

**BROWN UNIVERSITY  
FALL 2010  
GRADUATE SEMINAR**

**POLS 2330  
Politics in India**

Tuesday 130-350 pm  
Prospect House Seminar Room

Professor Ashutosh Varshney  
ashutosh\_varshney@brown.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 2-4 pm  
(Prospect House 112, or Watson Institute 228. Unless I announce by email otherwise,  
the office hours will be in Prospect 112. )

This seminar will present Indian politics in a comparative and theoretical framework. It will focus on four themes: British India and Indian Nationalism; India's democratic experience: politics of ethnic and religious diversity; and political economy. The rationale for these four themes is as follows. First, British rule in India (1757-1947) is a natural beginning, if one wishes to understand modern India. A great deal of what happened in post-1947 India was linked to, if not caused by, developments in the British period. Second, India's democracy, lasting since 1947 (with the exception of 18 months), has posed new puzzles for democratic theory. According to theory, India, a poor and primarily agricultural land, should not have been democratic for so long. Third, remarkable cultural, ethnic and religious diversity exists in the country. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism are the five major religions. More than fifteen languages are spoken in the country. In addition, Hindu society has major caste cleavages. Democratic politics has wrestled with such diversities in a way that has historically attracted a lot of attention and enriched theories of modernity, ethnic conflict and social justice. Fourth, Indian economy has begun to boom, and growth rates have been second only to China's. The idea of China and India as economic powers of the coming decades is now commonly proposed in corporate, government and journalistic circles. The politics of the ongoing economic transformation needs to be understood to assess future trajectories

Readings include the classics of the subfield of Indian politics and political economy, but also quite a lot of recent scholarship.

**Requirements:** Students will write about 25-30 pages in all. This can be done in two ways:

(a) Two papers of 12-15 page each. This option is recommended to those who are in their first or second year, or are taking this seminar to familiarize themselves with the literature in the subfield. The topic of the first paper will be announced in the fifth week. The paper will be due in the seventh week in class. . Students will pick the topic of the second paper on their own. A 2-page proposal describing the topic and the materials already examined will be due in class in the 11th week. It will be returned to students with the instructor's comments in the 12<sup>th</sup> week.. The deadline for the paper is December 15.

(b) One longer paper of 25 pages, based at least in part on original textual materials, or available datasets. This option is recommended to those who wish to specialize in this subfield, are planning to write a thesis or dissertation on India, have prior experience of working with professors on research projects, or are already engaged in a project of their own. A 3-page paper proposal will be due in class in the tenth week. and will be returned with the instructor's comments a week later. The paper will be due on December 15.

Since this is a graduate seminar, student participation is a requirement. Each student will make one or two presentations (depending on the size of the class) of 15-20 minutes each. The text and materials for the presentation should be with all seminar participants and the instructor 24 hours ahead of the class. In addition, participation in weekly discussion is expected. Participation will count for 20 per cent of the grade, and papers 80 per cent.

Between JSTOR and the library, the texts assigned below are easily available. Articles and some (not all) book chapters should also be available on electronic reserves. To access electronic reserves through OCRA, you may have to use the course pass word (POLS2330).

Please note that the instructor also organizes a Joint Brown-Harvard-MIT South Asian Politics Seminar, which meets at least once a month in one of the three institutions, normally on Fridays, 2-4 pm. It is not for credit, but a good deal of cutting-edge research is presented there by junior and senior scholars, and a vigorous discussion takes place. It is a resource you may wish to use for enhancing your understanding of Indian/South Asian politics. The seminar schedule will soon be available on <http://southasianpolitics.net/>.

### **Books**

The following books have been ordered for purchase. *Those who wish to work further on India and/or wish to build a collection may also want to buy the recommended books, which are good background readings.* If you don't buy the recommended books, you can, of course, access them in the library.

