Political Parties in India

Organiser: Professor K.C. Suri
Mondays 9:00-11:00
INF 330 SAI R 317

Rationale and Objectives of the course:

Political parties are the principal agencies of democracy in any nation. How parties are organized and function is crucial for an understanding politics in general. Therefore, it is imperative for students of political science to study in depth the evolution of party system in a country; ideology, policies and support bases of political parties; party leadership and functioning; and how they win and lose elections.

This course enables the students to understand the crucial role played by parties in making Indian democracy work. It deals with the external environment in which they operate, how parties and party politics changed over the years as well as the way in which they function. It also deals with the ideology and programme of parties, their electoral performance, and support bases.

We will study India’s political parties by drawing upon the theoretical knowledge that exits on party politics and party systems and looking at them in a comparative perspective. Thus the course aims to enable students to critically appreciate the success and challenges faced by parties in India in particular and parties in South Asia in general.
Calender and Syllabus

1. 30 April 2018: General introduction to the course. The nature of Indian polity and the role political parties play in it.

2. 7 May 2018: The evolution of political parties in India during the British rule.


4. 28 May 2018: What are regional parties? Why and how they became strong and important in the Indian polity?

5. 4 June 2018: Emergence of ‘post-Congress polity’ and coalition governments; Forging of party alliances and multiple fronts

6. **11 June 2018: Communist party and the splits within. Debates on the state character, strategy and parliamentary communism.**


7. **18 June 2018: The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party to power**


8. **25 June 2018: Caste based parties?**


9. **2 July 2018: Economic reform policies and the political parties**


10. 9 July 2018: Support base


11. 16 July 2018: Populism, patronage and clientelistic politics:


Piliavsky, Anastasia (2014). Patronage as Politics in South Asia, Delhi: CUP.


12. 23 July 2018: Dynastic leadership and family politics


13. 30 July 2018: Party and political reforms


Guidelines for the course:

This is a seminar course. The readings include both textbook chapters that are introductory in nature and writings of some of the scholars well known in the field of studying political parties in India. Students are required to go through the readings mentioned in the syllabus and participate in classroom discussions. Students will make presentations of the select reading or readings in about 15-20 minutes, followed by discussion. Students are expected to give a short note in about 1500 words on the reading soon after their presentation in classroom. This is followed by a full-length essay of 5000-6000 words to be submitted at the end of the semester.

We can talk about additional and supplementary readings on topics students choose to write a full-length essay.