**Political Economy of South Asia**

*Winter Semester 2016-17*

Instructor: Rahul Mukherji

Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute

**Aims**

South Asia comprises of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. India dominates the region comprising more than 70% of the geography and 80% of the economy. The region remains mired in poverty. Many countries in this region are growing rapidly, and India has recently emerged as a rapidly growing emerging economy. India is the fastest growing major economy in the world. This phenomenon has shifted the attention of the world towards South Asia and India.

This class will explore what political economy is. First, in order to understand the political realm, we will think deeply about social power. Political relations are driven by the quest for power. The economy deals more with issues such as the creation and redistribution of wealth. Political economy, therefore, invites us to think about the economy in terms of social relations based on power. We would invite students to focus on concepts such as class, caste and gender relations, while thinking about social power and the economy of South Asia.

We will also concern ourselves with economic ideas that influence policy. First, whose economic policy ideas matter? Second, do the dominant economic ideas within the state matter for South Asia’s development? Third, what is class and how does class interest make an impact on the politics of development? Finally, what is caste? Does caste as a source of social power make an impact on development? We will study development as a social process that deals with phenomena such as industrialization, agricultural development, gender equality and human development.

This class is concerned with South Asia. All South Asian country do not find the same place in the readings. Some countries are better researched than others. Students are encouraged to use the tools discussed in this class for understanding countries that have not been discussed at length.

**Calendar & Syllabus**

   
   *Social Power: First and the Second Face*
   
   This presentation will introduce the department and the class. It will explore two forms of social domination. We have to keep our eyes and ears open for exploring how they apply to South Asia.

**Supplementary**

2. 02.11.2016

*Social Power: The Third Face*
This presentation will introduce a third dimension of exercising power. How are these three dimensions different? Can we see their manifestations in social and political life in South Asia?


**Supplementary**


3. 09.11.2016

*Class and the State in Pakistan*
How is class in post-colonial Pakistan different from the traditional Marxist understanding of class? We take a look at the class composition of the state in Pakistan.


**Supplementary**


4. 16.11.2016

*Class and the state in India*
Does the Indian state and its policies conform with traditional class analysis?

Supplementary


5. 23.11.2016
Policy Ideas and the State
Do we need to understand policy paradigms that come to dominate specialists within the state in South Asia? To what extent does class analysis need to completed by looking more deeply at the state as a variable in policy analysis?


Supplementary

Rahul Mukherji, Globalization, and De-regulation: Ideas, Interests and Institutional Change in India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), Chapter 1-3.

6. 30.11.2016
India’s Industrialization


Sumit Majumdar, India’s late, Late Industrialization (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 186-216.

Supplementary


**Industrialization in Bangladesh & Sri Lanka**

India is not the only country in South Asia that has benefited from globalization. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have important export oriented sectors and have benefited from economic growth. This makes South Asia a dynamic region.


**Supplementary**


**Green Revolution**

Majority of Indians live in the villages. The country experienced a draught that could have transformed itself into a full-blown famine in 1966. This possibility led to technological and agricultural investments, which have inspired the green revolution and made the country self-sufficient in food grains. Did farmer’s politics play a role in the promotion of agriculture? What was the role of economists and foreign funding in this story? Agricultural growth had declined in the new millennium, and the government has increased investments in that sector. While this lecture is focused on India, it would be good to think comparatively about South Asia.


Supplementary


Information Technology – Back-Office of the World

If China is the “workshop” of the world, India is its “back office.” India’s globalization became evident when it became a major provider for information technology services for the major fortune 500 companies of the world. Over time, much of this work could be carried out in India using the Internet. How did this transformation occur? Was it driven by a certain class or by the state that wanted to become competitive?


Supplementary


10.11.01.2017

Caste

How does the social institution of caste lead to the projection of power in South Asian society? Is the village a site of exploitation? How is migration contributing to the distribution of social power in the village? What is the impact of the corporate sector and economic reforms on lower caste groups?

