

**B. A. (H) Sociology**  
**Core Course 05**  
**Political Sociology**

**Course Objectives:**

1. Political Sociology is one of the core areas of sociology. It is a thriving subfield of sociology with important theoretical and practical consequences. The endeavor in this course is to render it compact, contemporaneous and make it contextual for Indian students, while familiarizing them with enduring conceptual and theoretical concerns. It is rigorously theoretical yet relatable.
2. The course offers a judicious mix of classical and contemporary texts in political sociology that examines the bases of social power and the relationship between politics and society both analytically as well as in specific empirical contexts. The course is an intensive introduction to the theoretical debates extant in the sub-field and equips students to learn both classical and contemporary arguments about age old questions of power, authority and resistance and their manifestations in political institutions and political systems.
3. The course equips students to grasp the essential historicity of political processes, political institutions and political change to facilitate an understanding of the dynamic nature of political phenomena. The first two sections of the course deals with theoretical and analytical aspects of examining the interface between politics and society, while the third section seeks to provide an understanding of political processes in India.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

1. An ability to comprehend the embeddedness of political and the social in each other.
2. Familiarity with different theoretical and conceptual issues in political sociology and a capacity to use them to grasp political phenomena in a cross-cultural and comparative perspective
3. Be able to understand and appreciate the diversity of ways in which politics operates historically and spatially to generate a more expansive notion of the realm of the political.
4. Be able to understand the relationship between state and society in shaping politics in India both historically and analytically.

5. Be able to generate hypotheses and research questions within the theoretical perspectives and ethnographic contexts in political sociology.

**Course Content:**

**Unit 1. Introducing Political Sociology (3 Weeks)**

**Unit 2. Conceptual Moorings (6 Weeks)**

**1.1 Power, Authority and Resistance**

**1.2 Classes and Elites**

**1.3 State, Democracy and Citizenship**

**Unit 3. Politics and Society in India (5 Weeks)**

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**Unit 1: Introducing Political Sociology (Weeks 1-3)**

Nash, Kate. 2010. Changing definitions of politics and power, in *Contemporary Political Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 1-42

Wolf, Eric. 1990. 'Facing Power- Old Insights, New Questions', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol.92, No. 3, pp. 586-596

Spencer, Jonathan. 1997. 'Post-colonialism and the Political Imagination', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1-19

**Unit 2. Conceptual Moorings (Weeks 4-9)**

**2.1 Power, Authority and Resistance**

Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 212-254; 262-266

Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Hampshire: Palgrave, pp.14-49

Foucault, Michel. 2002. 'The Subject and Power', in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault*, Vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion, London: Penguin Books, pp. 326-348

Young, Iris Marion (2014). Five faces of oppression, *Philosophical Forum*. 19. 270-290.

## **2.2. Classes and Elites**

Bottomore, Tom. 1964. *Elites and Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Chs 1, 2 & 3

## **2.3 State, Democracy and Citizenship**

Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. 'The limits of the State: Beyond Statist approaches and their critics', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No.1, pp. 77-96.

Macpherson, C. B. 1966. *The Real World of Democracy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 1-45

Marshall, T.H. 1950. *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.10-27

Tilly, Charles. 1999. 'Where Do Rights Come From?', in Theda Skocpol (ed). *Democracy, Revolution and History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp.55-72

## **Unit 3. Politics and Society in India (Weeks 10-14)**

Bailey, F. G. 1968. 'Para-political Systems', in M.J. Schwartz (ed). *Local Level Politics: Social and Cultural Perspectives*, London: University of London Press, pp.281-94

Gupta, Akhil & K. Sivaramakrishnan (eds). 2011. *The State in India after Liberalization: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, London & New York: Routledge, Introduction, pp. 1-27

Corbridge, Stuart and John Harriss. 2003. 'Transfer of Power? Subaltern Politics, Sites of Empowerment and the Reshaping of India's Democracy', in *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*. Delhi: OUP. Pp. 200 - 230

Tarlo, Emma. 2003. *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 62-93

## **References:**

### **Compulsory Readings:**

Bailey, F. G. 1968. 'Para-political Systems', in M.J. Schwartz (ed). *Local Level Politics: Social and Cultural Perspectives*, London: University of London Press, pp.281-94

Bottomore, Tom. 1964. *Elites and Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Chs 1, 2 & 3

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Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Hampshire: Palgrave, pp.14-49

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Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 212-254; 262-266

Wolf, Eric. 1990. 'Facing Power- Old Insights, New Questions', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol.92, No. 3, pp. 586-596

Young, Iris Marion (2014). Five faces of oppression, *Philosophical Forum*. 19. 270-290.

## **Additional Resources:**

### **a. Books & Articles:**

Chomsky, N. 1999. *Profit over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*. Severn Stories Press, pp. 7-18, 43-64

Fortes, M. and E.E. Evans Pritchard (Eds), 1940. *African Political Systems*. London: Oxford University Press, Chapter 8.

Mills, C. Wright, 1956. *The Power Elite, New Edition*, OUP, pp. 269-297

**b. Audio Visual Resources:**

1. Documentaries: Why Democracy  
(<http://whydemocracy.net/>)

2. TV Series: Yes, Minister, Yes, Prime Minister,  
(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080306/>)

3. Films and TV Series from India:

Tamas , Neem ka Pedh, Kissa Kursi ka, Garam Hawa, Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron, New Delhi Times, Gulaal, Soldiers in Sarong.

**Teaching-Learning Process:**

Teaching learning process in this paper has to be interactive and reflective as majority of students are more often disinterested in questions concerning the political. Teachers should encourage students to read the daily newspaper and peruse electronic journals which would animate the conceptual and analytical aspects of the course with real socio-political events from the students' immediate contexts. Use of audio-visual resources, mainly documentaries will be made an integral part of learning in this course.

**Assessment Methods:**

Assessment in this paper will be in the form of written assignments, book reviews, film reviews, class presentations, projects, and class test.

**Keywords:**

Power, Authority, Resistance, Politics, Elite, State, Democracy, Citizenship, Rights, Para-Political Systems, Post-Colonialism.