

B.A. Honours Political Science

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Semester I

Indian Political Thought – I

Indian Political thought is one of the most important components of the study of political science as well as modern Indian history. This particular course aims to contextualize the various strands of political thought articulated by Indian thinkers. In this context-driven conceptualization of political thought, this course will focus on the main currents of political thought within the socio-economic and political contexts of the time when they were conceptualized. The students will engage in the writings of thinkers like Kautilya and his theory of the state, Kabir and his syncretism, Manu's social laws, and Abul Fazal's monarchy. This will give students a broad spectrum of Indian political thought, tracing the pre-colonial traditions -Brahmanic and Shramanic; and Islamic and Syncretic.

Political Philosophy – Classical

In studying the classical tradition of western political philosophy, the course will primarily deal with the writings and thought of thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli and Tocqueville. The course seeks to engage with major texts and answer questions on the idea of a political community and need for a social order and the questions about the legitimacy of governments. What form governments should take and what makes a government legitimate? A reading of the texts of these philosophers will give their view on justice, democracy, and the relationship between the state and the citizen.

Politics of Developing Nations

This course will explore political challenges facing developing nations in the post-Cold War era. A question of particular interest to the course will be how the legacies of colonialism and the Cold War have shaped and/or constrained economic and political development in the less developed world, as well as how -- and how much -- have developing countries exhibited their own agency in challenging or moving beyond these constraints? Students will explore these issues through primary source documents as well as theoretical treatments and relevant case studies.

Nationalism & Indian Freedom Struggle

The objective of this course is to enlighten students about India's struggle for independence by providing them with debates and academic discourse that has evolved post-independence. In doing so, the course will engage with different theoretical perspectives. Beginning with the 19th century responses to colonial rule and dominance, it seeks to highlight different dimensions and phases of the struggle – starting from reformism and anti-reformism to entering into the phase of partition and independence. In terms of dimensions, the course will focus on questions

of class, caste, gender and communal politics. The pedagogy on freedom struggle and nationalism will take into account the four main approaches applied to its study, namely, the Nationalist approach, Cambridge School of thought, Marxist interpretation and subaltern approach.

Political Evolution of the World

This course is about the political history of the world looking through the major political transitions such as democracy from monarchy. It gives a broad overview of the political changes, movements and systems that the modern world has gone through from the system of empires to the system of nation-states. From the earliest exchanges between major civilisations of the world, to contemporary ties between great powers like China and the United States, the course traces how diplomacy has evolved over centuries from 'club' to 'network' models.

Academic Reading & Writing

This course is primarily concerned with learning the skill of argumentative writing. For students to engage in such an exercise, it is imperative to know what an argument is – “when you support a position by giving a reason for accepting it, you are giving an argument.” Moreover, it is essential to understand that academic writing is the style of expression used by researchers to engage with the debates in their subject and define their discipline. The course will familiarize students with few basic points that are to be kept in mind while engaging in academic writing - focus on research question, conceptual clarity, language precision and most importantly, the structure of the paper.

Semester II

Indian Political Thought – II

This course covers a wide set of ideas and values across the continuum of modern Indian political thought. In trying to understand the emergence and articulation of socio-political issues - social justice, secularism, socialism, rights, gender, nationalism and communalization of politics - the course will cover the thought of political philosophers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi, B.R Ambedkar, Ram Manohar Lohia, V.D. Savarkar, Rabindranath Tagore Mohammad Iqbal and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Political Philosophy – Modern

In this course, the students will be learning about the evolution of modern political philosophy that hinges on the principle of enlightenment. With a focus on the ideas of five thinkers – Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill, and Karl Marx – the course will comprehend the tradition of modern political philosophy – the enlightenment project - through their writings. In interpreting these thinkers, the course will engage in contextualizing these texts and political writings.

Introduction to Political Science Research Methods

This course primarily deals with the question of “how” to do research. With this question in mind, the paper will familiarize students with different techniques of doing research, including qualitative methods and qualitative analysis. At the conceptual level, the students will learn to think systematically about research design – the necessity of building a hypothesis and raising pertinent research questions – in conducting research. This will also help students to learn the importance of data and theory and eventually engage in the data analysis. This course aims to acquaint students with “methods toolbox”, which would include statistical software in doing quantitative research and will introduce them to different types of methodologies used in Social Sciences.

