

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Course Report

Rapporteur – Sheona Everett (Student Mentor)

A Collaborative Online International Learning Course (COIL) was conducted between Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Gandhinagar, and Sacred Heart University, Connecticut, from September to December. The course was about exploring gender and the Representation of *Women in Cinema* in the US and India and Documentary making. It was lead by Dr. Neeta Khurana and Dr. Sandesh Mahajan from Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University and Dr. Sara Ross from Sacred Heart University.

This course was conducted to introduce and encourage the relationship between films and their social, political, and cultural context, thus exposing students to various cultures.

COIL began with the students sending introductory videos of themselves to get to know each other and learn about the students studying in the other university. This activity also gave them the practice of learning to film themselves.

They were followed by discussions on different movies every week. These discussions took place via online platform zoom. It would begin with a primary group consisting of the Professors and all the students, and then the students would break off into smaller groups for a detailed discussion. Each of these groups had a mentor to guide them. The majority of the movies discussed were not the conventional ones, but the kind people had not seen before. Many were in different languages exposing the students to an entirely different culture and film genre.

This discussion consisted of topics like dowry, rape, women leaders, female infanticide, objectification of women, women seen as baby producing machines, women vs. women, the patriarchal society, role of women, Feminism, Equality, Women shown as sex symbols, strong female leads and many more.

The students were also taught to observe the lyrics of songs used in the films, the color scheme, costumes, etc., all of which play an equally important role in making a film.

The students also had to make documentaries as part of their projects. They worked in teams of 4-5 with students from both Universities. The documentaries they had to make were about the Role of Women during a festival, which portrayed their culture and The problems women faced in society.

When the students were asked to share their experience,

Christina Chalis from Sacred Heart University said, "My experience in the COIL class was interesting. I had no idea that this class would have been with students from across the globe when I first signed up. The smaller group discussions were the highlights of this class. Talking about movies together with people who had insightful interpretations was nice to listen to and interact with! The projects we had to do (the documentaries) were incredibly stressful but, all in all, a fun experience because I learned a lot about the Indian culture from my group mates, and

we continually worked together to get it done. Before this class, I thought this project would be near impossible with partners abroad and differing time zones. However, this class showed that with enough consideration for what you have available, anything is possible."

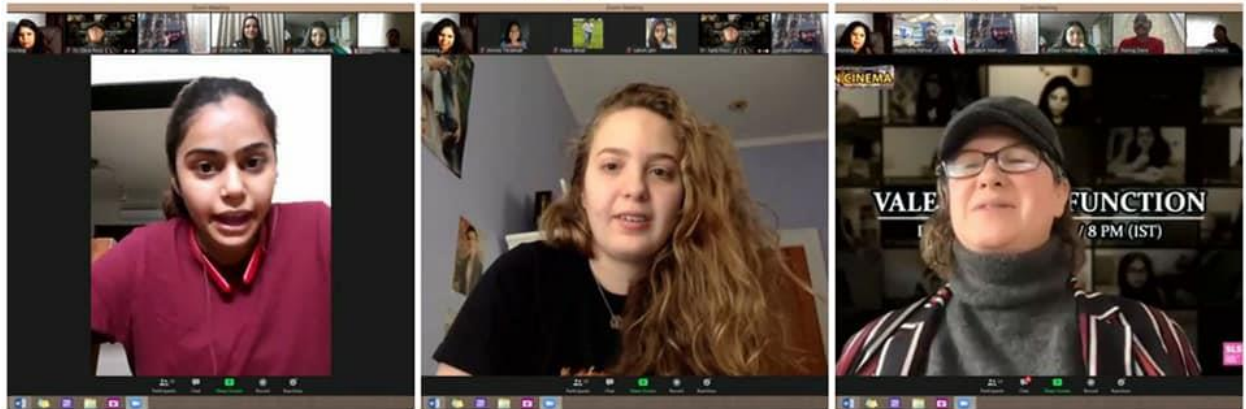
Through COIL, the students learned to work together in groups and create something meaningful despite the geographical distance and different time zones. They learned to cooperate and divide work in a way that everyone could contribute. They also learned about each other's cultures through these discussions and documentaries. These documentaries also brought them closer to their families and discover stories which they were unaware of earlier.

