



Course Title: Caste and Democracy in Indian Politics

Course Code: M.A. (DLB) 0670

Prerequisites: Students should have a keen interest in understanding how two seemingly contradictory phenomena, caste and democracy, interact and coexist within Indian politics.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Umesh Kumar

Instructor's Brief Bio: Dr. Umesh Kumar is Assistant Professor at Jindal School of International Affairs, O P Jindal Global University. He previously taught Political Science at University of Delhi. His areas of expertise are Political Theory, Indian Politics, International Relations and Iranian Politics.

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1. Course Description

Liberal modernisation theorists have anticipated that with the advent of democracy in independent India, democratisation would eventually overthrow the caste-based traditional structures. Contrary to their belief, political scientists have argued that caste in post-independent India has become increasingly compatible with democracy, which has resulted in the politicisation of caste. Such developments have further debilitated the possibilities of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ambitious project of annihilation of caste.

In this context of the intricate and tumultuous relationship between caste and democracy, this course would explore various themes such as the role of caste in electoral politics, the

intersectionality of caste and gender, and caste-based violence and humiliation in India's public sphere. The course will help students get familiarised with the theoretical debates on caste and democracy, and the concepts of constitutional morality and social democracy. The course will provide a critical understanding and explore the normative questions surrounding caste-based identities and their role in Indian politics.

The course will also focus on caste as an emerging category of analysis in international relations. The students will understand how caste has been functionalised in the era of globalisation and transnational migration of people across borders, which has led to the phenomenon of the internationalisation of caste. In this regard, the case studies of the UK and the USA will be examined. The current debate on the comparison of caste and race discrimination and its relevance in human rights discourse, as well as international law, will be discussed.

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives (Aim)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
To understand structure and different theories of origin of caste and how caste has changed over the time through its interaction with democracy.	Critically evaluating different perceptions and experiences through theoretical and historical lens. Conducting a reading/discussion of texts such as <i>Annihilation of Caste</i>	One mid semester test (20 marks), One book review (20 marks), One short research-based paper (20 marks), Class discussions (10 marks), Final Exam (30 marks).
Understanding concepts and processes such as politicization of caste, Sanskritisation, constitutional morality	Critically evaluating the concepts and seeking the possibility of alternative theorization or conceptualization of caste and politics	
Understanding contours of social justice and corrective majors related to caste inequalities at theoretical and as well as policy level	Normative exercises on the possibility of casteless society through reform-based approaches; conducting sessions on practice of responsible	

	citizenry/citizenship. Discuss different issues related to caste such as caste-based violence.	
Understanding the intersectionality of caste and gender in India	Discussing case studies and conducting interactive sessions with examples	
To engage with debates on caste census and internationalization of caste and anticipating possible outcomes of the same		

3. Assessment Scheme and Grading

Evaluation breakup

Internal breakup	70 marks or 70% Components
	Mid semester exam: 30 marks or 30%
	Research based paper: 30 Marks or 30%
	Class discussions: 10 Marks or 10%
External breakup	Final Exam: 30 Marks or 30%
Total	100 marks or 100%

Grade Definition

Grading and Comments			
Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Points	Comments
O	80 and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.

A+	75 - 79	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 - 74	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing material and originality in thinking and presentation.
A-	65 - 69	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49	2	Pass 1: Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter.
P2	40 - 44	1	Pass 2: Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.
F	Below 40	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course.

4. Academic Integrity

Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism:	Students will be expected to adhere to academic honesty. No
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	cheating or plagiarism will be accepted.
Participation/Attendance Policy	Students should attend all classes. Attendance will be marked as per university rules.
Use of phone/ texting/ laptop	Students should switch off phones during classes; no texting is allowed; students can use their laptops to take notes during class.

Plagiarism Penalty Structure: Section 12.1 – Penalties

a. Level 0	Similarities up to 10% - Minor Similarities, no penalty.
b. Level 1	Similarities between 11% to 20% - Such student shall receive a reduction of 5 Marks
c. Level 2	Similarities between 21% to 29% - Such student shall receive a penalty of 10 marks.
d. Level 3	Similarities of 30% and above - Award of Fail Grade

5. Keyword Syllabus

Caste, democracy, constitutional morality, humiliation, intersectionality of caste and gender, human right, internationalization of caste.

