Objectives of the Course

This course will introduce students to some key themes of political sociology, with a focus on South Asia. We will start with tracing the origins of this field by going through some classic readings in this field. Next, we will examine some key concepts to understand modern political sociology: State, Civil Society and Governmentality. We will then discuss some major texts on the peculiarities of the modern state in its colonial avatar, and its postcolonial legacies in South Asia. Our next module is on the ethnography of the state, with focus on two of its principal contemporary aspects - bureaucracy and democracy. Here too, our ethnographies will be from South Asia. Our final two modules are a broad introduction to politics of gender and of caste and ethnicity in South Asia.

Unit I: Political sociology as a discipline: Genealogies

This unit aims to introduce some classic early ethnographies of politics which served to established this sub-discipline, as well as early critiques of such work.


Unit 2: Understanding modern politics: Key concepts

This unit aims to introduce the key concepts of modern politics: state, civil society, governmentality and resistance. We will look at key theoretical texts as well as classic sociological treatises on the concepts.

State


Civil Society

Governmentality

Resistance

Unit 3: The Colonial and Post-colonial state
This unit will look at recent re-examinations of colonial and postcolonial histories in South Asia that impinge upon contemporary predicaments.


Unit 4: Ethnographies of the State:

This unit will look at contemporary ethnographies of two key aspects of the modern state: bureaucracy and democracy. The emphasis will be on such studies in South Asian contexts.

Bureaucracy


Democracy


**Unit 5: Gender and politics**

This unit aims to introduce critical themes on gender and politics, with a focus on South Asia. Before moving on to case studies, we will look at the framing of the women’s question in western political theory and in colonial South Asia.


**Unit 6: Politics of Caste and Ethnicity**

This unit will provide a general overview of the intractable arenas in the politics of caste and ethnicity in various South Asian countries, which so dominate the everyday politics of the region.