

India: Culture, Traditions, & Globalization

Contemporary India

Fall semester

Instructor

Dr. Shrikant Paranjpe

Credits

Required course; 4 semester credits

Course Description

The course seeks to introduce 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.

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.

Goals of the Course

India appears to be on the threshold of change. The 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.

Required Texts

These have been listed in each module and would be provided in the beginning of the course. This ensures that every student has the relevant text for the respective lectures.

Course Schedule

Session 1: Introducing Contemporary India

Sessions 2, 3 and 4: A Survey of Important Social/Cultural/Political/Economic Developments and Trends since Indian Independence

Reading: See synoptic note

Sessions 5, 6, 7: Understanding India: Ethnic, Religious, Caste, Linguistic Diversity and Its Impact on the Socio-Political and Economic System

Readings:

Jawaharlal Nehru, "Bharat Mata" and "The Variety and Unity of India" in *Discovery of India* (Penguin, New Delhi, 2004)

"Indian Secularism since 1980," Sumit Ganguly and Rahul Mukherjee, *India Since 1980* (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

"No, I am more Backward than you are," Zia Mody, *10 Judgments that Changed India* (SDE Books New Delhi, 2013)

See also synoptic note.

Session 8: 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.

Sessions 9, 10 and 11: Indian Political System (Structure and Process, Including Political Parties, Interest Groups, Elections, etc.)

Reading: Note prepared by Shrikant Paranjpe

Sessions 12 to 17: Understanding the Impact of Globalization and Liberalization on: Political Economy; Technological Issues; Indian Political Process; Indian Society and Culture; Educational Policies; Media

Readings:

Rakesh Mohan, A Decade after 1991: New Challenges facing Indian Economy, Frank Mores Memorial Lecture, 2002

R. Natarajan, Government Policies Impact Technology Education in India, *The Journal of Technology Studies*

Synoptic note on Globalization

Session 18: 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.

Session 19: Homeland Security Issues: Terrorism/Naxalism/Internal Security

Readings:

Internal Security and the Role of the State: A Framework for analysis, Shrikant Paranjpe (ed), *Internal Security in India: Issues, Structures, Approaches*, (Nehru Centre, Indus Source Books, 2014), pp. 8-29

Sandeep Kumar Dubey, *Maoist Movement in India: An Overview*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, August 6, 2013

Session 20: Indian Foreign Policy and US-India Relations

Reading:

Shrikant Paranjpe "United States in India's Changed Strategic Perspective in the Post-Cold War Era," *India Quarterly*, January-March 2013

Session 21: Issues in Governance

Readings: See Note

Session 22: 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:

- 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.
- A set of reading material (photocopied) would be made available in the program office.

Assessment

Assignment 1

Last date for submission: To be announced
(Word limit 1000 words approx.)

Topic: Please read newspapers/magazines/journals for any news articles or opinion pieces on economic, political, or socio-cultural issues that are currently being debated in the country. The selection may be done from Editorial page articles from newspapers; editorials in newspapers; articles from journals etc. Take up any ONE or TWO articles that deal with the subject that you are dealing with. (Word limit: 1000 words approx.)

The final written presentation must include the following:

1. Brief information about the selected issue as it has been reported in the article.
2. Dialogue with four to five Indian STUDENTS on the issue. Please do NOT interview the ACM staff on the matter.
3. Your view on the issue. (This is the important part of your assignment).

Assignment 2

Last date for submission: To be announced
(Word Limit 1000 words approx.)

Question: Globalization has brought in a lot of changes in India in the socio-cultural, economic, political and technological fields as well as on issues relating to governance. These changes have had both, a positive and a negative impact on the society. What changes have taken place? How are the people responding to these changes?

Your answer should focus on any ONE of the areas of change: (1) Political, OR (2) Economic, OR (3) Socio-cultural, OR (4) technological OR (5) Media OR (6) Governance

What do I expect from the answer? The answer should look at the following dimensions:

1. What are the changes that have taken place in India in the field that you are writing on?
2. How do people look at these changes? Talk to persons of both the younger and the older generations to see their perspectives. (Talk to at least 6 to 8 individuals)
3. See the magazines, newspapers, TV, Internet sites, etc. to understand the changes. Write about this aspect in your answer.
4. You may notice a lot of things during your trips outside of Pune. Add this to the answer.
5. How do you see India today from a global perspective? How globalized has it really become?
6. How much of tradition still exists and how much can you see as either modernization or westernization? (This part is YOUR perception.)

Assignment 3

Last date for submission: To be announced

(Word Limit 1000 words approx.)

The Modi Government has completed three years in India. There has been a lot of discussion on the expectations raised and wishes fulfilled. Take up any one of the following area:

1. Swatch Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India movement)
2. Religious tolerance
3. Indian economic development
4. Indian foreign policy
5. Skill development programme

The final written presentation must include the following:

1. Brief information about the selected issue as it has been reported in the article.
2. Dialogue with four to five Indians on the issue. Please do NOT interview the ACM staff on the matter.
3. Your view on the issue. (This is the important part of your assignment)

Assignment 4

(Word Limit 500 words approx.)

The presentations would be held throughout the semester during the class. You are required to submit a 500-word synopsis of your presentation immediately after the actual presentation.

ACM Policies on Academics

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

Class attendance and participation

It is essential that students participate fully in coursework and all required academic activities (classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips). 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.

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.