

POLITICAL SCIENCE 1280

POLITICS, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN INDIA

Spring 2011
Tuesday, Thursday, 1-220

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Office Hours Thursday 3-5 pm
(or by appointment)

Roughly 1.2 billion people live in India. In other words, every sixth person in the world is an Indian. This course will present an overview of India's politics, economics and society. The primary focus will be on modern India, though the materials will be presented in a historical as well as comparative perspective.

The stories of India's economic boom over the last decade are now commonplace in diplomatic, business and journalistic circles. But India's chronicle of achievements, economic as well as political, coexists with several unresolved problems. We will concentrate on three aspects of the "Indian experience": democracy, ethnic and religious diversity, and political economy.

First, defying democratic theory, India has continued to be democratic since 1947 (with the exception of a brief period during 1975-77). In the developing world, India's democratic record is unparalleled. It should, however, be noted that India's political freedoms exist in a land of remarkable socio-economic inequalities, raising issues about how freedoms are actually experienced by millions of people.

Second, remarkable cultural and religious diversity marks India's social landscape. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Sikhism constitute the religious tapestry. More than 15 languages, with long histories, developed grammar and literature, are spoken in the country. The term "race" does not have a clear meaning in India. Therefore, unlike the US, racial diversity is hard to sort out. Generally speaking, caste and religious cleavages, rather than class (or racial) cleavages, have played the most significant role in politics. Of late, "tribal" cleavages have also acquired considerable political salience.

Third, Indian economy has been going through a market-oriented reform since July 1991, raising prospects of a serious economic transformation. India's corporate sector has entered a period of remarkable wealth, and a very sizeable middle class, numbering 200-300 million, has also emerged. Though millions remain poor, the signs of economic, especially corporate, dynamism are plentifully evident. That China and India will be the economic superpowers of the 21st century is now widely believed.

Since so many of India's contemporary developments cannot be fully understood without paying sufficient attention to history, the course has an inescapable historical dimension to it. To understand the debate on Hindu-Muslim relations, for example, one has to go back to a period when, centuries back, Islam arrived in the subcontinent. The British period of Indian history – roughly 1757 through 1947 – also has played a pivotal role in the evolution of contemporary politics. History lives in the present in interesting ways, sometimes constraining Indian citizens, at other times liberating them.

On India, our main questions will be as follows: Given its multireligious, multilinguistic and generally multicultural social and historical context, how has India defined its national identity? How was India transformed under British rule (1757-1947)? After independence in 1947, how has a liberal political order, defined by political equality, interacted with India's social order, defined by inequality and hierarchy? Is the former undermining the latter? What sort of economic transformation is underway?

The readings are of two types: (i) academic treatises, and (ii) works of novelists, film makers, journalists and political leaders. The aim is to give students not only an academic sense of the place, but also a feel for the texture of life in the subcontinent. Novelists, film makers and journalists are some of the best observers of human life. Social sciences can use their observations and insights to good effect.

Requirements: Students will be required to attend lectures, write two papers and take a final exam. The first paper will be of 5-6 pages, the second due at the end of the class of 10-12 pages. The distribution of grade will be as follows: first paper (20%); second paper (40%); final exam (40%).

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The topic of the first paper will be announced in the 5th week; a 5-6 page paper will be due a week later.

The topic of the second paper will be announced in the penultimate week; a 10-12 page paper will be due 10-12 days later.

Other than the books that are to be purchased, all readings will be on electronic or hardcopy reserves. The recommended readings are relatively advanced and will be helpful to those who wish to go deeper into the themes of the course.

Books

Books marked with a * below are recommended, not required. Some recommended books will be used *partially, not wholly*, as required readings for the class. The purchase of such books is highly recommended to those who wish to pursue the study of India further.

Guha, Ramchandra, *India After Gandhi*, (Harper Perennial, 2007), ISBN: 0-06-095858-9*

Dalton, Dennis, *Mahatma Gandhi: Non-Violent Power in Action* (Columbia, 2000), ISBN: 0231122373

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

Panagariya, Arvind, *India: The Emerging Giant*, (Oxford, 2008), ISBN 0-195-31503-0*

Rudolph, Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *Postmodern Gandhi* (Chicago, 2006), ISBN # 0226731243*

Sen, Amartya, *The Argumentative Indian* (Picador, 2006), ISBN # 031242602X

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

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

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

READINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

An Overview of History, Religions, Society, and Polity (January 27),

1. Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, 3-33. An overview by one of India's greatest minds of the last hundred years. A Nobel Laureate in Economics, Sen is a renaissance intellectual.

Recommended: 1) For an introduction to the city of Mumbai, the capital of Indian entrepreneurialism and films, see V.S. Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, pp. 1-135; and Suketu Mehta, "Powertoni", in *Maximum City*, 40-112. (ii) For Delhi, India's political capital, see Rana Dasgupta, "Capital Gains", *Granta* 107, summer 2009. (iii) Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Delhi and New York: Oxford, 1985, "The Quest", pp. 49-68. Written by an intellectual statesman and India's second most famous man after Mahatma Gandhi. (iv) For thoughts on Hinduism, S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*. It is a slim volume.

