



Summer in Pune

SOCI 360: *Contemporary India*

Course Description

Every nation is unique in its own way. One of the world's oldest civilizations, scholars have often referred to India as a 'marvel and a paradox'. This course on "Contemporary India" seeks to acquaint students to contemporary Indian society, culture and its politics. A nation that is pitted to be a superpower with its scientific and technological advances also grapples with poverty and illiteracy. Add to it its complexities that arise out of religious, linguistic and ethnic diversities.

This course will aid the students' understanding and help contextualize current issues in India as they experience it during their stay, through interactions with local people and personal observations. Classroom participation on current issues will be the key to looking at India in its many dimensions. Students will be able to explore and appreciate India's diversity and complexities including understanding the societal and economic divides that exist, besides politics and other issues of contemporary relevance.

The media presents all socio-economic and political aspects in its current context. It would be essential for the students to regularly read newspapers, magazines and watch the television channels to understand media perspectives. These regular readings will put issues in its perspective during classroom lectures and discussions.

The course will be both informative and analytical through lectures and discussions. It is mandatory for students to drive discussions in class based on recommended reading on specific topics, additional reading, which will be recommended in the class from time to time based on developing current issues during the semester, as well as their own interpretation and observations.

Students must read newspapers and magazines to be on the same page to drive discussions. There is a flow of topics to give a comprehensive view of issues, yet one would often observe an overlap of topics and discussions as they are inter-related. Although time slots have been allotted to each topic, there may be times when a lecture/session may need more time or less depending on classroom interaction. It is impossible to be an expert on India through one course. However, this course will enable students to look at India and understand its dynamics.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will be expected to:

- Acquire working level knowledge about India in terms of her economy, politico-legal structure, her modern history and her future prospects
- Be sensitized about India's nuances in terms of religion, gender, caste and its impacts upon her social, political and economic aspects
- Achieve an understanding of where India stands today in relation to her peers in Asia and across the world in terms of geopolitical relationships, and the reasons for the same
- Know more about India's ecology, and the impact of climate change to this country in the coming years
- Gain an understanding of the potential causes that make India's rise in the 21st century probable, as also an understanding of potential hindrances

Course Schedule

Session 01-02/24 Introduction to India's Diversity:

- Geography- location and neighbours,
- Topography & climate,
- Linguistic, Religious and Regional Diversity

Session 03/24 Introduction to Food

Session 04/24 Decoding Indian Elections

Session 05/24 Birth of the Indian Nation: The Indian Nationalist Movement and its Impact in Shaping India

Readings:

Guha, Ramchandra. (2008). *India after Gandhi*. Harper Perennial. Ch. 2 and 6.

Session 06/24 Pre- Liberalization India

Readings:

Guha, Ramchandra. (2008). *India after Gandhi*. Harper Perennial. Chap. No. 29

Session 07/24 Break from the Past: The Emergence of the Great Indian Middle Class

Readings:

Bhagwati, J. and Panagariya, A. (2013). *India's Tryst with Destiny*. Harper Collins. Myth 2.4; Myth 2.5; Myth 3.1.

Session 08/24 Understanding Indian Politics

Readings:

Guha, Ramchandra. (2008). *India after Gandhi*. Harper Perennial. Ch. 28 (Rulers)

Session 09/24 Terrorism and India

Readings:

Sethi, Aman. (2011). "The Bloody Crossroads". *The Caravan: A Journal of Politics and Culture*. <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/reportage/bloody-crossroads?page=0,1>

Session 10/24 The Indian Economy: Part 1 (A look at the Agrarian Economy)

Readings:

Bhagwati, J. and Panagariya, A. (2013). *India's Tryst with Destiny*. Harper Collins. Ch. 15

Session 11 -12/24 Caste and Gender in Indian Society

Session 13/24 Representation of Indian diversity in Films and Literature

Session 14/24 Community Based Movements in India

Session 15/24 The Indian Economy: Part 2: Manufacturing in India: An Overview of Myriad Problems

Readings:

Bhagwati, J. and Panagariya, A. (2013). *India's Tryst with Destiny*. Harper Collins. Ch. 8 and 10

Session 16/24 The Indian Economy: Part 3: Services and Predicting the Future

Readings:

Bhagwati, J. and Panagariya, A. (2013). *India's Tryst with Destiny*. Harper Collins. Concluding remarks.

