

**Department: International Relations**

**Faculty: Social Sciences**

**Course Title: International Relations of South Asia (MA, Compulsory)**

**Number of Credits: Four**

**Course Objectives:**

International Relations of South Asia is based on the study of South Asia as a region. The course will consider a number of conceptual and policy questions, and explore why is South Asia 'international' in contemporary world politics. The students will be introduced to the idea of South Asia, its relevance as a region to international relations theory and praxis. Further, the course will cover a broad spectrum of issues which have a political and international dimension. The focus will also be on issue areas that internationalise South Asia as a region. While an imaginative exercise on engaging South Asia as region is encouraged, the students are made aware of the strategic undertones and the 'over-developed' nature of various South Asian states.

**Course Structure:**

**Unit I: Conceptualising the Idea of South Asia (Week One to Three)**

In this unit, we situate the idea of South Asia as a region. The emphasis is on identifying strands which give meaning to the 'ambiguous' idea of South Asia. Impact of colonialism, nationalism, partition and cold war on 'post-colonial' states and societies of South Asia will be studied. In what ways political culture of South Asian states informs the strategic behaviour and diplomatic culture in South Asia is discussed. The emphasis is on understanding the nature of South Asian states, its intellectual legacies and identifying the continuities between past, present and future.

**Unit II: Theorising South Asia-Old and New (Week Four and Five)**

This unit primarily deals with the question on using theories of international relations in an applied perspective. The aim here is to critically appraise theories, rather than fit South Asia within certain templates. For this reason, students are introduced to changes and continuities by juxtaposing the notion of 'old South Asia' to a potential 'new South Asia'.

**Unit Three (Week Six-Eight)**

This unit picks up on the nature of post-colonial states in South Asia. Under the theme of nationalism, the interactive nature of state and nation-state has been analysed. Students are also introduced to the critique of nation state by engaging with the works of Tagore, Gandhi, Chatterjee and Nandy. It introduces students to the notion of classical and critical geo-politics and takes them to a journey of understanding specific 'political cultures' of South Asia.

#### **Unit Four (Week Ten -Twelve)**

The purpose of this unit is to examine and identify the strategic hotspots in South Asia, which make the region 'international' in a strategic frame. The security environment of the region is complex, owing to the nuclearisation, strands of extremism and terrorism, contentious borders and the non-traditional security challenges. These range from the radicalisation of political Islam, left-wing insurgency and several secessionist movements. The broad focus of this unit aims at understanding the strategic and geopolitical undertones embedded in the region. Issues that can have strategic implications on South Asia are discussed. There will be a base reading and a supplementary reading. Primarily those issues which have an international connotation have been picked up for discussion. Engagement with reading before entering the class is important.

#### **Reading Suggestions:**

Nandy Ashis (2007), "The Idea of South Asia: A personal note on post-Bandung Blue", *InterAsia Cultural Studies*, 6:4.

Sugata Bose (2009), *The Indian Ocean: A Hundred Horizons in the Age of Global Empire*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Firdous Azim and Maheen Sultan (2010), "Mapping Women's Empowerment: Experiences from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, University Press Limited with Brac Development Institute.

Bianchini et al (2005), *Partitions: Reshaping States and Mind*, New York: Routledge.

Benedict Anderson (1982), *Imagined Community*, London, Verso.

Ahmed, Dubey and Sikri (eds.), *Contemporising Tagore and the World*, Dhaka, University Press Limited, 2013.

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Stephen Cohen, ed (2010), *The Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, Routledge.