



# Comparative Politics of South Asian States

*Winter Semester 2016-17*



## Seminar Handout

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### 1. Important Information

- Seminar time: Wednesdays 14:15 to 15.45
- Seminar place: SAI Z10
- First session: Wednesday 26 October 2016
- Last session: Thursday 8 February 2017
- Lecturer: Dr. Seyed Hossein Zarhani
- Office: SAI, Room No.409
- Office Hours: Mondays 14- 15:30
- Email: zarhani@uni-heidelberg.de
- Seminar Website: <https://elearning2.uni-heidelberg.de/> then Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften then Politische Wissenschaft
- Assessment: Attendance, presentation, and essay

### 2. Course Description

South Asia is a diverse and dynamic region politically, socially, and economically. Over the past several decades, South Asia has seen the rise of India as the largest democracy in the world, emergence and collapse of authoritarian regimes in Pakistan, democratization in Bhutan, civil war in Sri Lanka, fragmentation of state in Afghanistan, and economic boom and bust India. How can we make sense of these dynamics and complexities? Why characteristics and performances of South Asian countries are so diverse and different? As a subfield of political science, comparative politics provides us conceptual frameworks that facilitate comparison and explanation of what are seemingly quite different.

As an introduction to the comparative politics of South Asia, this course provides a comprehensive and systematic comparative study of major states of South Asia and focus on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal.

As a comparative politics course, this seminar discusses (i) processes of state formation in South Asia, (ii) classification of states regimes types, (iii) the structure of political institutions, (iv) the role of political actors, and (v) processes and performance.

The initial weeks of the seminar will focus on the definitions, concepts and the methodological concerns surrounding the comparative method as an approach to the study of politics. Subsequently, this seminar compares selected topics across countries: government structure, political culture, political parties, interest groups, election and participation, recruiting political elites, and government performances.

### **3. Prior Requirements**

This is an MA level class. What is required is a commitment to South Asia and to social science theory. Students are required to go through the readings mentioned just below the titles. This is essential. The supplementary materials are further readings for students who want to learn more about a particular topic. This material will be useful for research students, especially those who wish to present in a particular class.

### **4. Organization**

This seminar is based on lectures, student presentations on the required reading, and in-class discussions. The first meeting will be a discussion on how we will run the seminar. The theory lectures will be given in the second session; then, the student presentations will take place in the next sessions based on the required readings for that week.

The second session focuses on the conceptual and theoretical debates in comparative politics. This introduction should act as the basis for oral presentations and then essays.

### **5. Course Text**

The seminar will consist of the reading of a selection of the academic literature on comparative study of the South Asian States, their institutions, structures, and process. There is no single text. No reader. For each session, one or two texts have to be read by all participants. They are the basis for a discussion in the seminar. The course is taught as a political science course; however, the approach is multi-disciplinary, making use of texts from diverse fields of study like public administration, political economy or public policy to highlight the complex nature of the phenomena.

Students are encouraged to ask critical questions and develop interdisciplinary reflections in understanding the different issues. Their respective diverse backgrounds and majors, as well as cultural experience and political knowledge, are highly valued.

### **6. E-learning platform**

The seminar “Comparative Politics of South Asian States” is registered in the university eLearning platform. You will find it opening “Fakultät für Wirtschafts-und Sozialwissenschaften” and then “Politische Wissenschaft.” The enrollment key is *Comparative1617*. All course materials and other details will be uploaded there. Students who desire a “Schein” must register on Moodle by the second week after the lecture begins (9 November 2016).

### **7. Class Organization and Presentations**

There will be no student presentations in the first two sessions of the seminar, which will provide an introductory framework including a discussion of theories, important terminologies, and review of key concepts. The allocation of presentation themes will be done on 26 October session.

During the rest of the semester, students will be expected to present at least once. Presentations must be between 20 to 30 minutes and should aim at answering a central question. After that, it will be a general discussion. Each session is allotted at least one, core article (or articles) that will act as the basis for the class discussion. All participants are expected to read the assigned article. Presenters are expected to draw on additional information and **must** provide their colleagues with a handout.

## 8. Schedule

**26.10.2016**

### **Introduction and Organizational issues**

**02.11.2016:**

### **Comparative Politics, Concepts, Debates and Theories**

#### *Essential reading*

- Boix, Carles, and Stokes, Susan C., Overview of Comparative Politics, in Goodin, Robert E. ed., The Oxford Handbook of political science. Vol. 11. Oxford University Press, 2009.

#### *Supplementary reading*

- Powell Jr, G. Bingham, Russell J. Dalton, and Kaare Strom. Comparative politics today: a world view. Pearson Higher Ed, 2015. Chapters 1 to 5.

**09.11.2016**

### **Colonial Past, Institutions and State Building**

#### *Essential reading*

- Oldenburg, Philip. "Inheritances of colonial rule" in India, Pakistan, and Democracy: Solving the puzzle of divergent paths. Routledge, 2010. Pp 17-35
- Tablot, Jan, "India and Pakistan" in Paul Brass ed., Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 25-39

#### *Supplementary reading*

- Jalal, Ayesha, The Colonial Legacy in India and Pakistan, in Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A comparative and historical perspective, Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pp 9-65

**16.11.2016**

### **Democratization in South Asia: India and Pakistan**

#### *Essential reading*

- Mitra, Subrata K. "How Exceptional is India's Democracy? Path Dependence, Political Capital, and Context in South Asia, India Review, 12:4, 2013
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. "India and Pakistan: interpreting the divergence of two political trajectories." Cambridge Review of International Affairs 15.2, 2002. pp.251-267.

#### *Supplementary reading*

- Oldenburg, Philip. "Institutionalizing Democracy" in India, Pakistan, and Democracy: Solving the puzzle of divergent paths. Routledge, 2010. Pp 73-101
- Myerson, Roger. "Constitutional structures for a strong democracy: considerations on the government of Pakistan." World Development, 53, 2014, pp 46-54.

**23.11.2016**

### **Democratization in South Asia: Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka**

#### *Essential reading*

- Wilkinson, Steven I. "Democratic consolidation and failure: Lessons from Bangladesh and Pakistan." Democratization 7.3 (2000): pp 203-226.

- Krishna Hachchetu and David Gellner, “Nepal: Trajectories of Democracy and Restructuring of the State.” in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 131-14
- Krishna, Sankaran. “Challenges in State Consolidation and Minority Integration” in Paul, Thaza Varkey, ed. *South Asia's weak states: understanding the regional insecurity predicament*. Stanford University Press, 2010. Pp 220-240

**30.11.2016**

**Class and Politics in the South Asian States (With Focus on Bangladesh and Pakistan)**

*Essential reading*

- Alavi, Hamza. “The State and Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh” *New Left Review*, 1(74), 1972. pp. 64–74.

*Supplementary reading*

- Bardhan, Pranab. “The Political Economy of Development in India,” New York: Basil Blackwell. 1984 pp.40-53.

**07.12.2016**

**Political Conflicts and National Unity in the South Asian States (1)  
(Caste and Language)**

*Essential reading*

- Jaffrelot, Christophe. “Caste and the Rise of Marginalized Groups”. In *The State of India's Democracy*, eds. Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2007, pp 67-88
- Oberst, Robert C., et al. “Pakistan: Conflict and Mediation” in *Government and Politics in South Asia*. Westview Press, 2013. Pp 203-2016.
- Annamalai, E. “Politics of Language in India” in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 213-231

*Supplementary reading*

- Rahman, Tariq. “Language Problem and Politics in Pakistan” in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 232-246

**14.12.2016**

**Conflicts and National Unity in the South Asian States (2)  
(Religion and Politics in South Asia)**

*Essential reading*

- Waseem, Mohammad, *Ethnic and Islamic militancy in Pakistan* in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 213-231
- Ganguly, Summit, and Kapur, S. Paul, "The Jihad Paradox: Pakistan and Islamist Militancy in South Asia." *International Security* 37.1, 2012, pp 111-141.
- DeVotta, Neil. "Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist ideology: implications for politics and conflict resolution in Sri Lanka." *Policy Studies* 40, 2007.

**21.12.2016**

**Militaries of South Asia**

*Essential reading*

- Staniland, Paul. "Explaining civil-military relations in complex political environments: India and Pakistan in comparative perspective." *Security Studies* 17.2, 2008, pp 322-362.
- Ziring, Lawrence. *Weak state, failed state, garrison state: The Pakistan saga.* in Paul, Thaza Varkey, ed. *South Asia's weak states: understanding the regional insecurity predicament*. Stanford University Press, 2010. Pp 170-194

*Supplementary reading*

- Cohen, Stephen. "Militaries of South Asia" in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 351-363

**11.01.2017**

**Party Politics in South Asia**

*Essential reading*

- Jaffrelot, Christophe. "The Rise of the other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt." *Journal of Asian Studies* 59 (1): 2000, pp 86-108
- Blair, Harry, "Party overinstitutionalization, contestation, and democratic degradation in Bangladesh" in in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 98-117
- Oberst, Robert C., et al. *Pakistan: Political Parties and Political Leaders in Government and Politics in South Asia*. Westview Press, 2013. Pp 180-202.

