

HIS6934 Colloquium: Religion and Politics in South Asia (India and Pakistan)
R 9 am-12 noon
Dr Claudia Liebeskind

Course Description

Religion has played, and plays, an important part in India and Pakistan. In this course, we will look at the changing relation of religion and politics in South Asia during the colonial and postcolonial periods. We will explore why people organized on religious lines and how and why religious communities came into conflict with each other. We will analyse the development of religious nationalism that led to the eventual creation of Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan inherited the British legacy of laws and regulations, institutions, concepts, and practices. Both have over time seen their 'South Asianization' (Indianization and Pakistanization) as well as the rise of religious extremism and ethnic nationalism. We will look at the continued role that religion has played in public life, politics, and culture.

I will want you to leave this class with a firm grasp of the events in India and Pakistan over the last 150 years. You will understand how Hindus and Muslims responded to the developments during that period - British colonialism, independence & the creation of nation states, and globalization. You will have a nuanced understanding of the make-up of South Asian society and the interplay of religion and politics - at the local and national levels, during and after the colonial period. You will realize that neither the creation of Pakistan, nor its breakup, were pre-ordained, nor that politics in India was ever religion-free.

This class should prepare you to teach a course on South Asian history at the undergrad level.

The course can count for one of the following fields: Religion, Asia, South Asia, and Middle East