

Rini Bhattacharya Mehta

Assistant Professor

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Program in Comparative and World Literature

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Research Interests

Nationalism and Religion, British Colonization of India, Colonial Modernities, Postcolonial and Post-global India, Indian Cinema and Media, Postcolonial and Postglobal Modernities

Education

Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005

M.A. in Comparative Literature, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1996

B.A. and M.A. in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, India, 1992

Dissertation

Prisoners of History: Bengali Cultural Nationalists and the Hindu Past, written under the supervision of Michael Palencia-Roth. Committee members: Rajeshwari Pandharipande, Zohreh Sullivan, David Prochaska and Keya Ganguly.

Professional Experience

Assistant Professor, Comparative and World Literature, University of Illinois, current

Visiting Assistant Professor, Comparative and World Literature, University of Illinois, 2008-2012

Undergraduate Advisor, Comparative and World Literature, University of Illinois, 2008-current

Postdoctoral Research Associate, Comparative and World Literature, University of Illinois, 2006-2008

Adjunct Faculty, Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Connecticut, 2004-2005

Current Projects

Monograph: Indian Cinema in Context (under contract for Anthem Press, UK).

Co-Edited volume: Indian Partition in Literature and Films: History, Politics, Aesthetics, (under review by Routledge).

Publications

1. Edited Book: Bollywood and Globalization: Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora (UK: Anthem, 2010), Reprint in Paperback June 2011
2. Media: Post498A: Shades of Domestic Violence. Documentary film on domestic violence in the era of globalization, 52 minutes, in Bengali and English with English Subtitles. January 2011. Screened at (a) South Asian Feminist Conference, Indiana University at Bloomington, March 2011; (b) Global Media Studies Conference, University of Illinois, March 2011; (c) International Week at Illinois, Urbana, April 2011.

Publications: Peer-reviewed Articles

1. "Screening/Meaning: Hollywood's Long Career in India," Anthology on 'The Presence of America in India,' University of Illinois Press, forthcoming.
2. "In the Shadow of the Nations: Dissent as Discourse in Rabindranath Tagore's Political Writings, 1914-41," South Asia, Routledge UK, March 2012.
3. "Ur-nationalist and Secular Mythologies: Popular Culture, Nationalist Historiography, and the Indian Past," South Asian History and Culture, Routledge UK, Vol. 2 Number 4, October 2011, 572-588. Reprinted in Babli Sinha (ed.) South Asian Transnationalisms: Cultural Exchange in the Twentieth Century (Routledge, 2012)
4. "The Missionary Sannyasin and the Burden of the Colonized: the Reluctant Alliance between Religion and Nation in the Writings of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)" in Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (CSSAAME), Duke University Press, Volume 28 Number 2, 10-25
5. "The Pistol, Bhagavadgita, and the Lone *Bhadralok*: Individual Spirituality, Masculinity, and Politics in the Nationalist Writings of Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), Journal of Men, Masculinities, and Spirituality, Vol. 1, Issue 1, January 2007, 77-98
6. "A Song, a New Translation, and Nationalisms Old and New: the Literary Context of 'Mother India,'" ICFAI Journal of History & Culture (IJHC), Hyderabad, India, April 2007

Publications: Miscellaneous

1. "Buddhadeva Bose," Companion to 20th Century World Poetry. Ed. Victoria Arana. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2007 [Encyclopedia entry]
2. "Africa, Effect of Revolutionary Thought on," in Age of Political Revolutions and New Ideologies: 1760-1815, Ed. Gregory Fremont-Barnes, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group [Encyclopedia entry]
3. "Hare Krishnas," in Encyclopedia of American Counterculture, Ed. Gina Misiroglu et al., M. E. Sharpe [Encyclopedia entry]
4. "National Mythology" (Review of *Myths and Nationhood*. Edited by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin.). Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies, Vol. 6, Issue 3
<http://152.1.96.5/jouvert/v613/hoskin.htm>
5. "Poetry and Being," and "The Testimonial," trans. of Sukanto Bhattacharya's poems, Ghadar, Voume 5, Number 2, July 2002. <http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v5n2/sukantob.html>

Selected Conference Papers

1. "Teaching Bollywood, Translating Culture: Lessons from a Mid-Western Classroom," Shifting Paradigms: How Translation Transforms the Humanities, Urbana-Champaign, October 2010
2. "Fury and Its Sounds: Media Representations of Recent Insurgencies in India," Global Studies Association Annual Conference, Urbana-Champaign, May 2010
3. "The Great Mughal: Akbar as the Ur-Nationalist?" 124th MLA Annual Convention, San Francisco, December 2008
4. "Macaulay's Minutemen and the Mutiny: Traces of 1857 in Select Bengali Texts" 123rd MLA Annual Convention, Chicago, December 2007
5. "Of Holy Cows and Martyrs: History, Hindutva, and Militancy in Post-Global Bollywood," Global Studies Association Annual Conference (Special Topic: The Contested Terrains of Globalizations), University of California at Irvine, May 2007

