

HISTORY 174F
Gandhi and the Making of Modern India
UCLA, Spring 2016: Tue & Thurs, 11-12:15, Dodd 161

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Instructor's Web Site [MANAS]: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia>

Instructor's Personal Academic Site: <http://www.vinaylal.com>

Instructor's Blog: <https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/>

This course will examine the life and ideas of Mohandas Karamchand ('Mahatma') Gandhi (1869-1948), most renowned as the 'prophet of nonviolence' and the architect of the Indian independence movement, though in the concluding portion of the course we will also consider some of the various ways in which his presence is experienced in India today and the controversies surrounding his achievements and 'legacy'. Gandhi was a great deal more than a nonviolent activist and political leader: he was a spiritual thinker, social reformer, critic of modernity and industrial civilization, interpreter of Indian civilization, a staunch supporter of Indian syncretism, a major figure in Indian journalism, and a forerunner, not only in India, of the many of the great social and ecological movements of our times. After the first three weeks, we will only partly follow the chronological framework within which the biographies of Gandhi have been constructed, and around which a great deal of the scholarship still revolves, and more so when we need to understand how Gandhi's thoughts on a particular subject evolved over time. Gandhi's place within the nationalist movement will be assessed: consequently, we shall look at how Gandhi became the 'Mahatma', his political style and rhetoric, his reception by the peasantry and the working classes, his interaction with leaders and followers, and — needless to say — his encounter with, and resistance to, British colonial rule.

Gandhi coined the word 'satyagraha' to designate his mode—style, movement, idea, philosophy—of (mass) nonviolent resistance to colonial and indigenous forms of injustice. We will look at a couple of his *satyagraha* campaigns in some detail. However, it is also very likely that, in the years ahead, Gandhi will be remembered above all as the preeminent critic of modernity, modern knowledge systems, and industrial civilization, and accordingly we will take a close look at Gandhi's views on these subjects, as well as his outlook on 'development', Western civilization, and modern greed. Moreover, our constant endeavor will also be to subject the hagiographic view of Gandhi, which belongs to the 'Great Man Theory of History', to a critical and searching examination, and in so doing, we shall be looking at Gandhi from the perspectives associated with feminism, 'Subaltern Studies', the traditional left, Dalits, and so on. Questions of race, class, and gender are indeed of considerable importance in understanding both Gandhi's theory & practice of nonviolence and his relations with a wide range of social groups. Despite's Gandhi's enormous appeal to vast segments of the Indian population (and increasingly overseas), he always had a large number of detractors and 'enemies', and in the last few years he has been the subject of relentless critiques which cast him as an upper-caste Hindu elite who did little for Dalits,

working class people, the peasantry, or even women. We shall also try to look at Gandhi through their eyes. An attempt will be made to understand the radical contours of his life and thought, by considering his views on dissent, the environment, the relations between men and women, sexuality, and other matters.

A minimal familiarity with the outlines of Gandhi's life would be desirable. A recent and somewhat controversial biography by Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), has been ordered for your use. Some of the biographies that I recommend are the following: Robert Payne, *The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi* (Dutton, 1969; reprint ed. also available); B. R. Nanda (1st ed., 1958; reprint & rev. ed. from Oxford UP), *Mahatma Gandhi*; David Arnold, *Gandhi* ([Profiles in Power], London: Longman/Pearson Education, 2001); Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi* (New York, 1969); and Dhananjay Keer, *Mahatma Gandhi: Political Saint and Unarmed Prophet* (Bombay, 1973). You may, however, pick up some other biography of your choice. For a more comprehensive account, see the 8-volume biography by D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (New Delhi, 1951), which has the advantage of reproducing many of Gandhi's speeches and writings, often in their entirety, and the some 10 volumes of Pyarelal's biography, published over a period of 30 years under different titles; see, in particular, *The Early Phase* and *The Last Phase* (Ahmedabad, various years). A recent work in 4 volumes is Narayan Desai, *My Life is My Message*, trans. Tridip Suhrud (Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009). Among very short biographies, I would recommend those by Catherine Clement, George Woodcock, and Bhikhu Parekh.

