

**Critical Psychology in the Global South**  
Elective: Fall Semester 2025  
Jindal Global Law School  
Course Instructor: Dr. Chetan Sinha. JGLS

**Course Description:**

Critical psychology is a response to mainstream dominant psychology from the praxis of social revolution and change. The normalization of oppression and the rise of misinformation and technological dominance, shape psychologies to the benefit of the powerful. Critical psychology with its foundation and metatheory of social justice dives into the most nuanced aspects of social life which need critical appreciations and collective conscience. Though psychology as a well-established discipline has informed many domains of our life, that is, from our legal sensemaking to educational reforms, its therapeutic and conditioning approach, feed back to the same hierarchical positioning. This course is not directed at facilitating the post-truth world or pragmatism to substantiate the gaze of power, but clearly demarcates between truth and false, objective interpretation and subjective biases. We need psychology which quests for liberation and emancipation, critically address the power relations, facilitate empowerment and social justice in theory, research and praxis. Critical psychology steer towards creating and asserting new social identity with dignity and aspiration for harmonious relationships.

This course will help students understand the discipline of critical psychology, with a focus on the intersection between the Global North and the Global South. It will examine mainstream psychological approaches through the sociocultural, political and historical lens. It will also see how these influences shape our psychological knowledge, intergroup relationships and social practices. The course encourages students to reflect critically and be self-reflexive towards the ascribed and dominantly conceptualized aspects of psychological models emanating discussions on power, identity, inequality, and resistance.

**Objectives:**

1. Venturing into the metatheory of critical psychology and becoming familiar with the perspectives which enriched the doing of critical psychology
2. To understand the politics of psychology and psychology of politics present in our everyday life
3. To understand why the dominant psychological model which was both Western and representative of the Global North derived our way of understanding the social world
4. Construing decolonization critically and addressing the power dynamics at both Global and Local level.
5. Critically situating the social cognition and intergroup relationships through critical interdisciplinary perspectives.
6. To make a case for the critical psychology of caste and gender to have a meaningful outlook towards indigeneity and psychological conceptualization.

## Course Structure:

1. Introducing critical psychology and its foundation
  - a. Definition and Scope of Critical Psychology
  - b. Origins in Global South and Global North
  - c. Critique of Mainstream Psychology: Objectivity, Universality, and Individualism
  - d. Ideology, Power, Resistance, Liberation
2. Colonization legacy and the development of psychology
  - a. History of Psychology in India: From Colonial Science to Indigenous Movements
  - b. Role of Western Epistemologies in Indian Psychology
  - c. Decolonial Approaches to Knowledge and Mental Health
  - d. Language, Caste, Culture in Psychological Subjectivity
3. Psychology and Social Inequality
  - a. Mental Health and Social Determinants: Poverty, Violence, Discrimination
  - b. Caste and Psychology: Dalit and Bahujan Perspectives
  - c. Gender, Patriarchy, and the Feminist Critique of Psychology
  - d. Intersectionality and Critical Praxis in Indian Society
4. Psychology of Institutions and Power
  - a. Schooling and Education: Normalization and Psychological Testing
  - b. Prisons, Asylums, and State Control
  - c. Law, Legal Consciousness, and Psychological Governance
  - d. Media, Surveillance, and the Making of the 'Citizen'
5. Indigeneity and Alternative Framework
  - a. Community Psychology in India
  - b. Traditional Healing Practices and Folk Therapies
  - c. Indian Philosophy and Theories of Self: Vedanta, Buddhism, and Others
  - d. Dialogues Between Tradition and Modernity
6. Critical Psychology in Action
  - a. Liberation Psychology and Participatory Action Research
  - b. Case Studies: NGOs, Mental Health Movements, Student Activism
  - c. The Role of the Psychologist as Advocate and Ally
  - d. Ethical and Political Issues in Critical Practice
7. Reimagining Psychology
  - a. Challenges in Teaching, Research and Practicing Critical Psychology
  - b. Methodological imperatives and Methodologism
  - c. New Directions: Policy, Pedagogy, and Community Engagement
  - d. Student Reflections: Visions for a Just and Inclusive Psychology

## Readings:

Ambedkar, B. R: Annihilation of Caste.

Augoustinos, M., Walker, I., & Dinaghue. (2014). *Social cognition: An integrated introduction*.  
Sage

Bastos, F. I., & Andreatini, R. (2013). *Cultural Psychology in Non-Western Contexts*.

Burr, V. (1995). *Social Constructionism*. Routledge.

Chomsky, N. (2008). *The essential Chomsky*. Penguin.

Dalal, A. K. (2002). *Social Interventions to Promote Health: The Role of Community Psychology*.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish*. Routledge Classics

Fox, D., Prilleltensky, I., & Austin, S. (2009). *Critical Psychology: An Introduction*.

Fromm, E. (1941). *Fear of freedom*. Routledge Classics.

Fromm, E. (1962). *Beyond the chains of illusion. My encounter with Marx and Freud*

Gergen, K. (2001). *Social Construction in Context*.

Guru, G. (2009). *Archaeology of Untouchability*.

Hook, D. (2004). *Critical Psychology*. Routledge.

Kumar, K. (2004). *What is Worth Teaching?*

Markova, I. (2016). *The dialogical mind*. CUP.

Martín-Baró, I. (1994). *Writings for a Liberation Psychology*.

Nandy, A. (1983). *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*.

Parker, I. (2007). *Revolution in Psychology: Alienation to Emancipation*.

Prilleltensky, I. (1997). *Values and Psychology: Beyond Positivism and Objectivism*.  
Rose, N.

Sinha, C. (2023). *Power Dynamics in Education* (1st ed.). Routledge India.

Sinha, D. (1997). *Indigenizing Psychology*.

Teo, T., Gao, & Zhipeng Gao. *Methodologism/Methodological Imperative*. Springer.

I will also share publications and essays as per the need of the class

**Assessments:****A. Mid-Sem (70 Marks)**

1. Critical Psychology Lab: Class Participation & Reflexive discussion on the sent readings (15 Marks).
2. Mid-term Essay: Critical analysis of a topic from units 1, 2 and 3 (15 Marks, 4<sup>th</sup> week of September).
3. Group Presentation: Case study on Indian context (Any unit of your choice) (20 Marks, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of October).
4. Final Project: Research or action-based project related to critical psychological practice (20 Marks, 4<sup>th</sup> week of October).

**B. End-Sem (30 Marks)**