6. *"Bride and Immigration: the Problem of the Idealized Indian Expatriate"* Alternative Globalizations Conference, Depaul University, May 2006
7. *"Relocating the Family in the Diaspora: The Politics of Social Hierarchies in Post-Globalization Bollywood"* 20th Annual South Asia Conference, University of California, Berkeley, February 2005
8. *"I Love my India: The Non-Resident Nationalist Rhetoric in Post-Globalization Bollywood,"* Voices From a Globalized South: Social Justice and Cultural Hybridity; US Launch of The Journal of South Asian Popular Culture, Fairfield University, Fairfield CT, August 2003
9. *"Hinduism, Tradition and Modernity in two essays by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya and Rabindranath Tagore,"* 118th MLA Annual Convention, New York, 2002
10. *"Mother India, Her sons, and the Holy Struggle,"* 116th MLA Annual Convention, Washington, D.C, 2000
11. *"Real Bodies, Imagined Homelands: An Examination of the 'Body's' Resistance to the Nation in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh and Arundhati Roy,"* 115th MLA Annual Convention, Chicago, 1999
12. *"Audio-Visual Erotopia: An Examination of the Representation of Sexuality in Indian Popular Cinema,"* South Asia Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Spring 1999. (Invited Talk)
13. *"Cosmopolitans with Indian Hearts: A Reading of the Politics of Identity in Mira Nair's Mississippi Masala,"* Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities, Co-sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, November 1998
14. *"English, Saab: A Study of Upamanyu Chatterjee's English, August,"* 26th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1997
15. *"The Subversion of Politics in Indian Popular Cinema,"* 25th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1996
16. *"War and Roses: Nation, Woman, and the Bourgeois Gentleman: A Political Story,"* 24th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1995
17. *"Real and Imagined Homelands: Nation and the Cosmopolis,"* 23rd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994

Teaching: Current and Recent Courses

1. Empires of the Novel, Spring 2014, University of Illinois
2. Deceit, Desire, and the Novel, Fall 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, University of Illinois
3. Introduction to the Literatures and Cultures of South Asia, Spring 2010, 2011, 2012, University of Illinois
4. Indian Cinema in Context, Fall 2011, 2012, University of Illinois
5. Love and Death in Indian Cinema, Spring 2009, 2010, 2011, University of Illinois
6. Introduction to the Literatures of Asia and Africa Part I, Fall 2008, 2010, University of Illinois
7. Colonialism, Nationalism, Imperialism, Spring 2007, 2008, 2009, University of Illinois

Teaching: Past Courses

1. Asian Mythology, Fall 2006 and 2009, University of Illinois
2. Introduction to Hinduism, Spring 2007 and 2009, University of Illinois
3. Classics of World Literature: Part I, Fall 2004, University of Connecticut
4. Classics of World Literature: Part II, Spring 2005, University of Connecticut
5. International Short Story, Summer 1995, University of Massachusetts

6. Brave New Worlds, Winter 1995, University of Massachusetts
7. Spiritual Autobiography, Fall 1995, University of Massachusetts
8. Myth, Folklore, and Children's Literature, Spring 1995, University of Massachusetts
9. Cinema and Psyche, Spring 1994, University of Massachusetts
10. Contemplative Literature, Fall 1993, University of Massachusetts

Awards and Grants

1. Curricular Development Grant for Global Cinema, School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics, UIUC, Summer 2013
2. Public Engagement Grant for Indian Cinema Centenary Event, UIUC, 2013
3. Curricular Development Grant for "Introduction to the Literatures and Cultures of South Asia," awarded by the School for Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics, UIUC, Summer 2009
4. Tikku Memorial Prize in Comparative Literature, University of Illinois, 2000
5. University Fellowship awarded by the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (Fall 1996, Fall 1997)
6. National Scholarship Awarded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (1989-1990)
7. First Class Honors, B.A and M.A final examinations, Jadavpur University Calcutta, 1989 and 1991

Service

1. Advisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Program in Comparative and World Literature, 2008-current
2. Reviewer, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council, 2013
3. Member, Executive Committee for Tagore Sesquicentennial Celebrations, University of Illinois, 2011
4. Campus Fulbright Interview Committee, 2007, 2009, 2013
5. Committee for the Tikku Memorial Prize, 2007, 2010
6. Reviewer for UIUC Research Board Proposal, 2007

Conference Panels Organized

1. Symposium on the Life and Legacy of Rabindranath Tagore, University of Illinois, April 2011
2. "Everyone's Burden? British and Indian Writings on the 1857 Mutiny" 123rd MLA Annual Convention, Chicago, 2007
3. "Discourses, Disciplines, and Dissemination: Globalized India's Reflection(s) in the Cracked Mirror," 36th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2007
4. "History, Writing, Spectacle and India Incorporated: Images and Narratives of Globalized India," Global Studies Association Annual Conference, Irvine, 2007
5. "Tradition, Migrations and Globalization: Real/Screen Faces/Voices of India," Alternative Globalization Conference, Chicago, 2006
6. "Invention of Religious Traditions: A New Hinduism and Nineteenth-Century Indian Nationalism," 118th MLA Annual Convention, New York, 2002
7. "Empire, Nation, and the Colonial Indian Novel," 116th MLA Annual Convention, Washington D.C, 2000

8. “ Narrating the Postcolonial Nation: From Rushdie to Roy,” 115th MLA Annual Convention, Chicago, 1999
9. 26th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1997

Languages

Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, French

References (in alphabetical order)

1. Antoinette Burton, aburton@illinois.edu
Professor of History, and Catherine C. and Bruce A. Bastian Professor of Global and Transnational Studies
2. Jean Philippe Mathy, jmathy@illinois.edu
Professor and Director, Comparative and World Literature
3. Michael Palencia-Roth, palencia@illinois.edu
Trowbridge Scholar in Literary Studies, and Professor (Emeritus) of Comparative and World Literature
4. Rajeshwari Pandharipande, raj-pan@illinois.edu
Professor of Linguistics, Religion, Sanskrit, and Comparative Literature, University Distinguished Teacher/Scholar
5. Zohreh Sullivan, zsulliva@illinois.edu
Professor (Emeritus) of English