Sparsh Agrawal, a student at Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, said, "Women are an integral part of films and our lives; they have created art in such a way that it changed perspectives and broke social constructs. Learning about women's role in Cinema was a great experience I got through COIL. It was eye-opening and taught us to look at films in a different way. The projects practically supported us as we learned to make documentaries through teamwork and innovative ideas. Even in these difficult times, COIL helped us learn and create."

These few months of regular meetings and discussions helped form bonds of friendship that go beyond this course. It helped the students be more mindful of situations and realized the differences and similarities between their cultures. This course was an enlightening experience for everyone. It taught the students not just how Women are portrayed in Cinema but also how others view one's culture. It helped destroy the various myths and stereotypical ideologies that people had regarding other cultures.

Despite various challenges that the students faced by having to stay up late or with internet connection issues, everyone's cooperation and help managed to fulfill its goal and was a success.



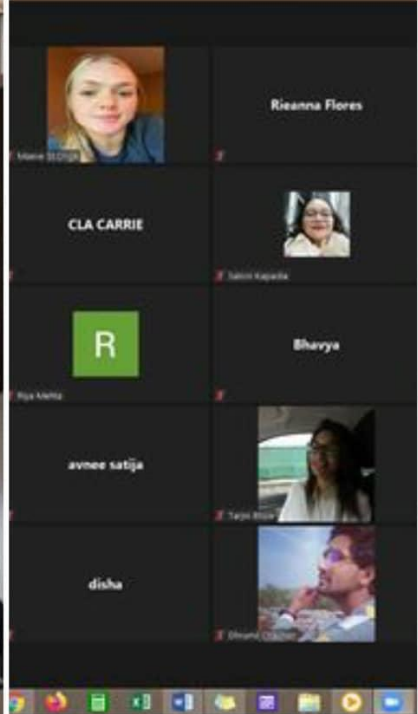
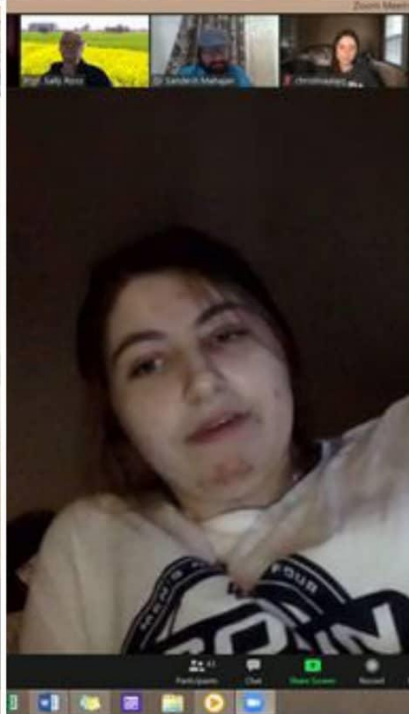
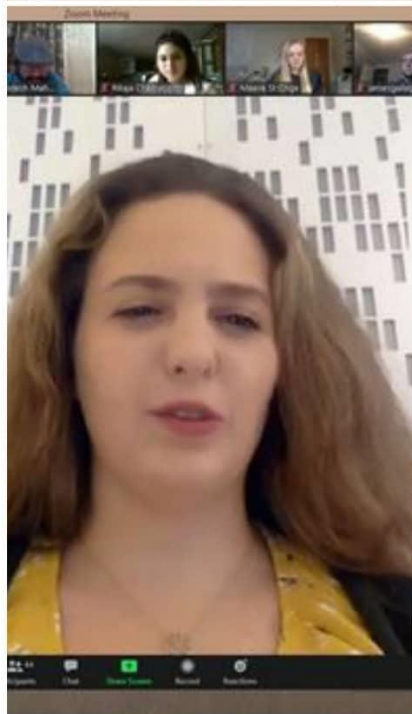
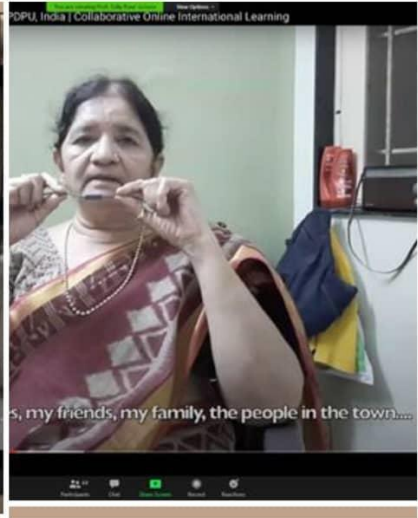
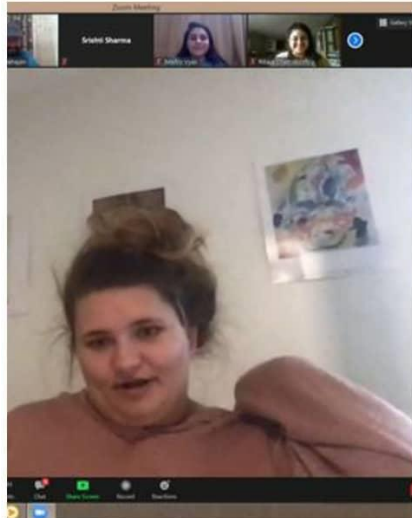