2. BRITISH INDIA

i) The Rise of the British: Key Features (Feb. 1, 3 8, 10)

1. Burton Stein, *A History of India*, pp. 201-283. Overview of British rule till the rise of nation movement.
2. Amartya Sen, "Indian Traditions and the Western Imagination", in *Argumentative Indian*, 139-160.

Recommended. 1) Chris Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, esp. 1-135, and 169-206. An example of how British historians are revising their view of the British rule. 2) For Nehru's view of Mughal rule and the early British period, *The Discovery of India*, 227-244, 257-272, 273-307.

ii) The Freedom Movement, and the Partition of India (Feb. 15, 17, 24, March 1, 3, 8)

A) An Overview

1. Burton Stein, *A History of India*, pp 284-366. A historical account of the rise of Indian nationalism.

Recommended: 1) Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 356-478. Nehru's view of the late British phase; ii) Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform*, Sage 1989, pp. 34-70; iii) Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*. A widely noted account of the impact of British rule on Indian psyche.

B) Explaining "Muslim Separatism"

1. Mohammad Mujeeb, "The Partition of India in Retrospect", in Mushirul Hasan, ed., *India's Partition*, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 396-407. A major Muslim intellectual of India recalls partition and reflects on its causes.
2. Stephen Hay, ed, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol. II, Penguin, 1991, pp. 180-195, 205-7, 218-222, 228-231, and 236-242. Relevant speeches and letters of the leading South Asian Muslim figures between 1860-

1947: Sir Syed, Iqbal, Jinnah and Azad.

3. 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. This book is also sometimes available as *Eight Lives*, State University of New York Press, 1986, ISBN# 0887061966. The page numbers in *Eight Lives* may not be the same as above, but the chapter titles are. You have to read the chapters on Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Maulana Azad.

Recommended: 1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 524-536. 2) 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. 3) Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, Cambridge 1985, introduction and conclusion;

C) Mahatma Gandhi, India's Independence and Partition

1. *Gandhi*, a film by Richard Attenborough. *Gandhi*, a monumental film and winner of seven Oscars, is a remarkable cinematic overview of the readings that follow.
2. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *Postmodern Gandhi*, Chapters 5, 6 and 8., pp. 177-206, 230-252.
3. Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, Princeton 1988 edition, pp. 105-145.
4. Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi*, Columbia University Press, 1993, Chapters on "Civil Disobedience: the Salt Satyagraha" and "The Calcutta Fast" (pp. 91-167).
5. Ashis Nandy, "The Final Encounter: The Politics of the Assassination of Gandhi", in *At the Edge of Psychology*, Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 70-98.

Recommended. i) Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform*, Sage 1989, pp. 71-106. ii) Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi*, especially 63-167. And for Gandhi's influence on Martin Luther King, Dalton, pp. 168-187, and for Gandhi's critics, pp. 63-90.

3. THE POST-1947 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (March 10, 15)

Film *Life and Times of the Dynasty* highly recommended. It is devoted to the Nehru family and its role in Indian politics.

I) Institutions and Norms: Governmental Structure and Party Politics

1. Jyotirindra Dasgupta, "India's Federal Design" and Sumit Sarkar, "Indian Democracy: the Historical Inheritance" in Atul Kohli, ed., *The Success of India's Democracy*, pp. 23-46, 49-77.

2. Granville Austin, "The Expected and the Unintended in the Working a Democratic Constitution", in Zoya Hasan, E. Sridharan and R. Sudarshan, eds, *India's Living Constitution* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), 319-343.

Recommended: Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, "The Biggest Gamble in History", pp. 137-159; 2. Myron Weiner, *Party Building in a New Nation*, a study of how the Congress functioned in the early years of Indian independence. Read the introduction and conclusion.

ii) De-Institutionalization After Nehru, Yet Democracy Survives

1. Weiner, *The Indian Paradox*, 77-98.
2. Ashis Nandy, "Indira Gandhi and the Culture of India Politics", in *At the Edge of Psychology*, pp. 112-130.
3. Ashutosh Varshney, "Why Democracy Survives", *Journal of Democracy*, July 1997.
4. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, "Redoing the Constitutional Design", in Atul Kohli, ed, *The Success of India's Democracy*, pp. 127-162.

Recommended: 1) Ramchandra Guha, *India after Gandhi*, "The Elixir of Victory", "The Rivals", "Autumn of the Matriarch", "Democracy in Disarray", pp. 445-518, 542-568; (2) Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, "Democracy", pp. 15-60; 2) Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 3-34, 184-202, 297-302, 383-404. Kohli deals with the evidence of institutional decline between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s;

4. DIVERSITIES I: HINDU SOCIAL ORDER AND POLITICS (March 17, 22, 24)

Film *Ankur* highly recommended. It shows how caste used to operate, and sometimes still does, in rural India.

i) Caste and Upward Mobility

1. M.N. Srinivas, "The Social System of a Mysore Village", in McKim Marriott, ed, *Village India*, University of Chicago Press, 1955, pp. 1-35. A classic ethnographic account of the caste system.
2. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, University of California Press, 1966, and Orient Longman, Delhi, 1989. pp. 1-10 from "Sanskritization", and pp. 46-63 from "Westernization".
3. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, Part One, pp. 17-87. Skim pp 88-102.

