Introduction to the Politics of South Asia (PSC 169-10)

Lectures: Monday/Wednesday
12:45-2:00 p.m.
Monroe Hall, 112

Emmanuel J. Teitelbaum
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Hall of Government
Room 411

Office Hours: Wednesday
2:00-3:15
and by appointment

emt@gwu.edu
(202) 994-9125

Home to nearly 1.5 billion people, South Asia is one of the world’s most ethnically and religiously diverse regions. South Asia’s cultural diversity is mirrored by the contradictions inherent in its political landscape. Many South Asians have enjoyed the freedoms associated with political democracy while others have suffered under brutal dictatorships. Some live in conditions of peace and stability while others live amidst persistent communal strife. Finally, some South Asians prosper in relatively egalitarian societies while others endure grinding poverty, inequality and deprivation. This course will harness this variation to explore important topics in the field of comparative politics.

Course Requirements

1) One critical essay (30%)
2) Two Exams (30% each)
3) Class Participation (10%)

Readings

Students will read approximately 50 pages per week of academic material and one novel or work of popular nonfiction during the course of the semester.

All academic readings will be posted to blackboard. Students should purchase the novel for the argumentative essay assignment through Amazon or some similar vendor.

Critical essay

Students will write one critical essay during the course of the semester. The purpose of the essay is to provide students with the opportunity to engage a novel or work of popular non-fiction relating to one of the course’s three main issue areas--colonialism and empire; violence and political conflict; or economic development.

Crucially, the essay should do two things. First, it should critically engage the novel or work of popular nonfiction. Second, it should endeavor to draw connections between the relevant novel or work of popular nonfiction and the academic readings for the course.

This is to be a critical essay, not a book report. At the beginning of each section of the course, I will provide ‘guideline questions’ that students may use to aid them in constructing their essays; however, students are encouraged to be creative in developing the central questions and arguments for their papers.

Students should draw on as many readings in the section of the course as apply to the central question addressed in their essays.
I encourage students to discuss ideas for their papers with me during office hours. I am also willing to review drafts of papers, but only during office hours and not over e-mail.

The papers should be no less than five pages in length and no more than seven pages in length. Pages must be double-spaced with 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins on all sides. The penalty for papers that violate these guidelines is an automatic one-half letter grade deduction.

These essays will be due approximately ten days after the last lecture in each section of the course (due dates are noted in the syllabus). Papers submitted late, for any reason, will receive a one-half letter grade deduction per day until the highest possible grade the student can receive is a C. Students presenting a letter from a qualified professional may be exempted from this rule.

Exams

Exams will be comprised some combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions.

Class Participation

Students are encouraged to participate in class discussion.
Part I: Colonialism and Empire

Novel: Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*

Week 1: Imperial domination: methods and justifications (Jan 12 & 14)

- Video--Simon Schama’s *History of Britain*, Volume V, episode 2, ‘The Empire of Good Intentions’
- Francis Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence*, chapters 1 and 4
- Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*, chapter 3, pp 97-126

Week 2: The political economy of colonial rule (Jan 21)

- Angus Maddison, *Class Structure and Economic Growth*, chapter 3
- Paul Bairoch, *Economics and World History*, chapters 5-8

Week 3: Partition and Independence (Jan 26 & 28)

- Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia*, chapters 1 and 2

**Argumentative essay due at noon on Friday, February 8**

Part II: Political Violence and Civil Conflict

Popular Nonfiction: Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars*

Week 4: Ethnic Conflict, Part I (The Role of Elites) (Feb 2 & 4)

- Steve Wilkinson. *Votes and Violence*, chapters TBA.

Week 5: Ethnic Conflict, Part II (The Role of Political Institutions) (Feb 9 & 11)


Week 6: Ethnic Conflict, Part III (The Role of Civil Society) (Feb 18)


**No Class February 16, President’s Day**

Week 7: Caste Conflict (Feb 23 & 25)

- Pradeep Chhibber, *Democracy Without Associations*, chapter 6
- Human Rights Watch, *Broken People*, chapters TBA
Week 8: The Conflict in Sri Lanka (Mar 2 & 4)

- Amita Shastri, TBA

Week 9: The Challenge of Unity (with a special focus on Kashmir) (Mar 9 & 11)

- Paul Brass, Politics of India Since Independence, Chapter 6
- Ollapally, Deepa. The Politics of Extremism in South Asia, chapter TBA.

** Spring break, March 14-22

Week 10: Afghanistan and Al Qaeda (Mar 23 & 25)

- Barnett Rubin, “Saving Afghanistan,” Foreign Affairs
- Barnett Rubin, “Afghanistan Under the Taliban,” Current History

**Midterm exam, March 25
**Argumentative essay due Friday April 3

Part III: The Political Economy of South Asian Development

Popular Nonfiction: Gurucharan Das, India Unbound

Week 11: The Politics of Growth (Mar 30 & Apr 1)


Week 12: Development and Political Freedom (Apr 6 & 8)

- Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity, chapters 4 and 8

Week 13: Women and Development (Apr 13 & 15)

- Jeffrey, Robin. Politics, Women and Well-Being, chapters TBA

Week 14: State-Labor Relations and Economic Reform (Apr 20 & 22)

- Christopher Candland, “Labor Institutions in India and Pakistan”
- Emmanuel Teitelbaum, “Can a Developing Democracy Benefit from Labour Repression?”

Week 15: Inequality (Apr 27 & 29)

- Readings TBA

**Argumentative essay due at noon on Friday, May 8
**Final exam during exam period, May 4-12