*Supplementary reading*

- Kothari, Rajni. "The Congress System in India." *Asian Survey*, 4 (12), 1964, pp 1161-1173.

**18.01.2017**

**The Weak States in South Asia: Afghanistan and?**

*Essential reading*

- Rais, Rasul Bakhsh. "Afghanistan: A Weak State in Path of Power Rivalries" in Paul, Thaza Varkey, ed. *South Asia's weak states: understanding the regional insecurity predicament*. Stanford University Press, 2010. Pp 195-215
- Riaz, Ali. "Weak State with multiple Security Challenges" in Paul, Thaza Varkey, ed. *South Asia's weak states: understanding the regional insecurity predicament*. Stanford University Press, 2010. Pp 241-264

**25.01.2017**

**Ruling Elites and Elite Agency in the South Asian States**

*Essential reading*

- Mitra, Subrata Kumar. "Room to maneuver in the middle: Local elites, political action, and the state in India." *World Politics* 43.03 (1991): 390-413.
- Oldenburg, Philip. "Who really govern?" in *India, Pakistan, and Democracy: Solving the puzzle of divergent paths*. Routledge, 2010. Pp 102-128
- Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. "The Iconization of Chandrababu: Sharing Sovereignty in India's Federal Market Economy " In *Handbook of Politics in Indian States: Regions, Parties, and Economic Reforms*, edited by Sudha Pai. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2013. Pp 315-338.

**01.02.2017**

**Mass Politics in South Asia: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh**

*Essential reading*

- Kohli, Atul. "The NTR phenomenon in Andhra Pradesh: Political change in a South Indian state." *Asian Survey* 28.10 (1988): 991-1017.
- Malik, S. Jamal. "The Luminous Nurani: Charisma and political mobilization among the Barelwis in Pakistan." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 28 (1990): 38-50.

08.02.2017

## State Bureaucracy and Service Delivery in South Asia

*Essential reading*

- Mukherji, Rahul. "Ideas, interests, and the tipping point: Economic change in India." *Review of International Political Economy* 20.2 (2013): 363-389.
- Mathew, Santhosh, and Mick Moore. "State incapacity by design: Understanding the Bihar story." *IDS Working Papers* 2011.366 (2011): 1-31.
- Burki, Shahid Javed. "Pakistan Politics and its Economy" in Paul Brass ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp 83-97
- Mukherji, Rahul, "A Review of Administrative Reforms in India" in Bibek Debroy ed. *Agenda for Improving Governance*. New Delhi: Academic Foundation. 2004. Pp 105-120

### 9. Assessment and Submission Dates

Students wishing to obtain a "Schein" or Credit Points for the seminar would be required to:

- Attend in 80% session, be familiar with the core reading texts and actively participate in discussions. (2 CPs)
- Hold a presentation on one of the topics of the seminar and prepare a handout for this presentation, including, but not limited to, the core question, main points in a bullet-form and a selected bibliography. (2 CPs)
- Submit an essay (2 CPs)

In addition to regular participation and a seminar presentation, those taking the course for credit are required to submit a seminar paper (5000-6000 words) (by March 30th, 4 pm. The deadline cannot be extended. Only soft copies will be accepted. The essay must be submitted along with a properly filled in *Scheinformular*. The Cover page of the *Hausarbeit* should give the contact address of the author, indicate the Fächerkombination and the *Fachsemester*.

### 10. Teaching Support and Student Feedback

As always, student feedback is essential to the success of the seminar, and your comments are welcome at any time. Please contact me if you have any difficulties with this seminar or if you wish to discuss your work and progress.

My Office Hour: Mondays 14–15:30, Room 409.

### 11. Seminar Evaluation

Student feedback is essential to the success of the seminar, and your comments are welcome at any time. Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which enables the Department to monitor the lecture and addresses any apparent problems or difficulties.

Please also contact me in the case of difficulties or if you wish to discuss your work and progress. In particular, please do not hesitate to inform me if a book or journal is not available in the library.