Recommended: Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, Chs. 1, 8, and Conclusions, pp. 1-24, 306-341, and 365-382.

ii) Caste, Democratic Politics and Affirmative Action

1. Myron Weiner, "The Political Consequences of Preferential Policies", in Myron Weiner, *Indian Paradox*, pp. 152-175.
2. Myron Weiner, "The Struggle for Equality: Caste in Indian Politics", in Atul Kohli, ed, *The Success of India's Democracy*, pp. 193-225. Marc Galanter, "The Long Half Life of Reservations", in Hasan, Sridharan and Sudarshan, eds, *India's Living Constitution* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), pp. 306-318.
3. Ashutosh Varshney, "Is India Becoming More Democratic?" *Journal of Asian Studies*, February 2000.

Recommended: i) Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Rise of the OBCs in North India", *Journal of Asian Studies*, February 2000; ii) Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), first chapter; (iii) Yogendra Yadav, "Politics", in Philip Oldenburg and Marshall Bouton, *India: Looking Back, Looking Forward*, M.E. Sharpe, 1999

5. DIVERSITIES II: ETHNOCOMMUNAL CONFLICTS (April 5, 7 and 12, 14)

Chak de India, a film about Indian diversities, highly recommended.

I) Secularism and Hindu Nationalism

- 1.T.N. Madan, "Secularism in Its Place", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1987, pp. 747-760.
- 2.Ashis Nandy, "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tradition", *Alternatives*, Vol. 1 1988, pp. 177-194.
3. Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, Ch. 3, 55-86. Amartya Sen, "India Large and Small" (pp. 45-72) and "Secularism and its Discontents", in *The Argumentative Indian*, pp. 273-293.
- 4.Rajeev Bhargava, "India's Secular Constitution", in Hasan, Sridharan and Sudarshan, eds, *India's Living Constitution* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), pp. 105-133.

Recommended. 1. Myron Weiner, "India's Minorities: Who Are They? What Do They Want?", *Indian Paradox*, Ch. 2, pp. 39-76; 2. For how India sought to define its identity, see Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India, 150-195*. 3) Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, (Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 11-79; 4) Romila Thapar, "A Historical Perspective on the Story of Rama", and Mushirul Hasan, "Competing Symbols", in S. Gopal, ed, *Anatomy of a Confrontation*, Viking, 1991;

ii) Hindu-Muslim Relations

1. .S Naipaul, *A Million Mutinies*, pp. 351-387. A thoughtful account of the emotional problems of Muslims.
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.

Recommended: i) Ramchandra Guha, "India After Gandhi," "Riots", pp.624-650. ii) Ashutosh Varshney, "An Electoral Theory of Communal Riots?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 24, 2005; iii) Paul Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, (Princeton U Press, 1995), introduction and conclusion.

iii) Kashmir

1. Ashutosh Varshney, "Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir Has Been a Problem", in Raju Thomas, ed, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 191-234.
2. Sumantra Bose, "The Kashmir Conflict in the early 21st Century", in *Contested Lands*, Harvard University Press, 2007. Excerpted in Sanbib Baruah, ed, *Ethnonationalism in India: A Reader*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 200-236.

Recommended: Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency", *International Security*, Fall 1996, pp. 76-107; Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, "Securing Kashmir" (pp. 249-266); Pervez Iqbal Cheema, in Raju Thomas, *Perspectives on Kashmir*.

5. POLITICAL ECONOMY (April 19, 21, 26, 28,)

Slumdog Millionaire, winner of eight Oscars, highly recommended.

(i) The Agricultural Turnaround, and the need for a new Green Revolution

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.S.

2. Mahendra Dev, "Agriculture Development", in Kaushik Basu, ed, *The Oxford Companion to Economics in India*, Delhi" Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 11-15.

ii) Industrial Growth, Services and Economic Reforms: Bullock Carts, Software and Space Satellites

1. Jagdish Bhagwati, *India in Transition*, Clarendon, 1993, pp. 39-69.

2. Ashutosh Varshney, "India's Democratic Challenge", *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2007.

3. Arvind Panagariya, *India: The Emerging Giant*, pp. 95-109, 129-156, 259-281,

Recommended: Montek Ahluwalia, "The Performance of States Since the Reforms", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 27 2001; Kaushik Basu, paper presented at the Singapore conference.

iii) Human Development: Education, Health, and Gender Inequality

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.

Recommended: Myron Weiner, *The Child and the State*, Princeton 1991, pp. 3-18, 109-179, 180-207.