#### **Required**

Kohli, Atul, ed, *The Success of India's Democracy*, (Cambridge, 2001), ISBN#0521805309

Mehta, Uday Singh, *Liberalism and Empire: India in British Liberal Thought*, (Chicago, 1999), ISBN: 0226518825

Dirks, Nicholas, *Castes of Mind*, (Princeton, 2001), ISBN: 0-691-08895-0

Varshney, Ashutosh, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, (Yale, 2003), ISBN: 0300100132

Rudolph, Lloyd, and Susanne Rudolph, *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays* (Chicago, 2006), ISBN: 0226731243

Rudolph, Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, (Chicago, 1967), ISBN: 0-226-73137-5

Varshney, Ashutosh, *Democracy, Development and the Countryside* (Cambridge, 1998), ISBN# 0521646251

Panagariya, Arvind, *India: The Emerging Giant* (Oxford, 2008), ISBN# 978-0-19-531503-5

#### **Recommended**

Guha, Ramchandra, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Harper 2008), ISBN# 978-0-06-095858-9

Stein, Burton, *A History of India* (Blackwell, 1998), ISBN: 0631205462

Sen, Amartya, *The Argumentative Indian* (Picador 2005), ISBN# 978-0-312-42602-6-

**Week 1. 9/7. An Overview**

**Week 2. 9/14. The Discursive/Ideational Structure of British Rule**

**Week 3. 9/21. Colonial Psychology and Gandhi's Challenge**

**Week 4. 9/28. Muslim Separatism/Nationalism**

**Week 5. 10/5. The Caste System (First paper topic announced)**

**Week 6. 10/12. Caste and Modern Politics**

**Week 7. 10/19. Secularism and Hindu Nationalism (First paper due in class)**

**Week 8. 10/26. Communal Violence**

**Week 9. 11/2. Kashmir**

**Week 10. 11/9. Democratic Theory and India (Long paper proposal due)**

**Week 11. 11/16. The Green Revolution and its Current State (Second short paper proposal due)**

**Week 12. 11/23. Economic Reforms and India's Economic Future**

**Week 13. 11/30. . Human Development: Health, Education and Gender**

**Final Papers Due on December 15.**

**Week 1. Sept. 7. Overview**

Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, "Prologue: Unnatural Nation" (1-15), "Epilogue: Why India Survives" (733-759). This is for a quick narrative introduction.

## **THE BRITISH PERIOD (SOME KEY ISSUES)**

We will not examine the British Raj chronologically. Rather, we will concentrate on some key analytical themes. This graduate seminar assumes that you have chronological knowledge of the British period (1757-1947). *Those who are not exposed to that history are expected to read Burton Stein, A History of India (Blackwell, 1998), pp. 201-366. Read it over the first week of the class. Second week onwards we will focus on some*

**Week 2. Sept. 14. The Discursive/Ideational Structure of British Rule**

1. Amartya Sen, "Indian Traditions and the Western Imagination", in *The Argumentative Indian*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2005), 139-160.
2. Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), Chs. 1-3, and 5, pp. 1-114, 153-189.
3. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Oxford U Press, 1990), Ch. 2, "The Colonial Construction of India's Past", pp. 23-65

**Week 3. Sept. 21. Colonial Psychology and Gandhi's Challenge**

1. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford U Press, 1983), 1-63.
2. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays* (U of Chicago Press, 2006), Chs. 5, 6 and 8, 177-206, 230-252.
3. Denis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Non-Violent Power in Action* (Columbia U Press, 1993), Introduction, Chs. 1, 2, 4 and 5, 1-62, 91-167.

Recommended: Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform*, Sage 1999 (revised edition), Ch. 2 on "Hindu Responses to British Rule", pp. 40-80; Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (U of Minnesota Press, 1993), Chapters on Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru, pp. 54-166.; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* (Princeton U Press, 1993), 1-75.

#### **Week 4. Sept. 28. Muslim Separatism/Nationalism**

1. Paul Brass, "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity Among the Muslims of South Asia", and Francis Robinson, "Islam and Muslim Separatism" in Malcolm Yapp and David Taylor, eds, *Political Identity in South Asia*, London: Curzon Press, 1979, pp. 35-111. This is a famous, instrumentalist/essentialist, debate on the sources of Muslim separatism/nationalism in British India.
2. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, Cambridge 1985, introduction and conclusion.
3. Lloyd Rudolph, "The Road Not Taken: The Modernist Roots of Partition", in Rudolph and Rudolph, *Postmodern Gandhi*, 60-91.