Please see the note below on *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [CWMG], 100 volumes (Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publications Division, 1951-1995; this includes the supplementary volumes). A more manageable print collection is the three-volume anthology edited by Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York and Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989); the selections are nothing short of brilliant. A one-volume edition of this work is also available as *The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Oxford UP). There is a new and highly praised anthology, *The Oxford India Gandhi: Essential Writings*, ed. Gopalkrishna Gandhi (Delhi: Oxford UP, 2007), which is also recommended. *However, please note all these works have been mentioned here only for your reference; the only readings you need to do are those mentioned in the weekly schedule of readings, below.*

Requirements: The weekly reading for this course amounts to about 150-175 pages on average but is generally quite easy. There are three formal requirements for this course, as follows:

- a. A short paper assignment of 1-2 pages which will not be graded but must done to pass the class, due on the Tuesday of Week 4. This assignment will be explained in class.
- b. An in-class mid-term exam, which will consist of some identification questions and three essay questions, of which you will answer two; and
- c. A take-home final exam which will be comprised solely of essay questions. You will be given six questions, divided in three groups of two questions each. From Group I, you will answer both questions; from Groups II and III, you will answer one question each. In short, you will write four essays. The final exam will be given to

you at the end of the last class, Thursday, June 2, and will be due on Tuesday, June 7, by 2 PM. **I shall not be able to grant extensions on the final exam.**

The grade will be determined on the following basis: mid-term exam, 35%; final exam, 55%; class attendance and participation, 10%. Attendance is not taken, but you are strongly urged to attend all classes and unexplained class absences that come to my attention will lead to a deduction in your grade.

Course materials: Five books have been ordered for your use at Ackerman Bookstore for your ease; readings which are not to be found in these books will be available online. These are the books which you shall need for the course:

Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (Knopf, 2011);

M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography* (Dover ed.);

M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan);

M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (Satyagraha) (Dover ed.);

Vinay Lal, *Of Cricket, Guinness and Gandhi: Essays on Indian History & Culture* (Seagull).

You are, of course, not obligated to buy the books from Ackerman, and may purchase them from other vendors (betterworldbooks.com; alibris.com; Powells.com; etc).

A Note on *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG): This is a set of 100 volumes; Vols. 99 and 100 offer an index to the entire set, though each volume has its own index also. And the entire set is online, at <http://www.gandhiserve.org/e/cwmg/cwmg.htm>. The Autobiography of Gandhi, for example, is available in Vol. 44; *Satyagraha in South Africa* is contained in Vol. 34. You can search the entire set online. For readings assigned from the *Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG), please go to the online edition; you may read the text online, download a document as a PDF, or print it out.

Recommended/Background Readings are NOT REQUIRED and are mentioned for your reference; there is no expectation on my part that you will look at these readings. However, those of you interested in pursuing certain topics at your leisure may find the readings of interest.

You may also find useful my web site, particularly the various web pages on Gandhi; go to: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/Gandhi/gandhi.html>

Schedule of Weekly Readings and Topics:

Week 1 (March 29, 31): Introducing Gandhi and a Biographical Sketch

Gandhi, *Autobiography*, Parts I and II (until p. 161 in the Dover ed.)

Vinay Lal, "Gandhi's West, the West's Gandhi", *New Literary History* 40 (Spring 2009), pp. 281-313

Optional Reading: Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India*, or any other biography in its place.

Weeks 2-3 (April 5, 7, 12, 14): Gandhi's Theory & Practice of Nonviolence

M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, complete; you may omit pp. 212-47. [Cf. relevant chapters of Gandhi's autobiography].

T. K. Mahadevan, "An Approach to the Study of Gandhi", in *Gandhi: Theory and Practice*, ed. S. C. Biswas (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969), pp.45-61.

M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, pp. 3-36.

Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (rev. ed., Berkeley, 1971), ch. 3, read portions on "The Essentials of Satyagraha", the Ahmedabad Labor Satyagraha, and the Salt Satyagraha.

Optional/Background Reading: The literature on Gandhi's theory of nonviolence is enormous. The best single-volume work is still Raghavan Iyer's *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973). For the 'grammar' of satyagraha, see Gopinath Dhavan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Bombay, 1946; reprint, Delhi, 1990); for an imaginative (and 'homely') exploration of satyagraha, and how to resolve conflicts between spouses, lovers, and labor and management, see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Fighting with Gandhi* (New York, 1984; reissued with new material as *Gandhi's Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, University of California Press, 2005). Similarly entitled, but more anecdotal, is a 'study' by Jehangir P. Patel and Marjorie Sykes, *Gandhi: The Gift of the Fight* (Rasulia, Madhya Pradesh: Friends Rural Centre, 1987). The literature on Gandhi's years in South Africa is also very large. The most critical of these works is Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1965) and, more recently, Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *The South African Gandhi: Stretcher-Bearer of Empire* (Stanford University Press, 2015).

Week 4 (April 19, 21): Gandhi's Critique of Modernity

Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (1909), complete. [This is a short work, so don't be alarmed.] This can be accessed here: <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL010.PDF> [go to p. 245] [You can also download it here: http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/hind_swaraj.pdf]

"The 1910 Banning of Hind Swaraj", *Gandhi Marg* 15, 2 (July-Sept. 1993):240-254. (Much of this is a summary of the book and you can skim through it quite quickly.)