Comparative Politics and Government

In an attempt to go beyond eurocentrism, this foundational course on comparative government and politics will primarily acquaint students with the approaches adopted in the study of this field, particularly, the historical framework of examining politics. This includes the development and growth of colonialism, socialism and capitalism in the making of modern governments across the world. The course will familiarize students with the various themes of comparative analysis that include political economy, democratization, coalition politics, globalization, ethnic politics, political leadership, religion and politics among others.

Indian Foreign Policy

In a postcolonial perspective, this course will aim to familiarize the students with the genesis, evolution and practice of India’s foreign policy. With an emphasis on the continuous shift in domestic and international politics – liberalization of economy and end of the Cold War - the course will highlight India’s relations with major powers – US, China & Russia, her neighbors - Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and cementing of Asian regionalism – Japan, ASEAN countries, and striking a balance in the West Asian region. As a postcolonial state, the course will also trace the evolution of India’s position as a global player focusing on her bargaining strategy and changing positions.

Political Violence & Revolution

This course will familiarise students with theories of revolution with an emphasis on the history of revolutions across the world, including French Revolution, the Nazi uprising, the Russian and the Chinese revolution, and revolutions in Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba among others. It will acquaint students with counter-insurgency theories and strategies with specific case studies. The course will focus on revolutionary movements in the contemporary era, which includes the Arab Spring, the Iranian Green Revolution.

Semester III

Evolution of Indian Constitution, Politics & Government

This course teaches students about the constitutional designs of state structures and institutions and how they have been working over time. The Indian Constitution- the longest Constitution

in the world accommodates concepts of liberty, justice, territorial decentralisation and the arrangement of strong Union within itself. This course traces the embodiment of these conflicts in constitutional provisions and lays out how these have unfolded in political practice.

Gender, Identity and Politics

This course introduces debates about caste and class identities, expressions of gender identities and their representation in politics; and in Indian politics in particular. The course begins with a contemporary debate about gender identities, their relationship to the historical understandings of sex, gender and identity. Drawing upon psychology, social and political theory, the course unpacks the concept of identity, its sources and then discusses how identity affects perceptions, behaviour and social relations.

Globalisation and the Role of International Institutions

This course will teach students about the different aspects and dimensions of globalisation. It will also look at how the flows of globalisation are controlled and impacted by international institutions. The paper will elucidate the domestic and political implications of trade and financial liberalisation, poverty reduction, foreign aid, promotion of democracy and the impact of globalisation on conflict, expansion of the human rights regime and the globalisation of justice.

War and Peace

This course undertakes a comprehensive review of the literature on the causes of war and the conditions of peace, with a primary focus on interstate war. The course focuses primarily on theory and empirical research in political science but also gives some attention to work in other disciplines. Students will study the conditions under which various outcomes are most likely to occur. Theories of interstate war, which have dominated the International Relations literature on international conflict will be an essential part of this course.

Mass Violence and Identity Politics

Conflicts in Syria, Sudan and Myanmar have ensured that mass violence and identity politics are perpetual headline news. The most pertinent question in this context is what, if anything, is gained by destroying, in whole or in part, a real or imagined enemy by way of genocide? In this course, empirical cases will be discussed, including Germany, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria, Cambodia, Guatemala, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sudan and Syria. The course will cover the origins and development of genocidal campaigns, ethnic cleansing and pogroms their impact on the maintenance of international peace and security. and their consequences for the reconstruction and development of states.

Ethics, Public Administration and Policy

This course introduces the student to some of the ethical issues that arise in administration. This course is a survey of contemporary perspective on ethics in government; students learn

theories and traditions in public administration. This course identifies public values and how they apply in the administration of government. It reviews sources of values employed in public sector decision-making, and reviews how values in public administration are managed and applied. Systems of professional ethics are reviewed in the context of public professions.

