Political Economy of South Asian Development (PSC 288-11)

Lectures: Tuesday 5:10-7:00 p.m. Emmanuel J. Teitelbaum
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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-11:15, (202) 994-9125
and by appointment

Increasingly, South Asia is one of the most economically vibrant and important regions in the world. Whether as a more democratic alternative for investments or a new source of economic competition, the economies of South Asian countries have garnered the attention and imagination of journalists, policymakers and academics alike. This course will explore the political economy of South Asian development by harnessing intra- and cross-regional comparisons to explore of four key issue areas: democratic development; agrarian political economy; the political economy of labor; and economic reform.

Course Requirements

1) Option of four argumentative essays or one research paper (70%)
2) Weekly memos and class participation (30%)

Readings

You may want to purchase the following books, of which we will read substantial portions:

*Academic Texts*


Other readings will be uploaded to the course website.

Writing assignments

Students have the option of writing four argumentative essays or one term paper. The four argumentative essays will correspond to each of the four substantive issue areas covered in the course. The essays should be approximately 10 to 12 double-spaced pages in length and should provide substantial responses to questions formulated by the professor. I will circulate the questions on the last day of each thematic section, and your responses will be due one week later. For example, the section on democratic development ends on September 25, and the argumentative essays for this section will be due in class on October 2.

The term paper will be an original research paper of approximately 25 to 30 pages in length, although the length of the paper is much less important than the quality of your research and argumentation. If you decide to write the research paper, I will work closely with you to define the paper’s scope and a research strategy. Your goal should be to write a paper good enough to send to a professional academic journal for peer review and, hopefully, publication.

Memos and class participation

You are required to submit a 250 to 500-word memo on the readings, which will be based on questions that I email to you each week. The primary purpose of the memos is to prepare you to discuss the readings in class. The memos will also help you to recall your central critiques of each week’s readings when you sit down to write your argumentative essays. Please circulate your memos via e-mail to the class list no later than midnight the day before class. Memos will be evaluated on a simple three-point scale (☐, ☑, ☑+) and will form a primary basis for your class participation score.
Week 1: Introduction (September 4)

Part I: The Challenge of Democratic Development

Week 2: Planning and Socialist Development (September 11)

- Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapters 1 and 3
- Atul Kohli, State-Directed Development, 1-3, 6 and 7

Week 3: Participatory Development (September 18)

- Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity, entire

Week 4: Regional Development Disparities (September 25)

- Aseema Sinha, A Divided Leviathan, chapters 4, 6, 7 and 8
- Montek Ahluwalia, “Economic Performance of States in Post-Reforms Period”
- Sudip Chaudhiri, “Regional Growth and Disparity in India”

Part II: Agrarian Political Economy

Week 5: Agrarian Reform (October 2)

- Ronald Herring, Land to the Tiller, entire
- Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapters 4 & 5 (skim)

Week 6: Hunger and Famines (October 9)

- Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, Hunger and Public Action, chapters 1, 2, 5-13
- Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, Poverty and Famines, chapter 6 (skim)
- Jos Mooij, Food Policy and the Indian State, chapters 1, 3 and 5

Week 7: Rural-Urban Struggles (October 16)

- Michael Lipton, Why Poor People Stay Poor, chapter 2
- Ashutosh Varshney, Democracy, Development and the Countryside, pp. 1-9, chapters 2, 4, 6 & 8
- Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapters 6 & 7 (skim)

Part III: The Political Economy of Labor

Week 8: Labor and the Developmental State (October 23)

- Lloyd and Susan Rudolph, In Pursuit of Lakshmi, chapter 10
- Vivek Chibber, Locked in Place, chapters 1, 4-6, and 8
Emmanuel Teitelbaum, “Was the Indian Labor Movement Ever Co-opted?”
Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapter 3

Week 9: Child Labor (October 30)
Myron Weiner, The Child and the State in India, entire

Week 10: State-labor relations and economic reform (November 6)
Christopher Candland, “The Cost of Incorporation”
Patrick Heller, The Labor of Development, Chapter 7
Emmanuel Teitelbaum, “Can a Developing Democracy Benefit from Labor Repression?”
Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapters 2 and 11

Part IV: Economic Reform

Week 11: Crisis and Reform (November 13)
Pranab Bardhan, The Political Economy of Development in India, entire
Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapters 8, 12 and 14 (skim)
Montek Ahluwalia, “India’s Economic Reforms, An Appraisal”

Week 12: How Can We Explain Reform? (November 20)
Rob Jenkins, Democratic Politics and Economic Reform in India, chapters 1,2, and 4-6
Stuart Corbridge and John Harris, Reinventing India, chapter 7
T.N. Srinivasan and S. Tendulkar, Reintegrating India With the World, entire

Week 13: Performance Since Reform (November 27)
Mihir Rakshit, “Some Macroeconomics of India’s Reform Experience”
M. Govinda Rao, “State-Level Fiscal Reforms in India”
Nirvikar Singh, “Information Technology and India’s Economic Development”

Week 14: Reform and Inequality (December 4)
Angus Deaton and Jean Drèze, “Poverty and Inequality in India: A Re-Examination”
Sen and Himanshu, “Poverty and Inequality in India”
Francine Frankel, India’s Political Economy, chapter 14