Recommended: Rajmohan Gandhi, *Understanding the Muslim Mind*, Penguin, 1990, Introduction ("Hindus and Muslims) plus Chapters on Jinnah and Azad, pp. 1-18, 123-188, 219-254. An easy read, this is a biographical account of the major Muslim figures of British India.

## **CASTE AND POLITICS**

#### **Week 5. Oct. 5. What is Caste? How Flexible is the Caste system? What did the British Have to do with it?**

##### **First paper topic announced**

1. M.N. Srinivas, "The Social System of a Mysore Village", in McKim Marriott, ed, *Village India*, Chicago, 1955, pp. 1-35. A classic ethnographic account of the caste system.
2. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* U of California Press, 1966, and Orient Longman, Delhi, 1989. pp. 1-10 from "Sanskritization", and pp. 46-63 from "Westernization".
1. Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, Chs. 1-4, 8, 10 and 12, pp. 3-60, 63-80, 149-172, 198-227, 255-274.

Recommended: Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge U Press, 1999), introduction and conclusion.

#### **Week 6. Oct. 12. Caste and Modern Politics**

1. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, Part One, pp. 17-102.

2. Myron Weiner, "The Struggle for Equality: Caste in Indian Politics", in Atul Kohli, ed, *The Success of India's Democracy*, pp. 193-225.
3. Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution* (Columbia U press, 2003), pp. 1-10, , 453-491.
4. Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), Chs. 7-9

Recommended: Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*, 144-184; Marc Galanter, "The Long Half Life of Reservations", in Zoya Hasan, E. Sridharan and R. Sudarshan, eds, *India's Living Constitution* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), 306-318.

## RELIGION, POLITICS AND VIOLENCE IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

### Week 7. Oct. 19. Secularism and Hindu Nationalism

#### First paper due in class

1. Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, "Minding the Minorities", 365-388. A quick narrative.
2. T.N. Madan, "Secularism in Its Place", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1987, pp. 747-760.
3. Ashis Nandy, "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tradition", *Alternatives*, Vol. 13, 1988, pp. 177-194.
4. Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, Ch. 3, 55-86.
5. Amartya Sen, "Secularism and its Discontents", in *The Argumentative Indian*, pp. 273-293.
6. Christophe Jaffrelot, ed, *The Sangh Parivar: A Reader* (Oxford, 2005), "Introduction" (1-22), "The RSS: A Hindu Nationalist Sect" (56-90).

Recommended: Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, Chapter on "Who is an Indian", 150-195; Rajeev Bhargava, "India's Secular Constitution" in Zoya Hasan, E. Sridharan and R. Sudarshan, eds, *India's Living Constitution* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002) , 105-133; Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India", in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, eds, *Subaltern Studies VII* (Oxford U Press, 1992), 1-39 ; Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, (Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 11-79.

### Week 8. Oct. 26. Communal Violence

1. Paul Brass, *Theft of an Idol* (Princeton U Press, 1997), 3-31, 260-288.
2. Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, pp. 3-18, 113-167, 219-278, 281-300.
3. Steven I Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), 1-62, 236-241.

**Recommended:** Paul Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, read the case study "Kala Bachcha: Portrait of a BJP Hero", 204-259; Ashutosh Varshney, "An Electoral Theory of Communal Riots?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 24, 2005

### Week 9. Nov. 2. Kashmir

**1. Two Narratives** for a quick read: (a) Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, "A Valley Bloody and Beautiful" (pp. 74-96), "Securing Kashmir" (249-26). (b) Basharat Peer, *Curfewed Night* (Scribner 2010), "City of No Joy" (107-131), "In the Courtyards of Faith" (165-183), "The Black Blanket" (193-216). "Epilogue" (217-221).

**2. Analyses:** Ashutosh Varshney, “Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir Has Been a Problem”, in Raju Thomas, ed, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 191-234.; Sumantra Bose, “The Kashmir Conflict in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, in *Contested Lands*, Harvard University Press, 2007. Excerpted in Sanjib Baruah, ed, *Ethnonationalism in India: A Reader*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 200-236; Pervez Iqbal Cheema, in Raju Thomas, *Perspectives on Kashmir*.

