COURSE OUTLINE: Tagore and Gandhi – The Great Debate
Professor Clare Fischer  Fromm Institute  Spring 2019
Tuesdays  1-2:40 pm

Recommended Reading: M. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj and Other Writings
R. Tagore, Nationalism

“Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity.”
Rabindranath Tagore (1908)
“Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. It is enough that I should be
my own follower.” M.K.Gandhi (1937)

4/9: Introduction: Significance of “the argumentative Indian.” Focus on
debate between India’s iconic freedom movers. Note Amartya Sen’s
The Argumentative Indian (2005) and S. Bhattacharaya, Talking Back(2011)
Some contextual words about India and “nationalism” and nation building.

4/16: Rabindranath Tagore: the poet’s commitment to freedom.
Gittanjali, the Nobel Prize 1913; travel and “cosmopolitanism.”

4/23: Mahatma Gandhi: a sketch of his life and the background of “the debate.”
“Satyagraha” and Hind Swaraj; National Congress.

4/30: Friendship, Shared Vision and Differences. Elements of the initial debate.
Bhattacharya, The Mahatma and the Poet, Letters and Debates.

5/7: Tagore and Gandhi on independence, strategies and symbols.
Note: Tagore, Home and the World; Gandhi: spinning and khadi

5/14: Tagore and Gandhi: modernity, science, technology; village and nation.
Tagore’s view re: nationalism. (Note text: Nationalism)-

5/21: Religion and social structure: Tagore and Gandhi: Hindu – Muslim relations;
 caste and “harijans.”


❖ Note. During the Spring term, elections will be taking place in India.
❖ May 8th: Tagore’s birthdate.