

Course IS 401 N Political Thought I**Instructors - Nivedita Menon and Mollica Dastider****Monsoon Semester****Credits: 4****Method of Instruction: a) Lectures****b) Guided reading in class of selected texts****Contact hours: 3 per week****Evaluation: Two mid-term assessments and final exam.****Rationale and description of course:**

Indian universities generally make a distinction between Political Thought and Political Theory, in which the former syllabus is structured around individual thinkers, and the latter around concepts. These syllabi are also implicitly or explicitly about western thought/theory, while Indian Thought, if taught at all, is a separate course. Further, conventionally, western thought both at BA and MA level tends to end at Marx.

In these two courses on Political Thought, the primary concerns are

- a) to introduce students with or without a background in Political Science to key themes in contemporary critical thinking.
- b) to treat both 'non-western' and 'western' thought as resources in understanding contemporary intellectual and political fields.
- c) to equip students of International Relations in particular, to engage comparatively with the theoretical aspects of issues they would deal with in area studies.
- d) in the current intellectual climate of moves towards interdisciplinarity, to bring together diverse fields both within the discipline of Political Science - such as Political Thought, Political Theory, Indian Thought and Philosophy of the Social Sciences – as well as from outside the discipline, such as Cultural Studies, Anthropology and History.

Scope and method of teaching

The approach would be to cover a wider field rather than intensively focusing on a small area. Each topic is centred around a set of readings that are provided to the students in advance. Apart from lectures, students will engage with several of the readings through a guided reading in class.

NB All the readings listed below are available in the photocopying section of School of International Studies.

Course Outline and Readings

Part I – Nivedita Menon

1. Debates around the relationship between “language and reality”, and the question of “interpretation”.

Peter Winch “Understanding a primitive society” (From Peter Winch *Ethics and Action* Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972)

Steven Lukes “On the social determination of truth” (Michael T Gibbons ed *Interpreting Politics* Basil Blackwell, 1987).

AK Ramanujan “Is there an Indian way of thinking? An informal essay” (*From India Through Hindu categories* ed McKim Marriott, Sage, 1990)

Stuart Hall Sections from “The work of representation” (in *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Sage 1997)

2. Materialism

a) Classical Indian traditions of materialism

Ramakrishna Bhattacharya ‘Development of materialism in India: the pre-Carvakas and the Carvakas’, *Esercizi Filosofici*, 8, 2013.

b) Marxist materialism

Karl Marx ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ Available on-line

Laclau and Mouffe Sections from *Post Marxism without Apologies*

3. Modernity - the structural transformations brought about in temporal terms by “modernity” (16th to early 20th centuries) and debates about culture, identity and the self-representation of modernity.

Sudipta Kaviraj Sections from “An Outline of a Revisionist theory of Modernity” (*European Journal of Sociology* XLVI, 3, 2005)

Karl Marx *Capital Volume 1* Chapters 26-28 (Penguin Classics)

Anthony Arblaster Section from *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism* (Basil Blackwell 1984)

Immanuel Kant “What is Enlightenment” (Available on-line)

Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze “The colour of reason: the idea of ‘race’ in Kant’s anthropology” (*Postcolonial African Philosophy. A Reader* Basil Blackwell 1997)

4. Four responses to modernity in early 20th century India – Gandhi, Ambedkar Savarkar, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein

MK Gandhi Sections from *Hind Swaraj* (Available on-line)

BR Ambedkar “Gandhism” (Valerian Rodrigues ed. *Essential Writings of BR Ambedkar* OUP 2006)

VD Savarkar Sections from *Essentials of Hindutva* (Available on-line)

Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein *Sultana’s Dream* (Available on-line)

5. Foucault on Power and Subjectivity

Michel Foucault “Power, Right, Truth” (*Power/Knowledge* ed Colin Gordon, Harvester, 1980)

Michel Foucault “The Subject and Power” (Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* University of Chicago Press, 1983)

Dreyfus and Rabinow “From the repressive Hypothesis to Bio-power” (Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* University of Chicago Press, 1983)