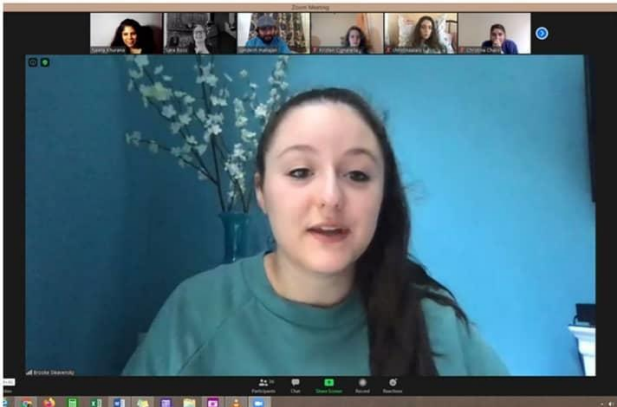
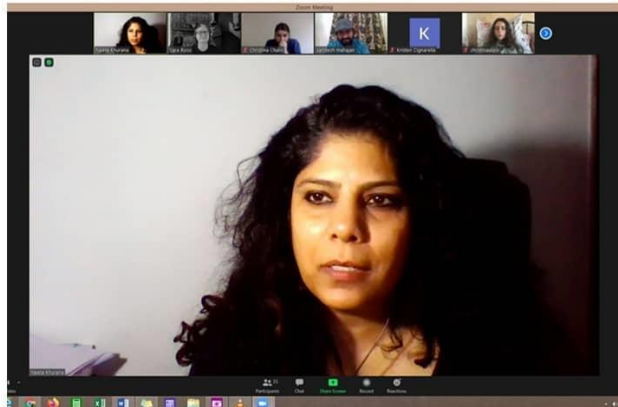
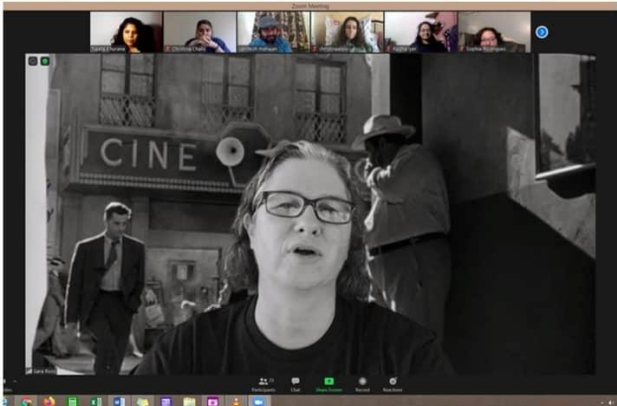
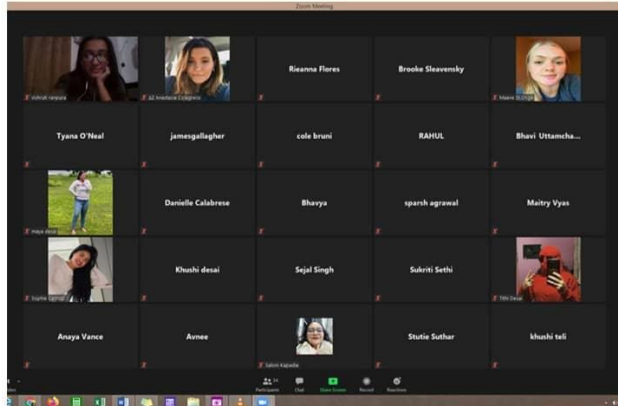