Ashis Nandy, "Gandhi's Cultural Critique of the West", in his *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*. (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).

Vinay Lal, "Gandhi and the Ecological Vision of Life", in *Of Cricket, Guinness, and Gandhi*, pp. 148-77.

Background/Optional Reading: Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, 1990). You may also want to look at some post-modern critiques of modernity and compare those with Gandhi's critique of modernity. There are some interesting essays in *Hind Swaraj: A Fresh Look*, ed. Nageshwar Prasad (Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1985).

Week 5 (April 26, 28): Gandhi's Critique of Colonialism:

M. K. Gandhi, *Colonialism and the Call to Freedom*, ed. with an introduction by Vinay Lal (Penang, Malaysia: Citizens International, 2010), comprised of the three following pieces: Benares Hindu Univ. speech, 4 Feb. 1916, **CWMG** 15:148-55 [also Tendulkar I:179-85]; "Speech at 'The Great Trial', 1922, **CWMG** 26:351-2, 377-86 [Tendulkar II:95-102]; and Letter to Lord Irwin, 2 March 1930, **CWMG** 48:362-67 [also Tendulkar III:14-20].

M. K. Gandhi, 'Do or Die' speech, 9 August 1942, **CWMG** 83:189-200 [also Tendulkar VI:154-68]

M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, 270-287;
Raghavan Iyer, *Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 350-58; and
Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: OUP, 1984), pp. 1-63.

Weeks 6 (May 3, May 5): Gandhi's 'Femininity', His Relations to Women, & Feminist Perspectives

Tuesday, May 3: In-class mid-term examination

Selections from *Gandhi on Women: Collection of Mahatma Gandhi's Writings and Speeches on Women*, compiled by Pushpa Joshi (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House; Delhi: People's Pub. House, 1988), pp. 70-80, 84-91, 143-46, 168-69, 210-15, 236-37, 241-42, 269-70, 277-79, 288-89, 296-98, 305-16.

Madhu Kishwar, *Gandhi and Women* (Delhi: Manushi Publications, 1987).

Vinay Lal, "Nakedness, Nonviolence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi's Experiments in Celibate Sexuality", in *Of Cricket, Guinness and Gandhi*, pp. 110-37.

Optional Reading: Vinay Lal, "Gandhi's Last Fast", *Gandhi Marg* 11, 2 (July-Sept. 1989):171-191.

Recommended/Background Reading: Manubehn Gandhi, *Gandhi -- My Mother* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1949), provides an extraordinary and touching portrait of Gandhi's life. A very valuable work is the autobiography of Mirabehn [Madelaine Slade], entitled *The Spirit's Pilgrimage* (1960, reprint, 1984). Interesting remarks will also be found in Margaret Sanger's autobiography and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay's memoirs, *Inner Recesses, Outer Spaces* (New Delhi: Navrang, 1986). Another anthology that can be consulted is *Gandhi to the Women*, ed. Anand Hingorani (Delhi, 1941). For a radical feminist critique, see the relevant pages in Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston, 1978; London, 1979).

Weeks 7 and 8 (May 10, 12, 17, 19): Friends and Followers, Adversaries and Critics

Please note that on Thurs, May 19, I will be giving an illustrated lecture on "Gandhi and the Politics of the Image", a study of visual representations of Gandhi (cartoons, paintings, murals, prints, artwork, advertisements) from the 1920s to the present, drawn from my own digital collection of over 6,000 distinct images.

B. R. Ambedkar, "Gandhism" and "Reply to the Mahatma", both in *The Essential Writings of B. R. Ambedkar*, ed. Valerian Rodrigues (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2002), pp. 149-72, 306-19.

M. N. Roy, *Selected Writings* (Delhi: Oxford, 1989), Volume II, pp. 152-57, 180-84, 311-315; Vol. III, pp. 457-58, 505-8, 566-71.

Vinay Lal, "The Gandhi Everyone Loves to Hate", *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 40 (4 October 2008), pp. 55-64.

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, compiler and ed., *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates Between Gandhi and Tagore 1915-1941* (Delhi: National Book Trust, 1997), pp. 1-37, 54-92, 99-128, 153-161. [ISBN: 81-237-2202-8]

Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom* (1941; reprint ed., Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 47-53, 65-85, 309-326.

B. R. Nanda, "The Master and the Disciples", *Gandhi Marg* 15, 2 (July-Sept. 1993):154-173.

Shahid Amin, "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921-2", in *Subaltern Studies III*, edited by Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 1-61.

