

## **RST 2920-01** **India “An Introduction”**

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### **Course Description**

Peace and prosperity in today’s world depend increasingly on the ability of governments and people to manage their complex relationships in more cooperative ways. Understanding other cultures and societies and the ability to appreciate varieties of angles and interpretations are critical determinants of success in this endeavor. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to aspects of life and society in the world’s second most populous and largest democratic state: the Republic of India. RST 2920 is an introductory survey of India’s history, politics and contemporary society. Through the course readings, classroom discussion, videos and classroom activities, students will be able to gain a deeper appreciation of India’s past, present and future standing in the world. This course will also provide adequate preparation for students to pursue higher level courses on India and South Asia.

### **Learning Objectives**

As a core course in Wright State’s curriculum, RST 2920 will produce the following learning outcomes of Element 3:

1. The course will enable students to demonstrate global and multicultural competence (L. O. # 5); students will learn about India’s diverse religious and cultural traditions and practices;
2. The course will help students demonstrate understanding of contemporary social and ethical issues (L. O. # 6) as India deals with wide impact of its closer economic and political integration with the outside world and resulting vast transformation of its economic, social and political landscapes.
3. The course will also prepare students to be more informed and civically engaged citizens (L. O. # 7) by learning about various aspects of politics and international relations of India- the world’s largest democracy and one of the fastest growing economies.

### **Element 3 Learning Outcomes**

By taking this course students will develop a critical appreciation of political, Students will also learn about the evolution of India’s cultural and spiritual traditions by analyzing elements of continuity and transformation. The course will also highlight the role of modern technological innovations in transforming Indian economy and society (3.a)

RST 2920 will help students appreciate the nature and role of diversity of people, culture, religion, region on

India's journey as a nation, thus, making them more effective in participating in ever more diverse national and global environments (3.b)

India's role is becoming ever more critical to world's economy, politics and security. RST 2920 will provide students knowledge and background of India's political, social, economic, historical, cultural and spiritual aspects to enable them to better evaluate many contemporary issues (3. C)

### **Writing Learning Outcomes: Students will be expected to produce writing that**

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

This course will pursue these goals by widening critical understanding and awareness of Indian people, their history, culture, politics and India's role in the South Asian region and the wider world. India's growing role in the global economic and security arena and critical international engagement in the South Asian region (Afghanistan, Pakistan) underline the timeliness of this course

**Texts :** The course will use four books:

1. ***India*** (Third Edition) by Stanley Wolpert (Oxford University Press: 2005; Abbreviated in syllabus as "Wolpert")
2. ***Train to Pakistan, a novel*** by Kushwant Singh (Grove Press, 1981; abbreviated in syllabus as "Singh")
3. Sirin M. Rai. ***Gender Politics of Development, Essays in Hope and Despair*** (Zed Books: 2009; abbreviated "Rai")
4. Nandan Nilekani. ***Imagining India, the Idea of a Renewed Nation*** (Penguin , NY: 2009; abbreviated "Nilekani")
5. Students will also be responsible for additional readings posted on Wings by the instructor

### **Student Responsibilities and grade points distribution The course will have a total of 800 points distributed as follows:**

*Attendance and participation:* (100) Students in this course will be an active participant in their learning. Regular attendance and class participation will be a major component of their class grade. Students will be expected to share their knowledge and understanding of India related current events with other members of the class. **More than three unexcused absences will lower a student's letter grade in class.**

***Intensive Writing Requirements will be satisfied through short papers and exam.***

- The course will have three written exams consisting of Essays and short answer questions to assess students' ability to express their learning of the course content.
- Students will write three short papers including a book review and a documentary reviews. The papers will be returned with the instructor's comments for students to revise and resubmit before final grades are assigned to those papers. Written exams and writing assignments will consist of most of students' grade in the course.

### *Three Short Papers (3-4 typed double spaced pages)*

- The first short paper* will be on a selected topic or a review of a selected book that will expand students' understanding of India. Students could also select an Indian movie to review or prepare a report on their engagement with the Indian community on campus or in Miami valley to complete this assignment. This assignment will refine both their writing skills as well as understanding of the Indian context (50 points)
- Reflection Paper on Train to Pakistan*: Students will select one of the major characters from the text *Train to Pakistan* and write a reflective essay on how their selected character helped them understand some important dimensions of modern India (50 points)
- Current Affairs Paper*: Each student will write a quarterly report on a topic/theme based on their regular monitoring of one major Indian newspaper (online) during the quarter. During the last week of the quarter students will make a brief class presentation (5-7 minutes) on the current affairs of their choice (100 points)
- Film/Documentary Reviews: (100 points each; maximum four reviews)

**Exams:** (300): the course will have two exams. Exams will be combination of short answers and/or multiple choice questions. No make-up exams will be given unless justified by a legitimate situation. Students will provide acceptable documentation.

### **Pop quizzes (100 points): at least three pop quizzes will be given during the quarter**

**Note:** all assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.

Some of the Films to be viewed in class

*India: working to End Child Labor 2004*, a 26 minute video the video shows how an NGO mobilizes community resources against the exploitation of children by creating bridge schools that help children make a transition from slave like labor to education. The video also makes a strong case that child labor increases poverty levels.

<http://dmc.ohiolink.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?cc=dvc;view=entry;entryid=x-5929929>

*India, Faultlines: The Search for Political and Religious Links* this 37 minute video captures the increasingly

political nature of Hinduism and its volatile relationship with Islam -- India's leading minority religion.  
<http://dmc.ohiolink.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?cc=dvc;view=entry;entryid=x-5932455>  
Other links

**Indian Newspapers:** <http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~harit/papers.html>

**Directory of Government related Websites:** <http://goidirectory.gov.in/>

**BBC South Asia**  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

**India Club of Greater Dayton**  
<http://www.indiaclubdayton.org/>

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

*Weeks 1: India's history, an introduction*

Wolpert: 1-39;

*Week 2: India's history continued*

Wolpert: 40-70;

*Week 3: India's Religion and Philosophy*

Wolpert: 71-115;

### **The First Short Paper Due**

*Week 4: Indian Society*

Singh: 117-156;

### ***Exam 1***

*Week: Indian Arts and Science*

Wolpert: 157-197

*Week 6: India at partition*

Singh, 1-100

*Week 7: India at partition*

Singh: 101-181;

***Reflection Paper Due***

Week 8: Polity and Foreign Policy

Wolpert: 199-238;

A. Roy: Shall we leave it to the experts? On WINGS

**Exam II**

Week 9: Gender and Politics in Modern India

Wolpert: 239-252; Rai: 1-38

Week 10: Gender and politics and development

Rai: 40-90; Nilekani: 1-33

Week 11: Gender and Development Cont

Rai: 91-175; Nilekani: 48-119

Week 12: Imagining India (class presentations)

***First Draft of Current Affairs Paper due***

Nilekani: 120-218

***Exam III***

Week 13: 219-341(class presentations)

Week 14: Imagining India continued

Nilekani 345-404

***Current Affairs Paper Due***

Week 15 Exam and/or Presentations