A screenshot of a Zoom meeting interface. On the left is a grid of 10 participants. In the center, a document is shared with the following text:
CM 311 - Women in Film and Television
Professors Khanna, Rao and Mahajan
Film Review
Write a review of one of the films that we viewed this semester that was not made in your country. Imagine that your reader is not as familiar as you are with the subject matter of this film. Using the insights that you gained from this class, how would you introduce this film to your audience?
Additional Requirements
Make use of and cite what you learned in at least one course lecture in your review.
Film Options for PDFU students:
13*
Grey Gardens
Bicycle Thieves
Goodman: Prof. Blomster
Film Options for SHU students:
Gandhi: Gang
Fire
Mother India
Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge
Length: 750-1000 words
Due: Nov 8
Please submit this assignment in the course google drive and via the assignment window on Blackboard.
Tips for writing a good film review
It's very difficult to write well about a film after only one viewing. Be prepared to re-watch your chosen film closely, multiple times.

On the right, a large video feed shows a man with a beard and glasses wearing a blue hoodie and a grey cap. The Zoom interface at the bottom shows various controls like mute, video, and chat.







SYLLABUS

CM 351, Women in Film

Dr. Neeta Khurana, PDPU and Prof. Sally Ross, SHU

Dr. Sandesh Mahajan

Prof. Ross – Contact Information

Email: rosss2@sacredheart.edu

Office: Martire W214

Zoom Office Hours: Monday, 11am-1pm/13:00 Eastern Standard Time (UTC -4)

Please join me here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87165876829>

Office Phone: 203 371 7862 Department Phone: 203 371 7755

Course Description

In this collaborative online international learning class, we will explore gender and the representation of women in cinema of the U.S. and India. Students from Sacred Heart University and Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University will work together in both discussions and in production projects.

Course objectives:

1. To understand the basic genres and techniques of documentary film production
2. To encourage critical reflection on the relationship between film and its political, social and cultural contexts
3. To create an interface among students of different cultures to exchange ideas
4. To introduce students to various perspectives and realities of the other culture, thereby breaking stereotypes.
5. To offer students a platform to virtually experience the other culture by way of joint projects and documentaries.
6. To understand Gender and representation of women in cinema

Students in this class will work on the following learning outcomes:

- Develop intercultural competency to interact effectively with peers from another culture
- Develop and apply the skills to be active, critical consumers of mass media texts through a variety of analytical methods
- Analyze ethical issues relevant to the production and distribution of mass media texts.

- Develop the skills to communicate and integrate ideas in oral, written, and audiovisual form.
- Explore the representation of women and gender norms in mainstream films over the years

Required Texts

Any readings will be available free of charge online. We will be watching films each week, and in some cases you may need to pay a streaming fee to watch a film.

Schedule: The following schedule may be adjusted to meet the week-to-week needs of the class.

Items noted in orange are synchronous during our regular class time for U.S. students.

Items noted in orange are synchronous during our mutually decided time for PDPU COIL students.