Supplementary


11. 18.01.2017

Gender

Gender has been a source of power and discrimination in South Asia. Can we think systematically about why this has been the case? Are middle class women any better off in South Asia?


Supplementary

Naila Kabeer (2011). "Between affiliation and autonomy: navigating pathways of women's empowerment and gender justice in rural Bangladesh." Development and Change, 42.2: 499-


12.25.01.2016

**Human Development**

This lecture will describe India’s lack of progress in creating a literate population. Are there any social reasons for it? Is India overcoming some of these problems? This poses a challenge both for economic growth and human development in India. India’s situation is quite characteristic of all South Asian countries other than Sri Lanka.


**Supplementary**


13.01.02.2017

**India and China**

This lecture will assess the strengths and weaknesses of India’s economic policies initiated after 1991 in relation to China’s. This is a comparative class where India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh’s trajectories will be assessed in relation to class, state, industrialization, agricultural development and gender relations. Further comparative reflections on India and China will help us understand the South Asian context more comparatively.

Supplementary

14. 08.02.2017

*Exam*: The question paper will be given out on February 1, 2017, after class. The exam on February 8 will be a closed book exam. MA students will answer three questions, and BA students will answer two questions.

**Prior Requirements**

This class does not require any prior knowledge of South Asia. What is required is a commitment to South Asia and to social theory. The instructor and the lecturers are happy to work with students. Students are required to go through the readings mentioned just below the titles. This is essential for taking the exam. The supplementary materials are further readings for students who want to learn more about a particular topic.

**Organization**

The Vorlesung will be a 90-minute lecture with discussions wherever possible. I encourage students to ask questions, even though lecturing will be the main component of the class. Questions and comments make for a lively class both for the lecturer and the pupils. Otherwise, the class becomes boring. I will use slides, which will come with lecture notes.

The lecture slides and essential readings will be uploaded on Moodle. The supplementary material will be available in the library reserves. Following the lecture and essential readings will earn you a good grade. If you go into the supplementary material as well, that will be impressive. There is no limit to how much you can learn from this class. I have pointed to additional resources in the following section titled: Scholarly Resources.

Students who desire a “Schein” must register on Moodle by the second week after the lecture begins (9 November 2016).

**Assessment**

Attendance in the Vorlesung is voluntary for those who do not wish to get a ‘Schein’ at the semester’s end. For others, attendance is compulsory. BA students will take a 90-minute exam on February 8, and MA students will take a 120-minute exam on the same day. The exam paper will be given out on February 1. The week between
February 1 – February 8 can be used for preparation. There will be a closed book exam on February 8.

Students who do not attend the exam will receive no grade, unless they have a good excuse. Such students are required to submit a paper within a week. MA students will have to write a 4500 to 5000 - word paper. BA students should turn in a 3000 to 3500 - word paper. The right to turn in such a paper is not automatic. I will need to be convinced that circumstances beyond the student’s control led to the student’s absence at the time of the exam.

**Scholarly Resources**

These resources are not required for taking the exam. However, if you are deeply interested in politics, political economy and South Asia, these journals will allow you to go deeper.

*Journals*: The journals given below are scholarly in nature. They often carry papers on the political economy of South Asia. You can go to their web sites if you are keen to learn more about this class.

*Economic and Political Weekly*: [http://www.epw.in/](http://www.epw.in/)

*Journal of Development Studies*

*World Development*

*Pacific Affairs*

*Asian Survey*

*Contemporary South Asia*

*India Review*


*Contemporary South Asia*

*Journal of South Asian Development*

*Journal of Asian Studies*
Leading newspapers: Economic Times (India), The Hindu (India), Dawn (Pakistan), Indian Express (India), Daily Star (Bangladesh), Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka), Ceylon Today (Sri Lanka), Daily News (Sri Lanka), The Himalayan Times (Nepal).