Semester IV

Regional Politics of India

This paper will introduce students to the Party system in India and how it has evolved. In juxtaposition to National Parties like the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), this paper will teach students about parties like Asom Gana Parishad, All India Trinamool Congress, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, AIADMK, DMK and United Democratic Party among others. The paper will outline the social and ideological bases of these political parties.

Introduction to International Relations

This course introduces students to the study of important issues in modern international relations. The goal of the course is to teach students basic concepts and theories that are useful for making sense of contemporary debates and challenges in international politics. In this course, students will study current events and the recent history that has shaped how states and other actors interact with each other across national borders.

Role of Leaders in Politics

This course is about the study of political leadership and its different strains be they populist, authoritarian, charismatic or political royalty. The political qualities of individual politicians or states-persons have long lasting impacts not only on the politics of the day but the political culture in the long run. With the help of this course, the students will be able to assess the role of varied past political leaders and their distinct legacies. By studying particular leaders of the past or present the students will have a more nuanced understanding of actors, events and ideas that shape politics of any place.

Political Communication and Public Opinion

In this paper, students will learn about the major research and debates related to political campaigns, advocacy, communication and social change. The course offers an overview of the main theories, concepts and empirical approaches in the realm of political communication in democratic nations. The course delves into the modalities of political campaign and communication, the role of the media in processes and the media effects on public opinion. Some of the key concepts to be explored are mediatization of politics, social media, rhetoric and usage of political satire. The latter will include analysis of political animations ranging from comedy to commentary to mimicry. Students will also study building political narratives, media systems, freedom and pluralism, journalist professionalism and information quality, among others.

Political Systems and Electoral Politics

In this paper, students will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different political systems such as parliamentary, presidential, federal, unitary etc. They will look into case studies of countries such as India, Pakistan, USA, United Kingdom, Iran, Israel, Russia, China, Venezuela to compare and critically examine the robustness of the systems. This course will also delve into how these different systems generate political behaviour at the grassroots and impact the cohesiveness of the nation.

Political News From Multiple Perspectives

In this paper, students will learn how the diffusion of technology has led to the availability of news at people's fingertips and how that itself is changing popular perception of issues ranging from culture to war. An event reported as news from different agencies and nations is bound to have differences. Why these differences emerge in reporting and what are the motives behind such reporting will be an aspect students will learn as part of this course. Students will also learn about the emergence of fake news and how that is also used as a tool to colour popular perception of events of significance.

Semester V

Populism and Dissent

Populism can be understood to embody the spirit of democracy, with its appeal to the discontent & aspirations of the masses or ordinary person. However, history has shown us that while populist campaigns can highlight the fundamental problems existing across a nation; the political leadership that it brings to power can go either way, being a force for radicalization & socio-political purges or inclusion & economic development. In this course, we will look into populism on a case by case basis. For e.g.: Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, campaigns of Donald Trump & Bernie Sanders, Narendra Modi's rise, the Aam Aadmi Party's anti-corruption campaign, the Arab Spring, Populism & agrarian protests in USA & India and trade unions as populist platforms.

The Role of Regional Organisations in International Politics

In this course we will look at some of the transnational regional organizations and their role in furthering cooperation and mitigating tensions. We will examine to what extent the organization is helped or hampered by regional politics and their impact on a global scale. In South Asia we will focus on SAARC & BIMSTEC and in the Asia Pacific, ASEAN and related bodies. We will also look in western partnerships such as NATO, EU, PSI, etc.

India and its Neighbours

The focus will also be on SAARC and South Asian politics, as well as the problems facing integration of the subcontinent. In this course we will look into the root causes of conflict that led to the creation of the two countries, India and Pakistan, as well as the ongoing conflict over Kashmir. We will examine the evolution of democracy in South Asia, the exodus of minorities and rise of secessionist movement & cross-border terrorism. We will look at the strategic interests of extra-regional players such as USA, UK, Saudi Arabia etc. in South Asia. Current developments, including the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir and how that affects regional stability, will be covered.

Formation, Evolution and the Future of the European Union

In the wake of the two World Wars, it became imperative for the former imperial powers, to unify their political and economic goals to avoid the kind of social & economic destruction seen in the 20th century. This course looks into the chronology of formation and impact thus far of the EU and its subsidiary organizations. We will also do a comparative analysis of the impact of the EU and its policies on the more dominant members such as France and Germany versus countries of Eastern and Southern Europe. We will delve into the implications of Brexit as well as the slated accession of Turkey.

The Emerging World Order

The post-Cold War period saw the rise of the USA as the ‘international policeman’. Today, although the USA may still be ascendant militarily, the levers of international political economy, the rise of China and other Asian countries in particular have made the power balance more multipolar. Add to this the fact that it is not just USA & Russia or indeed state-actors that may be in possession of nuclear weapons. Managing the challenges be they political, economic or ecological requires robust collaboration of a multilateral scale. At the same time multilateral organizations may also be a way to balance the power of major powers such as Russia, China & USA. This course will examine what can be expected dynamics in a multipolar world.

International Political Economy

This course introduces students to the study of the international political economy. It focuses on the political foundations and consequences of the contemporary world economy and employs some basic economic concepts. The course will survey the evolution of the international economic system since the Second World War, with reference to contemporary debates and issues. Examples include the World Trade Organization and Trade Policies, the Brexit and the European Union and the trade war between the U.S. and China.

Semester VI

Politics of the Middle East and North Africa

The Middle-East and North Africa together represent a region of great resource wealth as well as pockets of great poverty and conflict. It is a region like many others, of ethnic divides that

have given rise to violent power struggles. Prone to ethnic tensions, religious radicalizations, political conflict and power struggles & vacuum, it has most recently seen the rise and fall of ISIS. Today, the OPEC countries continue to influence the world economy significantly through the regulation of oil production and costs. This course looks at the evolution of region and what countries are doing to remain relevant politically and economically beyond the oil boom.

The Rise of the Asia Pacific

The economic rise of Southeast Asian tigers, the Chinese dragon and India over the past three decades has deemed the 21st century, the Asian century. Both the platforms for collaboration and flashpoints of conflict exist simultaneously, making it hard to discern what's around the corner. Arguably, Russia and USA now may be competing for influence in Asia as much as in Europe, making the region a prime candidate for any major international military skirmish in the future. This course will look into what can be expected with the rise of major Asian powers and any of their revisionist tendencies.

Politics of South Asia

South Asian countries while complex and ancient as civilizations, are still comparatively new to tackling the challenges of statecraft. This has largely been due to colonialism which although may have put some functional structures such as bureaucracy and railways in place did not for obvious reasons institute welfare of society or camaraderie between ethnicities despite political unification. Arguably, we still see today not only a national but a regional level, tensions with regards to identities. This course will look at the politics of South Asia and examine what needs to change for there to be proper political, economic and social cohesion.

USA & Latin American Politics

USA has played an important role in the economic trajectory and political life of the countries of Latin America. This largely originated by the Monroe doctrine seeking to make the region primarily, USA's sphere of influence for resource and strategic reasons. This course will look into the evolution of democracy, human rights, economic development and other facets of empowerment of people in the face of tumultuous domestic politics and USA's influence.

Nuclear Proliferation, Treaties and the Sanctions regime

The creation of nuclear weapons capacity can be understood to be this age's proverbial opening of a Pandora's Box. Logically, every party - state or non-state that possess nuclear weapons represents a threat to humanity. However, in the international community the threat perception spear-headed by the western powers, has been directed in the post 9/11 era at George Bush's Axis of Evil (Iraq, Iran and North Korea). The course will look into the

evolution of the major treaties such as CTBT & NPT, the modus operandi of the sanctions regime and their impact.

Geopolitics and Strategy

In this course, the political, military, economic, and cultural effects of geography are analyzed in historical and current terms. The role of geography in the development of international, national, and regional strategies is assessed. This course studies the effect of geography on military-political affairs. The overall objective is to familiarize the student with the fields of study that comprise Geopolitics and Geostrategy and the analytical processes involved in the assessment of various geostrategies. The theoretical, geographic, political, economic, and cultural rationales that contribute to the formation of the geostrategies of both nation-state and non-state actors in the global arena will be discussed extensively in the course.