Session 17- 19/24 Summer Excursion to Velhe

Session 20/24 Summer Excursion review

Session 21/24 India and Her Demographic Dividend

Readings:

Weisman, Alan. (2014). "What Started the Biggest Population Boom in History?" *Medium.com*.
<https://medium.com/matter/what-started-the-biggest-population-boom-in-history-1909ce55ada2>

Session 22/24	India's Foreign Relations: SAARC, Asia and Beyond
Session 23/24	India and International Geo-politics in the 21st Century
Session 24/24	India and Climate Change: An Impossible conundrum?

Course Textbook

A set of photocopy material will be provided as basic background reading for each topic at the beginning of the course.

Guha, Ramchandra. (2008). *India after Gandhi*. Harper Perennial.
<http://www.amazon.com/India-After-Gandhi-History-Democracy/dp/0060958588>

Bhagwati, J. and Panagariya, A. (2013). *India's Tryst with Destiny*. Harper Collins.

Supplemental Course Materials

(2010). *Understanding Contemporary India*. Sumit Ganguly & Neil de Votta (Eds.). Lynne Rienner Publications.

Evaluation

Attendance & Class Participation	10%
Response Paper	15 %
Presentation	25 %
Research Assignment	50 %

Assessment Criteria

Classroom Participation

Max Marks 10 will be allotted for responses based on readings allotted and classroom participation. This will be a continuous assessment process, the marks of which will be reflected at the end of the term.

Response Paper

A response paper based on Palkhi festival visit. An elaborate note about the festival is included at the end of the Contemporary India Reader.

(Max Marks 15 Word Limit 750)

Presentation

Students will have to scan the newspapers and magazines for any current issue of their choice and relate it to the specified readings given as course material. Students will have a power point presentation on the topic. The presentations schedule will be decided after initial class discussion between the Professor and students.

(Max Marks 25 – Analysis, contextualizing and understanding: 15 marks; Response to questions: 5 marks; Presentation: 5 marks) Professor will plan the dates.

Research Assignment

A research-based term paper incorporating interviews and observations to be submitted at the end of the course which may be in an area of academic interest to the student. The topic may be finalised with the teacher but should be within the broad framework of contemporary India.

(Max Marks 50 Word Limit 1500 to 2000)

NOTE: All written assignments to be typed with 1.5 line spacing, Times New Roman 12 points and emailed to the teacher. Please avoid hard copies to save paper.

Grading

Alliance programs utilize the follow standard grading policy well accepted by most US institutions.

Excellent	A	93-100%	Good	B+	87-89%	Acceptable	C+	77-79%
	A-	90-92%		B	83-86%		C	73-76%
				B-	80-82%		C-	70-72%
						Unsatisfactory	D+	67-69%
							D	63-66%
							D-	60-62%
						Failing	F	<60%

Course Policies

Exams and Assignments

Students are required to take all regularly scheduled exams in courses for which they are registered, and to submit all assignments on time. Any compelling academic, personal, or medical reason that might justify a rescheduled exam or assignment must be brought up to the Resident Director, not program faculty. Failure to take scheduled exams or submit the requisite assignments for a course will adversely affect your grade as per the stated grading criteria for each course.

Classroom Conduct

Student punctuality is extremely important in China and India. Please do not be late for classes or other activities, as it is considered impolite to do so. It is improper to eat in class, to engage in other activities such as texting, or to slump or nap. Students are expected to be alert and engaged as a sign of respect for their professors.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. It is essential that the students participate fully in the coursework and all required academic activities. Authorized absences may only be approved by the Resident Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Unauthorized absences will adversely affect a student's grades.