Recommended/Background Reading: One of Gandhi's most vociferous critics was B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Dalits (earlier referred to as 'Untouchables'). His critique is most forcibly expressed in *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* (1945, reprint, Lahore, 1977). For a contemporary reply to Ambedkar, see K. Santhanam's *Ambedkar's Attack* (New Delhi: Hindustan Times, 1946). For other works by Ambedkar on Gandhi, see his *Ranade, Gandhi, and Jinnah* (Bombay, 1943) and *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writings and Speeches*, 20 vols. to date (Bombay, 1979-). Of some value is Hirendra Nath Mukherjee, *Gandhi, Ambedkar, and the Extirpation of Untouchability* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1982). See also ch. 7 of Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse* (New Delhi: Sage, 1989).

Week 9 (May 24, 26): The Assassination of Gandhi: Another Look at Modernity, the Nation-State, and the 'World System'

Nathuram Godse, *May It Please Your Honor* (Delhi: Surya-Prakashan, 1989), pages as assigned.

Ashis Nandy, "The Final Encounter: On the Politics of the Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi", in his *At the Edge of Psychology* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980).

Claude Alvares, "Gandhi's Second Assassination", *Indian Express* (Sunday Magazine), 29 January 1984, pp. 1 ff.

George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi", in *The Orwell Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), also found in most collections of Orwell's essays.

Week 10 (May 31, June 2): India as a Nation-State, India as a Civilization: A Gandhian Perspective on the Nation

Raghavan Iyer, *Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 375-418.

Vinay Lal, *Of Cricket, Guinness and Gandhi: Essays on Indian History & Culture*, pp. 1-22, 54-109, 178-214.

A short selection of 5-7 newspaper articles or op-ed pieces on Gandhi written in the last couple of years put together as a PDF or Word document of about 15-20 pages.

A short reading (TBA) on Badshah Khan, aka Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and 'The Frontier Gandhi', a magnificent Pathan leader who was a close follower of Gandhi.

I: Glossary of Indian Words:

ahimsa -- nonviolence (himsa=violence)

apigraha – non-possession

atman -- soul

bapu/bapuji -- mode of addressing Gandhi; bapu=father; ji=suffix indicating respect

Bhagavad Gita -- literally, the 'Song of God'; an Indian scripture; also called the *Gita*.

brahmacharya -- celibacy (literally, devotion to God)

dharma -- law, morality, code of conduct and behavior

dharna -- word used for hunger-striking; literally, 'obstacle'

duragraha -- opposite of satyagraha; literally, 'force of falsehood'

hartal -- boycott, strike; closure of shops; non-cooperation

Hindustan -- another name for India

karma -- destiny; law of reincarnation

mahatma -- 'great soul' (maha=great; atma=soul)

Mahomedans – another name for Muslims

Mahabharata -- Indian epic in which the Pandavas and Kauravas are pitted against each other

moksha -- liberation, spiritual freedom, emancipation from worldly life

Mussulman – the colloquial expression for a Muslim, especially in north India

Rama Rajya -- the rule of Rama, i.e., the rule of truth, virtue, and justice in this world

Ramayana -- Indian epic of which the hero is Rama

sadhana – self-realization; discipline

sanatan dharma -- the true (i.e., orthodox) Hindu faith

sarvodaya -- welfare of all

satya -- truth, from sat=truth

satyagraha -- the force of truth; the grasping of truth

Sita -- heroine of the *Ramayana*; consort of Rama; ideal Hindu wife

swaraj -- freedom, independence

swadeshi -- self-reliance; literally, one's own country

tapas, tapasya -- sacrifice; self-suffering

varna – caste (more precisely, the rendering of caste as found in the classical texts)

II: Sample essay questions that will help you to prepare for the mid-term and the final exam:

1. What is Gandhi's notion of satyagraha? What does it mean to confront an opponent with satyagraha?
2. What is the relation of satya to ahimsa? Which, if any, takes precedence? Why?
3. In what respects would you say that Gandhi was ecologically minded? What is the relation of his advocacy of an ecological view to his conception of limits?
4. Take a Gandhian satyagraha campaign and analyze it; you may wish to break it down into its components. At what step(s) along the way might Gandhi have been exercising coercion?
5. Is satyagraha compatible with coercion? If not, why not? If so, to what degree?
6. What did Gandhi mean by ahimsa? Does ahimsa or nonviolence preclude the use of violence?
7. What is Gandhi's attitude toward British rule and toward Britishers? How does Gandhi draw a distinction between the two? Is the distinction wholly tenable?
8. Why is chivalry important for an understanding of satyagraha? Give illustrations.
9. How did Gandhi's experiences in South Africa help shape his views about satyagraha? In what respect did satyagraha in South Africa have to be different from satyagraha in India?

10. How would you characterize Gandhi's notions of sexuality? his relation to women? his understanding of femininity and masculinity?
11. What was the nature of Gandhi's critique of colonialism?
12. What is Gandhi's conception of law? Can law take the place of moral conviction in changing society? What is the relationship of law to morality according to Gandhi?