6. Identity and Politics

This section problematizes the critique of ‘identity politics’, through engagement with thought that claims no identity is universal.

a) Gender and sexuality – Problematizing the sexualized “body”

Gloria Steinem “If men could menstruate” (Available on-line)

Judith Butler sections from *Bodies that matter* (Routledge 1993) and *Gender Trouble* (Routledge 1990)

Anne Fausto Sterling "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are not enough" (Michael S. Kimmel, Amy Aronson ed. *The Gendered Society Reader* OUP 2004)

Bronwyn Davies "Becoming Male or female" (*Frogs and Snails and Feminist tales*, Hampton Press, New Jersey, 2003)

b) Caste, Nation

Kancha Iliiah "Towards the Dalitization of the Nation" (From Partha Chatterjee ed. *Wages of Freedom* OUP 1998)

MSS Pandian "Stepping Outside History? New Dalit Writings from Tamil Nadu" (From Partha Chatterjee ed. *Wages of Freedom* OUP 1998)

MSS Pandian "Denationalizing the Past - Nation in EV Ramasami's political writings" (*Economic and Political Weekly* October 16, 1993)

c) Race – Critical race theory, construction of race identity, construction of whiteness

Frantz Fanon "The fact of Blackness" (From Linda Martin Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta ed. *Identities* Blackwell 2003)

David Macey "Fanon, Phenomenology, Race" (From Philomena Essed and Goldberg ed. *Race Critical theories* Blackwell 2002)

David Roediger "Whiteness and Ethnicity in the History of 'white ethnics' in the United States" (From Philomena Essed and Goldberg ed. *Race Critical theories* Blackwell 2002)

Part II – Mollica Dastider

I Comparing Political Thought

The universality of western political theory as the model philosophy for the rest of is a much contested domain today. The need for comparing political thoughts also arise from the political reality in non western societies where the actual political practices and functioning differ widely from the normative western political theory.

1. Michael Freeden and A. Vincent 'Introduction' in Michael Freeden and A. Vincent (eds) *Comparative Political Thought*, Routledge, 2013. pp 1-27
3. Anthony Parel "The Comparative study of Political philosophy" in Anthony Parel, Ronald C. Keith, *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies Under the Upas Tree*, Oxford, Lexington Books. 1992. pp. 11-28
3. Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Introduction' in Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe: Post Colonial Thought and Historical Difference*. New Jersey, Princeton Univ. Press, 2000. pp 1- 26

II Political Difference in Indian Thought

(a) On Autonomy

1. Ronla Terchek, "Gandhian Autonomy in the Late Modern World" in Anthony Parel Ed. *Gandhi, Freedom and Self Rule*. Boston, LexingtonBooks, 2000. pp. 47-62.
2. David Hardiman, " An Alternative Modernity" in his book *Gandhi and His Times*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black. pp. 66-93.

(b) Secularism: The Indian Critique

2. Ashis Nandy, "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance" in Rajiv Bhargava edited *Secularism and its Critics*, New Delhi OUP. pp. 321-344.
3. Rajeev Bhargava, "The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism" in Akash Singh and Silika Mohapatra (eds) *Indian Political Thought:A Reader*, Oxon: Routledge. 2010.

III Modernity and Minority

Minority is not merely a category of nation-people, it is much more. It is about domination and subordination; about contingency of experience as against universalism of theory; and most importantly about resisting totalitarianism and bringing in ethical attribution to theory or cultural debate.

Readings:

1. Arjun Appadurai, " Fear of Small Numbers" in *Fear of Small Numbers*, Durham, Duke Univ. Press, 2006. pp. 49-84
2. Etienne Balibar " Ambiguous Universality" in *Politics and the Other Scene* London, Verso, 2002. pp. 146-176

3. Dipesh Chakrabarty "Governmental Roots of Modern Ethnicity" in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*, New Delhi, Permanent Black. pp. 80-97

[Additional Readings: 1. Bhabha, Homi "DissemiNation: time narrative and the margins of the modern nation" in *Nation and Narration*, London, Routledge, 1990. 291-322.]