Political Economy of South Asia

Winter Semester - 2018-2019

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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 in an economically dynamic region. 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 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 countries 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

1. 16.10.2018
   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. 23.10.2018
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. 30.10.2018
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. 6.11.2018

*Class and the state in India*

Does the Indian state and its policies conform with traditional class analysis?


*Supplementary*


5. 13.11.2018

*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 be complemented by exploring the state as a variable in policy analysis?


*Supplementary*


India’s Industrialization
We will explore the political economy of India’s industrialization


*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*


8. 04.12.2018

*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*


9. 11.12.2018

*Corruption in Pakistan*

Guest Lecture by Professor Zulfiqar Ali
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-


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


12.8.01.2019
No class: Students will reflect on the materials taught in 2018.

13.15.01.2019
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


14.22.01.2019

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

15. 29.12.2019
Preparation Week.

16. February 5 2019
Exam
The questions will be distributed on December 22. This will be a closed book exam in class.

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. We encourage students to ask questions, even though lecturing will be the main component of the class. Questions and comments make for a lively class for both 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. Please enter the password which will be given to you in the first class.

**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 5 and MA students will take a 120-minute exam on the same day. The exam paper will be distributed on December 22. 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 are should turn in a 3000 to 3500 - word paper. The right to turn in such a paper is not automatic. We 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*

*Studies in Indian Politics*

*Indian Politics and Policy*


*Contemporary South Asia*

*Journal of South Asian Development*

*Journal of Asian Studies*

*Indian Politics and Policy*