Recommended: Sumit Ganguly, “Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency”, *International Security*, Fall 1996, pp. 76-107; for other separatist insurgencies, see the narrative in Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, “Tribal Trouble” (267-283); “Democracy in Disarray” (542-568). And for linguistic issues in Indian politics, see in Guha’s book, “Redrawing the Map”, 189-208.

## DEMOCRACY IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

### Week 10, Nov. 9, Democratic Theory and India

Long Paper proposals due in class

1. Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, “The Biggest Gamble in History”, pp. 137-159, and “Autumn of the Matriarch”, pp. 491-518. A quick narrative about the early days of democracy and its only suspension in 1975.
2. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (Yale U Press, 1971), pages to be assigned.
3. Ashutosh Varshney, “Why Democracy Survives”, *Journal of Democracy*, July 1997.
4. Ashutosh Varshney, “Is India Becoming More Democratic?” *Journal of Asian Studies*, February 2000.
5. Atul Kohli, “Introduction”, in Kohli, ed, “The Success of India’s Democracy (Cambridge U Press, 2001), pp. 1-19.
6. Patrick Heller, “Degrees of Democracy: Some Comparative Lessons from India”, *World Politics*, July 2000, 484-519.
7. Pratap B. Mehta, *The Burden of Democracy* (Penguin, 2003), Sections entitled “Democracy and the Politics of Self Respect” and “Caste and Politics: Anti-Caste or Anti-Upper Caste”, pp. 35-84.

**Recommended:** Sumit Sarkar, “Indian Democracy: the Historical Inheritance” in Atul Kohli, ed., *The Success of India’s Democracy*, pp. 49-77; Sunil Khilnani, “Democracy”, in Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1997), Ch. 1, 15-60; David Waldner, “India’s Democracy in Pakistani Prism”, manuscript, to be provided by the instructor; Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia* (Cambridge U Press, 1995), pages to be assigned; Pradeep Chhibber, *Democracy Without Associations* (U of Michigan Press, 1999), 1-23; Yogendra Yadav, “Understanding the Second Democratic Upsurge”, in Francine Frankel, Zoya Hasan, Rajeev Bhargava and Balveer Arora, eds, *Transforming India* (Oxford U Press, 1999), pp. 120-145.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### Week 11. Nov. 16. The Green Revolution and its Current State

Short paper proposals due in class.

1. Ashutosh Varshney, *Democracy, Development and the Countryside*, pp. 1-9; 28-35 (up to Sections 2.2), 42-47 (Section 2.5); 48-57 (up to Section 3.2), 70-80 (Sections 3.4 and 3.5); 81-82, 88-89 (Section 4.2), 101-112; 113-120; 138-145; 174-190; 191-202.
2. S. Mahendra Dev, “Agriculture Development”, in Kaushik Basu, ed, *The Oxford Companion to Economics in India*, Delhi” Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 11-15.

**Week 12. Nov. 23. Economic Reforms and India's Economic Future**

1. Arvind Panagariya, *India: The Emerging Giant*, Oxford U Press, 2008, pp. 3-109.
2. Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), "Slow But Steady: India", pp. 221-289
3. Ashutosh Varshney, "India's Democratic Challenge" *Foreign Affairs*, March 2007.
4. Pranab Bardhan, *Awakening Giants, Feet of Clay: Assessing the Economic Rise of China and India* (Princeton, 2010), 125-159.

Recommended: For an interesting India-China comparison from a China scholar, Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics*, Cambridge U Press, 2008, Ch 5 (233-298 Ashutosh Varshney, "Mass Politics or Elite Politics?", in Jeffrey Sachs, A. Varshney, and N Bajpai, eds, *India in the Era of Economic Reforms*, Oxford 1999.

**Week 13. Nov. 30. Human Development: Health, Education and Gender**

1. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, pp.1-6, 27-56, 109-139, 140-146 [Section 7.1, and parts of Section 7.2 ("On the Female-Male Ratio" and "Two Misconceptions")], 159-178 (Sections 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6), 179-204.
2. Myron Weiner, *The Child and the State*, Princeton U Press 1991, pp. 3-18, 109-179, 180-207.
3. Arvind Panagariya, *India: The Emerging Giant*, Oxford U Press, 2008; 129-167

;

Final papers due, April 19, 5 pm (Haven Hall 7767)