6. Course Material

Kothari, R. (2014). *Caste in Indian politics* (Original work published 1970). Orient BlackSwan.

Shah, G. (2003). *Caste and democratic politics in India*. Anthem Press.

Chakravarthi, U. (2018). *Gendering caste: Through a feminist lens*. SAGE Publications India.

Omvedt, G. (2011). *Understanding caste: From Buddha to Ambedkar and beyond*. Orient BlackSwan.

Jodhka, S. S. (2012). *Caste*. Oxford University Press.

Jodhka, S. S. (2016). *Caste in contemporary India*. Routledge India.

Ambedkar, B. R. (1936). *Annihilation of caste* (Annotated critical ed., A. Roy, Ed., 2015). Navayana.

Rao, A. (2009). *The caste question: Dalits and the politics of modern India*. University of California Press.

Still, C. (2014). *Dalits in neoliberal India: Mobility or marginalization?* Routledge.

Irudayam, S. J., Mangubhai, J. P., & Lee, J. G. (2011). *Dalit women speak out: Caste, class and gender violence in India*. Zubaan.

Dirks, N. B. (2001). *Castes of mind: Colonialism and the making of modern India*. Princeton University Press.

7. Session Plan

Session	General Topic	Readings	Approach /Pedagogy
Session 1	Understanding Caste	<p>Ambedkar, B.R. (1917), “Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development” in <i>Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Writings and Speeches Vol. I</i>, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India. https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/amb/Volume_01.pdf</p> <p>Ambedkar, B. R. (1936) <i>Annihilation of Caste</i> in the annotated critical edition (2015) by Arundhati Roy.</p>	lectures, interactive sessions, debates and dialogues.
Session 2	Changing Nature of Caste: Sanskritization and Politicisation of Caste	<p>Kothari, Rajni (2014) ‘Introduction’ in <i>Caste in Indian Politics</i>, Orient Black Swan.</p> <p>Srinivas, M. N. (1956), “A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization” <i>The Far Eastern Quarterly</i>, 15(4), 481–496. https://doi.org/10.2307/2941919</p> <p>Srinivas, M. N. (1966), <i>Social Change in Modern India</i>, University of California Press.</p>	
Session 3	Debates on Caste and Democracy	<p>Shah, Ghansyam (2003), “Introduction: Caste and Democratic Politics”, in <i>Caste and Democratic Politics in India</i>, Anthem Press London.</p> <p>Rudolph, L. I. (1965). <i>The Modernity of Tradition: The Democratic</i></p>	

		<p>Incarnation of Caste in India. <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, 59(4), 975–989. https://doi.org/10.2307/1953217</p> <p>Deshpande, S. (2016), “Caste in and as Indian Democracy”, <i>Seminar</i>, No. 677.</p> <p>Jodhka, S. S. (2016). <i>Caste in contemporary India</i>. Routledge India</p>	
Session 4	Anti-Caste discourses and movements	<p>G. Omvedt (2002), “Ambedkar and After: The Dalit Movement in India,” in G Shah (ed.) <i>Social Movements and the State</i>, New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 302-318.</p> <p>Omvedt, Gail (2011), <i>Understanding Caste: From Buddha to Ambedkar and Beyond</i>, Orient Black Swan.</p>	
Session 5	Caste and Indian Constitution, Democracy as a way of Life: Understanding Constitutional Morality	<p>Ambedkar’s Speeches, <i>The Constitution and the Constituent Assembly Debates</i>. Lok Sabha Secretariat, Delhi, 1990, pp. 107-131 and pp. 171-183.</p> <p>Mehta, Pratap Bhanu, “What is Constitutional Morality?” https://www.india-seminar.com/2010/615/615_pratap_bhanu_mehta.htm</p>	
Session 6	Intersectionality of Caste and Gender	<p>Chakravarthi, Uma (1993), “Conceptualising Brahminical Patriarchy in Early India” <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol 28, No.15 https://www.epw.in/journal/1993/14/special-articles/conceptualising-brahmanical-patriarchy-early-india-gender-caste</p> <p>Chakravarthi, Uma (2018), <i>Gendering Caste: through a feminist lens</i>, Sage Publications India.</p>	
	Mid Sem Exam		
Session 7	Violence, Untouchability and Humiliation (Case studies of Khairlanji and Bathani Tola)	<p>Geeta, V (2009), “Breft of Being: The Humiliations of Untouchability” in <i>Humiliation: Claims and Context</i>, Oxford University Press</p>	

