. M. S. Sathyu, *Garam Hawa* (Hot Winds, 1973, Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHfrHDBxCFU>
3. Shyam Benegal, *Manthan* (The Churning, 1976, Hindi)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUdoz_uXvRc
4. Satyajit Ray, *Shatranj ke Khiladi* (1977, Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3Fgm0yaWbA>
5. Govind Nihalani, *Party* (1984, Hindi; no subtitles) or *Ardh Satya* (Half Truth, 1986, Hindi; no subtitles)
6. Govind Nihalani, *Tamas* (Darkness, 1988, Hindi) or *Dev* (2004, Hindi)
7. Ketan Mehta, *Mirch Masala* (Hot Chilies, 1987, Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jauKFA8gwMs>

8. Sayeed Akhtar Mirza, *Salim Langde pe mat ro* (Don't Cry for Salim the Lame, 1989, Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksFwAYzUAcc>

27 June
Diversity of South Asian cinema

Bangladesh:

Tareque Masud, *Matir Moyna* (The Clay Bird, 2002, Bangla)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmFIMthx44o>

Nepal: TBA

Bhutan: *Lunana: Yak in the Classroom*

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/81587946?trackId=255824129&tctx=0%2C0%2Cf542f485-8349-4d53-b49d-66f46d7f6ff7-13861%2Cf542f485-8349-4d53-b49d-66f46d7f6ff7-13861%7C2%2Cunknown%2C%2C%2CtitlesResults%2C81587946%2CVideo%3A81587946%2CminiDpPlayButton>

Sri Lanka & Sri Lankan diaspora

Jacques Audiard, *Dheepan* (Dheepan, 2015, Tamil, French, English).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7VZoE4vB2s>

READINGS & RESOURCES

1. Meenakshi Shedde, "Bollywood cinema: making elephants fly," *Cinéaste*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Summer 2006), pp. 24-29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41690002>
2. Ritwik Ghatak, *Cinema and I* (pdf forthcoming)
3. From BFI: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/lists/10-great-indian-arthouse-films-1970s>
4. Resource for Indian cinema: <https://indiancine.ma/>
5. Martin Scorsese on Ritwik Ghatak's *A river called titash*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HH_CpNnxjLw

Faculty Bio

Abhijeet Paul is a Continuing Lecturer in South and Southeast Asian Studies at UC Berkeley. He also teaches Asian American Studies at Laney College. He holds a Ph.D. in South Asian Studies from UC Berkeley, is a filmmaker and a critical theorist of cinema of the global South.