COMPARATIVE POLITICS: REFLECTIONS ON SOUTH ASIA

Course Details
Compulsory, 4 Credits
Classroom Hours: TBC
Contact Hours: TBC

Instructor Details
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The use of comparative method lies at the very base of comparative politics which deals with wide ranging issues that collapses into a single name, ‘politics’. Comparative politics has emerged as the substructure of this broad academic discipline which engages in comparing different models, used by different social groups for managing their group lives. State; Governmental structures; electoral behavior; sub-systems of the larger international system, are some of the models for comparison. Hence, comparative politics is an all pervasive substructure of political science; and all other components that fall under the broad rubric of the traditional academic discipline called political science; be it international relations and public administration, gets convoluted to this very sub discipline. Thus, it is crucial to study Comparative Politics as a part of an MA programme in International Relations. This necessity becomes even more profound, when we situate the study of International Relations in the domain of the idiosyncrasies that characterize South Asian dynamics. In view of this, the course aims to take up broad questions concerning mainstream political behaviour of man such as culture, nationalism, migration and economic transition and attempt at examining as to how these strands of political behaviour have operated in South Asia.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated during the semester on the basis of the following criteria:

Mid-semester examination- 20%
End-semester examination- 30%
Essay submissions, presentations and book reviews-40%
Attendance-10% as per Department policy
**COURSE STRUCTURE**

**Unit I: Introduction:**

**Unit description:**

The unit attempts at theorizing the concept of Comparative Politics and to define it from the perspective of different approaches. It will provide an introduction to comparative politics as a sub-discipline of political science. The unit will cover the nature of comparative politics and also interrogate as to how it can further our understanding of political phenomena and explore different methods of comparison. Apart from the discussion on the traditional and modern approaches, Thomas Kuhn’s concept of ‘paradigm shift’ has been included as a significant transition in the methods and notions involved in the understanding of Comparative Politics as a discipline.

3. Approaches to the Study of Comparative Politics: Traditional, Behavioural and Post-Behavioural, General Systems, Easton’s Input-Output Model, Kuhn’s Paradigm Shift.

**Required Readings:**

UNIT II: Comparative Political Processes and Institutions:

Unit description:

In this unit, we investigate important systematic variations in the institutional and cultural settings of politics. By invoking comparison as a method for analysing political processes and events, and drawing on a wide range of cases and themes, this unit will enable students to better understand debates surrounding key political institutions. Apart from the focus on formal structures such as different arrangements of executive power, legislative structures and executive-legislative relations, emphasis also would be on the understanding of informal institutions: e.g. political culture and ideas and modes of citizenship which can also influence political behaviour.

4. Political parties, party systems and electoral processes.
5. Political culture and political development.

Required Readings:


Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver & Peter Mair (2006), Representative Government in
Unit III: The Postcolonial State in South Asia:

Unit description:

This unit seeks to situate the diverse patterns of State formation in South Asia from a comparative perspective. It examines the origin and nature of the modern State in South Asia in the colonial setting and aims at understanding as to how colonialism and partition of the Indian subcontinent has played a crucial role in shaping the patterns of State formation in the region. Finally, the unit deals with some generic problems faced by the States in the region that include: anti regime activities, civil military relations, migration and the issue of Stateless communities and the issues involved in governance like corruption and bureaucratic inertia.

1. Colonial transition and the advent of modern institutions of governance in South Asia.
2. Colonial retreat and the partition of the Indian subcontinent.
4. Contemporary challenges of State-construction in South Asia

Required Readings:

UNIT 4: Comparative Politics of Developing Societies: Perspectives on South Asia:

Unit Description:

In view of the diverse challenges faced by Developing States of South Asia and their arduous journey in the way of democratization, there is a significant need to situate the study of comparative politics of the region from the perspective of development. While doing this, there is a need to consider the idiosyncratic socio-cultural and politico-economic features of the region. In this perspective, this unit would deal with some of the challenges of development faced by South Asian polities such as modernization of infrastructure and agrarian unrest, industrialization and environmental conservation and, the social movements that work towards shaping developmental policies in these issue areas. This is done in the light of various problems of democratization that the region is facing presently and by examining South Asian polities’ experiments with different types of developmental paradigms.

1. Developing Societies of South Asia: An Introduction.
2. Democratization of South Asia: Issues and problems
5. Industrialization and the Issues of development.

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings: