MASCU LINITY IN INDIA: Ethnography and Films by Dr. Harjant Gill (Towson University)

Tuesday, March 22, 2016
New Psychology Building 220
Screening and Q&A: 6 – 7:30 p.m
Seminar Discussion: 7:45 – 9 p.m.

ROOTS OF LOVE
In English & Punjabi (W/English Subtitles) - 26 Min, 2011
Told through the stories of six different men ranging in age from fourteen to eighty-six, Roots of Love documents the changing significance of hair and the turban among Sikhs in India. We see younger Sikh men abandoning their hair and turban to follow the current fashion trends, while the older generation struggles to retain the visible symbols of their religious identity. The film is a timely and relevant exploration of the inherent conflict between tradition and modernity, between pragmatism and faith. The choice of cutting one’s hair is one that not only concerns the individual and his family, but an entire community.

MARDISTAN (MACHOLAND)
Produced by PSBT (Public Service Broadcasting Trust, India)
28 min, 2014 - Hindi & Punjabi (W/ English Subtitles)
Mardistan (Macholand) is an exploration of Indian manhood articulated through the voices of four men from different generations and backgrounds. A middle-aged writer trying to make sense of the physical and sexual abuse he witnessed studying in an elite military academy, a Sikh father of twin daughters resisting the pressure to produce a son, a young 20-year-old college student looking for a girlfriend with whom he can lose his virginity, and a working-class gay activist coming out to his wife after twenty years of marriage. Together, their stories make up different dimensions of what it means to be a man in India today. Mardistan (Macholand) starts a conversation on critical issues including patriarchy, son preference, sexual violence and homophobia in a nation increasingly defined by social inequalities.

Dr. Harjant Gill is an assistant professor of anthropology at Towson University, Maryland. His research examines the intersections of masculinity, modernity, transnational migration and popular culture in India. Dr. Gill is an award-winning filmmaker, and his films have screened at festivals, conferences and on television networks worldwide including BBC, Doordarshan (Indian National TV) and PBS. In addition to Roots of Love and Mardistan, Gill is currently completing Sent Away Boys, about how provincial communities are transformed by the exodus of young men who give up farming to seek a better future abroad. Dr. Gill served on the board of the Society for Visual Anthropology (SVA) and co-directed the SVA Film & Media Festival (2012-14). www.TilotamaProductions.com

Dr. Gill’s visit is co-sponsored by Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, the South Asian Studies Seminar, and Film & Media Studies. This event is part of the Spring 2016 Anthropology/History/Art History graduate seminar Heritage and Power. If you would like to join the seminar discussion immediately following the films and q&a, PDF copies of readings are available by email from Dr. Jenny Chio (jenny.chio@emory.edu).