

Fall 2015

**HIST 585-003: Special Topics in History:**

(cross-listed with ANT 585-001/ILA 790-000/WGS 585-000)

Topic: Subaltern Studies (OPUS title)

Subaltern Studies: Past, Present and Future (complete course title)

Instructor	Day(s)	Time(s)	Maximum Enrollment
Pandey	TH	1:00 – 4:00 pm	12

**Semester Description:**

What is Subaltern Studies? A history of the poor and the marginalized in the colonized world? A supplement to standard histories of state and society? A new archive for people without history, and without written records of their own? Or a challenge to the disciplines of anthropology, history, sociology, religious studies, etc, as we know them?

The first volumes of the Indian *Subaltern Studies* initiative, launched by a group of graduate students and teachers in the early 1980s, were regarded as another instance of ‘history from below’, with the difference that the method was now being applied to a ‘Third World’ country by its own scholars. Later *Subaltern Studies* have been seen as a prominent example of postcolonial writing, and accused of having succumbed to Western theory in a way that reduces the original concern with the ‘subaltern’.

What were the political and historiographical debates out of which these writings emerged, and what are the debates they have in turn generated? What accounts for the alleged move from a critique of nationalism and the state, to a critique of history? How have scholars of South and North America, Africa and other parts of the world responded to the idea of ‘Subaltern Studies’, and to questions regarding the portability of theory – or its applicability across cultures and continents?

The purpose of this course is to think through some of these questions in the light of our different disciplines and individual research agendas.

**Required Textbooks, Articles, and Resources:**

TBA.