Items noted in green are short asynchronous lectures. You can locate and view them each week on our site.

Items noted in blue are synchronous for both SHU and PDPU students. You will be coordinating with your discussion facilitator to meet with students from our partner university.

[Synchronous means' online discussions/meetings]

[Asynchronous means recorded videos]

Week 1: September 3

Topic: Introduction – Course Logistics

Screening: Selection of Early Films from the U.S. and India

Assignment: Getting to know your partners.

Sept 3 - SHU students - meet with Professor Ross for a course introduction.

Sept 3 -PDPU students - meet with Dr. Neeta Khurana and Dr. Sandesh and other discussion leaders for a course introduction.

Prof. Ross – Ways to Approach Women in Film

Ice breaker meeting with students from our partner university.

Week 2 : September 10

Topic: Documentary – Traditional Documentary Form

Screening: *Ladies First* (2017, Uraaz Bahi), 39 min., *13th* (2016, Ava DuVernay), 100 min.

Assignment: Introductory Videos

Prof. Ross – Traditional Documentary Form

Prof. Khurana – What is Gender? How is identity constructed, represented and interpreted in films?

Sept 10 – SHU students – discuss week 2 films

Sept 10 – PDPU students – discuss week 2 films

Week 3 – Sept 14-18:

Topic: Documentary – Observational and Participatory Documentary

Screening: *Happy Mother's Day* (1973, Joyce Chopra, Richard Leacock), 26 min., *Gulaab Gang* (2014) Soumik Sen, 2 hr 19 min. *Hellaro*(2019) Abhishek Shah, 2 hr 1 min

Prof. Ross – Observational and Participatory Documentary

Prof. Khurana/ Guest Speaker - What is Indian Culture?

Sept 17 – SHU students – discuss week 3 films

Sept 17 – PDPU students – discuss week 3 films

Week 4, Sept 21-25

Topic: Documentary Production

Screening: *Joyce at 34*, (1972, Joyce Chopra, Claudia Weill) (or another from “Tell Me: Women Filmmakers, Women’s Stories,” programmed by Nellie Killian) 28min.

Prof. Ross – Basic Documentary Production Techniques

Oct. 1 – SHU students – discuss documentary production

Oct. 1 – PDPU students – discuss documentary production

Meeting with students from our partner university to discuss films so far.

Week 5, Sept 28-Oct. 2

Topic: A Brief History of Indian Cinema

Screening: *Fire, Earth, and Water* (1996) Trilogy films by Deepa Mehta

Dr. Sandesh – A Brief History of Indian Cinema

Week 6, Oct. 5-9

Topic: Melodrama

Screening: *Mother India* (1957, Mehboob Khan), 172 min.

Prof. Khurana – Semiotics and films

Oct. 8 – SHU students – discuss week 6 films

Oct. 8 – PDU students – discuss week 6 films

Week 7 – Oct. 12-16

Topic: Melodrama, , cont.

Screening: *Blonde Venus*, (1932, Josef von Sternberg), 93 min.

Prof. Ross – Melodrama

Oct. 15 – SHU students – discuss week 7 films

Oct. 15 – PDU students – discuss week 7 films

Week 8 Oct. 19 -23

Topic: Romantic Comedy/The Musical

Screening: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953, Howard Hawks) 91 min.

Prof. Ross – Women in Romantic Comedy

Assignment Due: Production Project #1

Oct. 22 – SHU students – discuss week 8 film/s

Oct. 22 – PDPU students – discuss week 8 film/s

Week 9, Oct. 26-30

Topic: Romantic Comedy/The Musical/Screen and Discuss Student Films

Screening: *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995, Aditya Chopra), 181 min.

Dr. Sandesh – Production Process

Meet with Discussion Groups to discuss student films

Oct. 29 – SHU students – discuss week 9 film/s

Oct. 29 – PDPU students – discuss week 9 film/s

Week 10, Nov. 2-6

Topic: Drama/Film Noir

Screening: *Out of the Past*, 1947, 97 min.

