

**Department of Political Science**  
**South Asia Institute: University of Heidelberg**

*Courses to be taught by Prof Suri for the winter semester 2018-2019*

**Course 2: Seminar**

Time: Classes take place once in a week, on Thursdays, from 9 to 11 AM at the South Asia Institute: INF 330 / SAI R Z10

Course title and description:

**Comparing India's states**

The objective of the course is to offer an analysis of policy and politics in India taking states (provinces) as units of analysis. The understanding behind this course is that India is a multinational country; and the states of India are like many nations that have come together to form a mega nation. Scholars in comparative politics say that India offers a laboratory for comparative studies because the states, unlike nations in cross-country comparisons, function under the same constitution and polity-wide legislation. So this course is a move in that direction.

Study of state politics during the 1960s and 70s was usually done with reference to individual states. In recent decades there has been growing tendency to study state politics in a comparative perspective. Considerable literature is already available and more has been coming out in recent years on some of the salient aspects of state politics, such as social structure, leadership, ideology, policy reforms and governance.

Readings for the course are related to some select themes for closer study. The states vary from theme to theme as we don't have studies on different themes for the same set of states. The themes presented in the syllabus here are not exhaustive, but represent only one set of many a possible one. This course proposes to understand the varying modes of Indian politics at the State level in a comparative perspective and in the process tries making some sense of arriving at a general and grounded view of Indian policy and politics. It seeks to avoid the tendency either to look at every state as unique in its politics or to fit all states into one universal narrative of Indian politics, i.e. to steer clear of state bias and nationalist bias.

**Themes**

Evolution of the study of state politics, Significance and Methodological issues

Caste and Social Structure

Economic policies and liberalization

Ideology and Regimes

Social justice

Clientelism

Populism

Formation of new states

Regional political parties

Party competition and elections

## Readings:

- Myron Weiner (ed.) (1968), "Political Development in the Indian States" in *State Politics in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 3-60.
- Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar (2008), "Ten Theses on state politics in India", *Seminar*.
- Louise Tillin. (2013) "National and Subnational Comparative Politics: Why, What and How", *Studies in Indian Politics* 1(2), pp. 235-240.
- Frankel Francine and M S A Rao (1989, 1990): *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, (Select chapters from Volumes I and II), OUP, Delhi.
- Christophe Jaffrelot and Sanjay Kumar (ed.) 2009. *Rise of the Plebeians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies*, New Delhi: Routledge.
- Aseema Sinha, (2004). 'Ideas, Interests, and Institutions in Policy Change in India: A Comparison of West Bengal and Gujarat', in Rob Jenkins (ed) *Regional Reflections: Comparing Politics across India's States*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 66-106.
- Banerjee Mukulika (2004). 'Mamata and Jayalalitha Compared: Populist Politics in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu', in Rob Jenkins (ed) *Regional Reflections: Comparing Politics across India's States*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kohli, A. (1983). Regime types and poverty reform in India. *Pacific Affairs*, 56(4), 649-672.
- Harriss, John (1999). "Comparing Political Regimes across Indian States: A Preliminary Essay", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 48 (Nov. 27 - Dec. 3), pp. 3367- 3377.
- Andrew Wyatt, (2013). 'Populism and politics in contemporary Tamil Nadu', *Contemporary South Asia*, 21 (4), pp. 365-81.

Evaluation: Presence and active participation in classroom discussions. Each student is required to make a presentation on a theme/topic based on the prescribed readings. At the end of the semester, students should submit a term paper on a topic finalized in consultation with the course teacher. The length of the term paper should be in the range of 5,000 to 6,000 words and can be submitted by end of February 2019.

Students interested in this course may please register by sending an email to [k.c.suri@sai.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:k.c.suri@sai.uni-heidelberg.de)

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