## HIST 452D - History and Film: Asia/Pacific (E)

## Bollywood and Indian Popular Cinema, from Independence to the New Millennium

Professor Ned Bertz Fall 2018
Film screenings (open to the public): Mondays 2.30-5pm, MSB 100
Class lectures & discussions: Wednesdays 2.30-3.45pm, KUY 210



Every year the wildly popular **dream factory of Bombay's Hindi cinema industry** entertains hundreds of millions of people in the Indian subcontinent and beyond its borders. Since its inception, Indian popular cinema – of which the largest regional industry is affectionately and controversially known as **Bollywood** – has woven magical tapestries full of riveting stories, colorfully animating (often through iconic song & dance numbers) Indian culture and society while illustrating the present and the past.

This course revolves around a central idea: what can the historian make of Bollywood? For example, how can we study the history of India through the economics of film production, distribution, and consumption? How do historical films create or complicate the construction of Indian national memory?

This class will be taught with a **Contemporary Ethical Issues focus**, involving, for example, the analysis of ethical dilemmas faced by Indians and Indian cinema in negotiating cultural encounters with globalization, and the ethical responsibilities of filmmakers in presenting sensitive historical issues—not to mention the ever present threads of morality stitched into each narrative of larger-than-life villains, loyal-to-the-death friends and family, pure and sacrificial mothers, and righteously vengeful (not to mention dashing) heroes.

We will watch a film together every Monday in our theater-style room (hooting and hollering encouraged), and on Wednesdays hold class discussions and lectures (hooting and hollering discouraged, unless deserved) to situate and analyze the films and readings. The course also qualifies as an elective for the International Cultural Studies Certificate Program.