Prof. Ross – The Femme Fatale

Assignment Due: Film Review

Nov. 5 – SHU students – discuss week 10 film/s

Nov. 5 – PDPU students – discuss week 10 film/s

Week 11, Nov. 9-13

Topic: Drama

Screening: *Dangal*, (2016, Nitesh Tiwari)

Dr. Sandesh Mahajan: Women in Indian cinema: In front of the lens and behind – a recap

Nov. 12 – SHU students – discuss week 11 film/s

Nov. 12 – PDPU students – discuss week 11 film/s

Nov. 14 – Happy Diwali!

Week 12, Nov. 16-20

Work on Production Project with your group.

Assignment Due: Production Project #2

Week 13, Nov. 23-25

Topic: Screen and Discuss Student Films

[Meet with discussion groups to discuss films.](#)

Assignment Due: Written Reflection

Nov. 26 – Happy Thanksgiving !

Week 14, Nov. 30-Dec. 4

[Whole class meeting to discuss written reflections.](#)

Assignments:

Production Projects

Production Project #1 - मेरा हिंदुस्तान (mera hindustan)/My United States

Individual Project

Create a short video documenting women's participation in a holiday, ritual or important family occasion that is specific to your culture. You can use traditional, observational or participatory documentary form. The event could be religious or secular. Focus on documenting elements that are important to this event, such as typical activities, clothing, decorations and/or food. You might also consider how this event is occurring differently this year. Try to capture the mood as well as the sensory experiences of this event (images, smells, flavors!) Your target audience for the video should be someone who is unfamiliar with this event. 2-3 mins.

Note: As part of this project, you will load selected raw footage into a shared folder for

use in project #2.

Production Project #2

Group Project

Collaborate in your discussion group to use the shared footage from Production Project #1 to create a new project that explores the events from both cultures that the students have documented. We will discuss the logistics of this project further in class.

Discussions

Film Discussions

Weekly discussions of the previous week's films. (Synchronous with Prof. Ross, Dr. Khurana and Dr. Sandesh)

Discussions Groups

Discussions of issues raised by the course with students at our partner university. (Synchronous with students at partner university and discussion facilitator.)

Written Assignments

Film Review

Write a review of one of the films that we viewed this semester that was not made in your country. Imagine that your reader is not as familiar as you now are with the subject matter of this film. Using the insights that you gained from this class, how would you introduce this film to your audience?

Written Reflection

Write a reflection that explores what you learned in this course. What surprised you, if anything, and what have you learned?

Note: These reflections will be discussed in your discussion groups.

Theory points that can be added if you think appropriate:

List of films:

1. *Mother India* (1957, Mehboob Khan), 172 min.
2. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995, Aditya Chopra), 181 min.
3. *Dangal*, (2016), Nitesh Tiwari) 2 hr, 49 min
4. *Gulaab Gang* (2014) Soumik Sen, 2 hr 19 min
5. *Hellaro*(2019) Abhishek Shah,2 hr 1 min
6. *Guide* (1965) Vijay Anand, Tad Danielewski, 3 hr 3 min
7. *Umrao Jaan* (1981), Muzaffar Ali, 2 hr 25 min
8. *Chandni Bar*,(2001), Madhur Bhandarkar, 150 min
9. *Fire, Earth, and Water* (1996) Trilogy films by Deepa Mehta
10. *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015) by Zoya Akhtar, 2 hr 15 min
11. *English Vinglish* (2012) Gauri Shinde, 2 hr 14 min
12. *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2016) Alankrita Shrivastava, 2 hr 12 min
13. *Fashion* (2008) Madhur Bhandarkar, 2 hr 47 min
14. *Ishquiya* (2010), Abhishek Chaubey, 115 min
15. *Tumhari Sulu* (2017), Suresh Triveni, 2 hr 30 min

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

has successfully completed the Collaborative Online International Learning Course:
Women in Film on December 7, 2020



Dr. Neeta Khurana PDPU



Dr. Sandesh Mahajan PDPU



Dr. Sara Ross SHU

