Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program  
Math and Science Teaching and Student Achievement  
Pre-Departure Orientation  
June 30-July 3, 2008  

Reading List  

Articles  

Abstract: How is Islam taught in American Schools? Teaching Islam to young Americans is a relatively recent phenomenon. The Israeli-Arab conflict shaped the contours of the study of Islam with images and stereotypes inherited from the Crusades and Colonialism. Islam has been taught not as an essential ingredient of the World History but through the political conflicts of Israelis and Arabs as well as the American global agenda within which Qaddafi, Hafez al-Asad, and Ayatullah Khomeini emerged as the representatives of Islam. The Muslim population in America grew dramatically in the twentieth century, and curriculum was devised to include Islam without disturbing the unitary narrative of the Western Civilization: The textbooks disconnect Islam from the Judeo-Christian tradition even as they emphasize how Islam borrowed from Jewish and Christian scriptures. Textbook writers portrayed Islam in the light of Arab nomadic society and the life of the Prophet of Islam while deliberately downplaying the Abrahamic legacy in Islam.  


Abstract: Banu Subramaniam takes a fresh approach to grappling with the subjects of science and religion. She argues that, “debates within the social, feminist, and postcolonial studies of science have largely been constructed within Western conceptions of secularism as a separation of church and state.” Instead of viewing science and religion in this light as antagonists to one another, she challenges us to “engage with religion, a powerful cultural force in the world.” Instead of asking whether or not science and religion are related, she asks, how. “How do they interact? How do they depend on each other?” Subramaniam situates these issues from her viewpoint growing up in a “secular India.”  


Abstract: This is the text of the Kingsley Martin Memorial Lecture given in Cambridge on 1 June 1988. Thapar challenges what she describes as the “constituents of Hindu communal ideology which claim legitimacy from the past, namely, that there has always been a well-defined and historically evolved religion which we now call Hinduism and an equally clearly
defined Hindu community.” She argues that such constituents are “part of a modern search for an imagined Hindu identity from the past.”

Books


Abstract: The role of the visual image is essential to Hindu tradition and culture, but many attempts to understand India’s divine images have been laden with misperceptions. *Darsan*, a Sanskrit word that means “seeing,” is an aid to our vision, a book of ideas to help us read, think, and look at Hindu images with appreciation and imagination.


Abstract: As the world’s largest democracy and a rising international economic power, India has long been heralded for its great strides in technology and trade. Yet, it is also plagued by poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and a vast array of other social and economic issues.

Here, noted journalist and former *Financial Times* South Asia bureau chief Edward Luc travels throughout India’s many regions, cultures, and religious circles, investigating its fragile balance between tradition and modernity. From meetings with key political figures to fascinating encounters with religious pundits, economic gurus, and village laborers, In Spite of the Gods is a fascinating blend of analysis and reportage that comprehensively depicts the nuances of India’s complex situation and its place in the world.


Abstract: This lively anthology of ethnographic writing on South Asia explores the ways ordinary people live and make their worlds in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Organized around key areas of daily life, these essays provide an engaging introduction to the questions involved in understanding the family and the life course, gender, caste, and class, religion, nationalism, violence, globalization, diaspora, and other important issues. The men and women whose perspectives and experiences are presented here include peasant girls in rural Rajasthan and advertising executives in Mumbai; “untouchable” sharecroppers and high-caste landlords; intimate, multi-generational households and street youth involved in “modern” gangs; South Asian-American children of high-powered professionals and refugees displaced by national conflict, among many others. Scholars and students alike will welcome this vivid compelling text.

Abstract: Kamala Viswewaran and Mani Shekhar Singh have put together an art catalogue featuring the work of Mithila artist, Santosh Kumar Das, along with articles about his series of Mathil paintings. The artist produced the paintings to confront an episode of violence between that occurred in Gujarat, India in 2002.