INDIA: CULTURE, TRADITIONS & GLOBALIZATION
Contemporary India
Fall 2015

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CREDITS: 4 semester credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course seeks to acquaint the students to contemporary India – its culture and society, the current politics, political economy, and foreign relations. It deals mainly with the current happenings in India with a little history as a point of reference. It is desirable that the students participate actively in the classroom discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVE
India appears to be on the threshold of change. Last year’s general elections brought in a new government in power ending the long standing Congress Party rule in a decisive manner. There were a lot of expectations. Changes were expected in the approaches to political economy, understanding of Indian culture and traditions, etc. What has changed? Has change taken place? Is the change that is taking place for the better? These and other questions are being raised in India today. This course seeks to find answers to these and other questions. It is not possible to develop an instant expertise on all dimensions of the country under study, but one can certainly try to understand them in their various elements. A simple test would be based on the reading of a standard newspaper or viewing any TV channel that provides a glimpse of India in its diversity. Would you understand the news, the stories, the drama of life and views that you read in a newspaper or watch on the TV? The media would present you images of the society, the polity, economic changes; they would also discuss things like corruption, religious riots and caste conflicts along with the construction of big dams and power plants. The purpose is to make sense out of what you read and see about the country. No one can be an area study expert with one course; but one can start looking towards that direction with an understanding of the dynamics of the country.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES
In a sense this is an area studies course that is introductory in nature. But the course seeks to go beyond being a descriptive one – it seeks to provide the student some analytical tools to understand contemporary Indian scene. It seeks to equip the student with the basics that would help the student to take off for further study in an area of his/her choice or specialization. This course along with a working knowledge of local language should enable the student to make sense of the developments in the country that the student may see or read in the media.

REQUIRED TEXTS
COURSE CONTENT

1. **Session 1: Introducing Contemporary India**

2. **Session 2, 3, 4 and 5**: Introduction of India’s geography, polity, economy, society, culture, traditions, etc.

3. **Session 6: Discussion** This discussion would be based on specific reading of certain current events that are taking place in the political/social/cultural/economic/etc. field and the experiences that the students have had in their interaction with the local people.

4. **Session 7, 8, 9, and 10**: Understanding the Impact of Globalization and Liberalization on political economy; technology issues; Indian political processes; Indian society and culture; and educational policies.

5. **Session 11 and 12**: One year of Modi Government

6. **Session 13 (15 Oct 2014): Discussion** This discussion would be based on specific reading of certain current events that are taking place in the political/social/cultural/economic/etc field and the experiences that the students have had in their interaction with the local people.

7. **Session 14**: Media in India

8. **Session 15 and 16**: Homeland Security Issues: Terrorism/Naxalism/internal security

9. **Session 17 and 18**: Indian foreign policy and US India relations

10. **Session 20: Open Discussion** This discussion would be based on specific reading of certain current events that are taking place in the political/social/cultural/economic/etc field and the experiences that the students have had in their interaction with the local people.

**Notes**

1. Each session would be of one and a half hour. In each session, half an hour would be kept for general discussion on any topic that the students would like to discuss in the broad area of contemporary India. Students are welcome to initiate classroom discussion on various aspects of contemporary India that they have read in newspapers or seen on the TV.

2. A visit to the MIT School of Government to interact with students. The MITSOG is a school that has been created to train youth to enter public life (politics/NGO sector/etc.)

3. Fergusson College, Pune, conducts a One Year course in American Studies. The purpose of this course is to introduce the Indian students to the United States. This course was designed with the help and support of the American Embassy. You would be encouraged to interact with the students of this course as Resource Persons.

4. A set of reading material (photocopied) would be made available in the Office.

5. For the discussion session, a set of articles from newspapers/magazines would be given in advance.
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENT

1. Neighborhood Walk (2 assignments)
   a. Assignment 1: Students would visit a specific neighborhood at the beginning of the course and write a note on their experiences/observations.
   b. Assignment 2: At the end of the course (before returning back to the US) students would return to the same neighborhood that they had visited the first time and again write of their observations/experiences. The purpose is to see how the experience of staying in India has changed the perspectives from the first visit to the second visit. Each note should be about 300 to 400 words in length (weightage: 20%)

2. There would be 3 home assignments. The dates for submission and the topics are enclosed. (weightage: 60%)

3. Each student would have to make at least ONE classroom presentation on the basis of what is read in newspapers/magazines. A small note on the basis of this presentation would be submitted after the presentation. (weightage: 20%)

ATTENDANCE
It is essential that students participate fully in coursework and all required academic activities. Excused absences may only be approved by the Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your grades.

ACM POLICY ON ACADEMICS
A complete listing of ACM policies can be found in your student handbook.

Class attendance and participation: You are expected to attend and participate fully in all classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips.

Academic honesty: Actions of dishonesty are destructive to the well-being of the academic community, and ACM staff respond to them vigorously. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic theft will result in a failing grade for that assignment and may result in failure for the course.

ACM POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION
The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, marital status, or disability.