		Guru, G. (2009). <i>Archaeology of untouchability. Economic and Political Weekly</i> , 44 (37), 49–56.	
	Research Paper Presentation		
Session 8	Affirmative Action, Politics of Caste based Identities (Issue based discussion; caste surnames,)	<p>Deshpande, S. (2013) “Caste and Castelessness: Towards a Biography of the General Category <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol 48, No.15. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23527121</p> <p>Despande, S. (2013) <i>Affirmative Action</i>, OUP Short Introduction Series, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Deshpande, A. (2013). <i>Affirmative action in India</i>. Oxford University Press.</p>	
Session 9	Caste Discrimination in International Human Rights’ Context	<p>Narula, S. (2001), “Caste Discrimination: A Global Concern, Human Rights Watch” Vol. 13, No. 3 (G).</p> <p>Keane, D (2007), <i>Caste –based discrimination in international Human Rights law</i>, Ashgate Publishing Limited</p> <p>Beteille, A. (2001), “Race and Caste”, in Thorat, S. and Umakant (eds.) <i>Caste, race and Discrimination Discourses in International Context</i>, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.</p> <p>Divakar, P. and Ajai (2004), “UN Bodies and the Dalits: A Historical Review of Intervention”, in Thorat, S. and Umakant (eds.) <i>Caste, Race and Discrimination Discourses in International Context</i>, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.</p> <p>Sarkin, J. and Koenig, M. (2010), “Ending Caste Discrimination in India: Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Individuals and Groups from</p>	

		Discrimination at the Domestic and International Levels”, <i>The George Washington International Law Review</i> , vol. 41(3): 541-576	
Session 10	Caste as the category of Analysis in IR	<p>Thakur, V. (2023), “Casting and Casteing Indian Diplomacy”. <i>Diplomatica</i>, 5(1), 130-137. https://brill.com/view/journals/dipl/5/1/article-p130_007.xml</p> <p>Natarajan K. The privilege of the Indian passport (1947–1967): Caste, class, and the afterlives of indenture in Indian diplomacy. <i>Modern Asian Studies</i>. 2023;57(2):321-350. doi:10.1017/S0026749X22000063 https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-asian-studies/article/privilege-of-the-indian-passport-19471967-caste-class-and-the-afterlives-of-indenture-in-indian-diplomacy/FDC79CB96F09533606E43509F40A1ED4?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=whatsapp&utm_source=im</p> <p>Menon, Nivedita. “Caste on the International Stage.” <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, vol. 46, no. 3, 2011, pp. 15–18. <i>JSTOR</i>, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27918032. Accessed 9 Dec. 2023.</p> <p>Shah, P. (2015). Caste and Continuing Foreign Interference in India’s Internal Affairs. In: <i>Against Caste in British Law: A Critical Perspective on the Caste Discrimination Provision in the Equality Act 2010</i>. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-57119-9_5</p>	
Session 11	Caste in Electoral Politics	Jaffrelot, C. (2003). <i>India’s silent revolution: The rise of the lower castes in North India</i> . Columbia University Press.	

		<p>Gupta, D. (2019). <i>Caste and electoral outcomes: Misreading hierarchy and the illusion of numbers. Economic and Political Weekly</i>, 54(25), 24-28.</p> <p>Jaffrelot, Christophe (2019). Class and Caste in the 2019 Indian Election-Why have So Many Poor Started Voting for Modi. <i>Studies in Indian Politics</i>, 7(2): 149-160.</p>	
Session 12	Revision, discussion on learning outcome		
	Spill Over		