

History of Ideas and Policy in India

From the 1940s, as independence approached, India's future leaders and then India's leaders and policy makers have engaged with ideas and ideologies, both from our own context and knowledge and from the world. As our leaders have identified and looked at our challenges these ideas have been adapted and applied into policy and programmes.

This course looks at how these ideas influenced our policy process, how institutions like the Planning Commission, Government departments and institutes, Universities and multilateral agencies, research agencies and think tanks all worked on and with our policy leadership.

The course shall read through changes in policy, various reports undertaken, committees formed, initiatives discussed, ideas adopted and modified that built our Policy choices, and how they impacted our lives.

Structure of Class Sessions

Session 1 – Introduction - basic ideas and policy frames in India and its States - the federal policy system, and the sub-regionalism in policy, programme and outcomes - the Union, the State, the Districts, and sub-district regions, and the administrative organs (3 hours)

Session 2 – Constructing the Nation – its Idea(s), its foundations, and boundaries, and its debates – the Constitution, adopting the Colonial legal and administrative system and its modification (3 hours)

Granville Austin, The India Constitution – Cornerstone of a Nation

Wages of Freedom – Fifty Years of the Indian Nation State, Ed. Partha Chatterjee, OUP, 1999, pages 1 to 36)

The Oxford Handbook of the Indian Constitution, Sujit Choudhry, Madhav Khosla, OUP, 2016, Chapters 1 to 4

Sessions 3 and 4 –Institutions in Policy - the Planning Commission, research organisations, specialised agencies, private and individual agents (6 hours)

Development Planning – The Indian Experience, Sukhomoy Chakravarty, OUP, 1989

Planning in the 20th Century and Beyond, Suresh Mehrotra, Sylvie Guichard, Cambridge University Press, 2020

Planning Democracy – How a Professor, an Institution and an Idea shaped India, Nikhil Menon, Penguin, 2022

Wise Counsel: Reflections on the Planning Era, 7th Sharada Prasad Memorial Lecture, Jairam Ramesh, New Delhi April, 15, 2018

Sessions 5 and 6 –Social and Protest Movements and transformative and constructive voluntarism- how their work and influence introduced fissures, fault lines and solutions to policies (6 hours)

Voluntary Action, Civil Society and the States, Tandon Rajesh, Mosaic Books

Social Movements and the State in India - Deepening Democracy, Ed. Kenneth Bo Nielsen, Alf Gunvald Nilsen, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016

Sessions 7 and 8 –Economy and Fiscal Policies – how are ideas and beliefs have crafted Economic policy, the influence of international financial institutions and international economic frameworks – and our own changing economic policy priorities and goals (6 hours)

Development Planning – The Indian Experience, Sukhomoy Chakravarty, OUP, 1989

Glimpses of Indian Economic Policy – An Insiders View, Patel IG, OUP, 2004

India's Economy from Nehru to Modi – A Brief History, Pulapre Balakrishnan, Permanent Black, 2022

Planning in the 20th Century and Beyond, Suresh Mehrotra, Sylvie Guichard, Cambridge University Press, 2020

Wages of Freedom – Fifty Years of the Indian Nation State, Ed. Partha Chatterjee, OUP, 1999, pages 37 to 60

Sessions 9 and 10 – Human Development – Education and Knowledge, Health and Longevity, Rights and Freedoms, 6 hours

The Poverty Curtain, Mahbub ul Haq, Columbia University Press, 1976

Economic Development and Social Opportunity, Jean Dreze, Amartya Sen, Clarendon Paperbacks

Education and Society, R Indira, <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/>

Development as Freedom, Amartya Sen, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2000

Session 11 – Environment and Ecology – Forest, Pollution, Land, Water, Wildlife, Flora and Fauna and Wildlife and Animal Life, 3 hours

This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India, Ramachandra Guha, Oxford India Perennials Series, OUP, 1999

Social Movements in India : Poverty, Power, and Politics, Ed. Raka Ray, Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, US, 2005

Speaking With Nature - The Origins of Indian Environmentalism, Ramachandra Guha, Yale University Press, 2024

Sessions 12 and 13 - Marginalised Communities – Affirmative Action, Legal Framework and Institutional Policies, 6 hours

The Remembered Village, Srinivas M N, OUP, 1997

Social Movements in India : Poverty, Power, and Politics, Ed. Raka Ray, Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, US, 2005

Wages of Freedom – Fifty Years of the Indian Nation State, Ed. Partha Chatterjee, OUP, 1999, pages 241 to 291

The Journey of Caste in India - Voices from Margins, Ed. N. Sukumar, Paul D'Souza, Routledge (2023)

Caste Pride - Battles for Equality in Hindu India, Manoj Mitta, Westland Publications Ltd., 2023

Republic of Caste, Anand Teltumbde, Navayana, 2018

Dalits - Past, present and future, Anand Teltumbde, Routledge India, 2016

This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India, Ramachandra Guha, Oxford India Perennials Series, OUP, 1999

Session 14 –Data and Statistics - where do numbers come from and how do they influence Policy and how are outcomes read, 3 hours

Whole Numbers and Half Truths, Rukmini S, Thomson Press, 2021

India's Statistical System: Past, Present, Future, Pramit Bhattacharya, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023

Session 15 – How India has tackled Ideas, been adaptive and adoptive and what have been the Policy making mechanisms, 3 hours

Scheme of Evaluation and Grading -

Class Exercises and Quizzes	30 %
Essays and Write Ups	20 %
Mid-term Essay/ Examination	20 %
Final Essay/ Examination	30 %