

Beyond Bollywood: Film and Literature in South Asian Culture

01:090:295:05 Index# 18765

Meheli Sen, SAS-Afri, Mdle E&So Asn Lng&Lit

TTH 03:20-04:40P T 06:40-09:30P

Tillett Hall Room 252

Livingston Campus

Will Count Towards SAS-Afri, Mdle E&So Asn Lng&Lit Major

Will Count Towards SAS-Afri, Mdle E&So Asn Lng&Lit Minor

Shakespeare in Bollywood? The idea seems incongruous! And yet, Bombay filmmaker Vishal Bharadwaj has reinvented Macbeth, Othello, and Hamlet for audiences worldwide and to great acclaim. Indian Cinema has drawn on literary texts for its source material since its earliest days, when Dhundiraj Phalke made Raja Harishchandra in 1913. From epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata to the modern novel, many of the most celebrated films of South Asia are adaptations of literary works. In this seminar, we will engage with a wide range of South Asian films and the literary works they are based on or “inspired by”.

The relationship between the literatures and cinemas of South Asia is a complex one, because adaptation is more than a matter of simple fidelity to or deviation from the original source. Adaptation is fundamentally also a task of translation—of the correspondences and differences between the written word and film language. Adaptations are also significantly informed by their location in history and culture—for example, certain kinds adaptations become possible with the progress of digital technology, while others are demanded by the political climate of their times.

In this interdisciplinary seminar, we will interrogate especially the poetics and politics of this translation in South Asia from a variety of perspectives. We will explore an array of literary and filmic/televisual forms, from “high culture” films like Satyajit Ray’s *Pather Panchali* (1955) and *Charulata* (1960) to television adaptations of the great epics, to popular Bollywood adaptations of Jane Austen such as *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) and *Aisha* (2010), in order to understand the range and diversity of adaptation in South Asia.