

**Model Course Curriculum for a Study Abroad Programme<sup>1</sup>**  
**CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

**Course Outlines**

The course outlines offered below are expected to give interested students a general sense of the topics that will be covered in each area/subject. Each course will be of 45 hours duration and will be completed in ten weeks. Besides lectures, there will be a variety of aids-film/documentary, screenings, demonstrations by artistes, outings to sites and performances of relevance, guest speakers, discussion groups – that will be used to enable the foreign students to grasp as many nuances of each subject as is possible in the limited time available. Details of these programmes, as well as reading lists for each course, will be provided closer to the commencement of the working semester, as soon as students indicate their interest in registering for this programme.

The teaching of all courses except the Travel course will be organized on the Hindu College campus of Delhi University, from where relevant outings will be arranged. The travel course will be organized separately in conjunction with a travel agency.

**Course 1**

**HISTORY, POLITICS AND SOCIETY: STRUCTURE CONTEMPORARY  
INDIA**

**Course Duration: 45 hours (10 weeks)**

**Course Credits: 3**

**Objectives and Background**

The basic objective of the outlined course is to familiarize the foreign students with the political and the societal developments that have taken place in India since ancient times. This is with a purpose to present before them an integrated view of Indian history, polity and society. As present has its linkages with the past, India's history has been taken here in this course as a continuous dynamic process because along with linkages the issue of 'Change' is also very important. This historical interpretation would

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by Hindu College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India

fortify the understanding of India's changing socio-political system. This holistic course would enable the foreign student to dispel possible misconceptions and commonly held constructions of Indian society. The course also proposes to acquaint the student with the modern, secular, democratic republic reality of India, with reference to its distinctive social ethos, so that they may appreciate developments in this country through the ages better.

## **Structure**

### **Week 1**

Understanding the Land and its History

Geographical and Historical Features; Sources and tools of historical reconstruction

The Harappan and Vedic Civilizations

### **Week 2**

Emergence of Empires

Mauryas and Guptas

### **Week 3**

Religion Philosophy and Society

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism; Changing nature of social classes

Medieval Politics: Problems of Change and Continuity

Early medieval polity; The Delhi Sultanate; The Mughal Empire

### **Week 4**

Advent & Consolidation of Colonial Power

Indian Nationalism: Background & Development

### **Week 5**

Social and Cultural Change

Independence & Partition

### **Week 6**

Making of a Post Colonial Society & Polity

Act of 1935 & the making of Indian Constitution

Basic Features of Indian Constitution

**Week 7**

Status of minorities

Struggle for minority rights

Mandal Commission & New Social formations

**Week 8**

Secularism as an ideology and as a set of practices in India

(Case study: The Babri Masjid issue)

Basic features of Indian society – region, language & religion & their relation to the nation

**Week 9**

Family in India

Definitions/debates surrounding the concept

Changes in family ties/contemporary trends

Existing critiques

Media images of family

**Week 10**

Basic features of the caste system

Varna and jati; Mobility & social change; Caste & Race – a comparison

Tribes in India – Social Structure & their relation with wider society

Formation of a new class, caste structure & realignment of social groups

Issues of Protest: Dalit movements; Environment movements

Field Trip

Weekend visit to a village in/around Delhi

- To acquaint students with community life/agrarian relations in India.

- Visit to historical monuments in/around Delhi or to Agra/Jaipur

**Evaluation**

Students would be asked to write a paper on any one subject from within the course, and

would be required to present it in the form of a seminar. External experts would be invited, if necessary, for evaluation.

## **Course 2**

### **INDIA PHILOSOPHY: BACK TO THE FUTURE**

**Course Duration: 45 hours (10 weeks)**

**Course Credits : 3**

#### **Objectives**

The course intends to establish that Indian philosophy is not a homogenised monolith, but a dynamic evolving discourse, borrowing from many strands of thought, and engaged in a continuous interface with its socio-cultural and political ambience.

#### **Background and Description:**

As a unit in the India Studies Programme 2000-2001, the conceptualization of the Indian Philosophy Course has been done with a view to equipping the student with a concise view of the unraveling of the diverse philosophical traditions of India from the ancient to the modern times.

The unit begins with an examination of the four major Vedas, which were taken as the primary articulation of Indian thought in the ancient period. The Vedas contain songs of adoration offered to various facets of nature such as the Sun, the Moon, the Rain, the Dawn, all infused with a realisation of the essential unity and colateralness of these phenomena. The Upanishads and the Gita epitomize the height of the scholarly exchanges between the teacher and one or more pupils on the deepest problems of human existence, of death, of the goal of life and the stages of spiritual realisation, and most significantly, an extraordinary theory of Action (Karma).

The Ancient Indian Thought also engages in a study of the nine school of Indian Philosophy. These have been categorised into the Orthodox (having its source in the Veda) and the Heterodox (independent of the Veda) respectively. These Systems of Indian Thought display an amazing breadth of speculations on metaphysics, epistemologies, logic and ethics. This section indicates the creative synthesis in Indian thought of such discrepant trends as materialism and rationalism.

The Medieval Indian Philosophy section scrutinizes the various religions which flourished in India besides Brahmanical Hinduism, such as Islam, Sikhism and Christianity, their specific points of entry and rise in popularity. This portion's objective is to highlight the evolution of the multicultural and multireligious ethos of India. Within Hinduism too, there were challenges to the Brahmanical hegemony in movements such as the Bhakti Movement. Crucially central to this movement were many saint-singers from all castes and communities, and some women too, who employed the regional languages and dialects to propagate the gospel of divine love and ecstasy to the masses.

The Modern Indian Philosophy section examines some of the Reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj (1828), the Prarthana Samaj (1867) and the Arya Samaj (1875) which aimed at correcting the excesses of formalism and ritualism within the Sanatana Dharam (True/Eternal Faith) traditions of Hinduism. They condemned idol worship, as also social ills such as caste taboos and sati (the immolation of widows upon their husbands' funeral pyre).

The impetus for these Reform Movements came from a heightened national consciousness and the perceived need to project a "modern" cultural image to contest colonial allegations of cultural backwardness. There were various trajectories towards projecting a new Indian ethos, among which two major ones were represented by Tagore and Gandhi.

Tagore stressed the composite culture of India to which the Dravidians, the Aryans, the Persians, and the Mohameddians have contributed their creative talents. He castigated the "nation of the west" for coming to India with imperialistic intentions, which suppressed the plurality of India's cultural heritage.

Gandhi prioritised the achievement of “cultural” Swaraj (self rule) over that of the “parliamentary”. He believed that political autonomy by itself was hollow without the realisation of an authentic Indian ethos. The framework for this ethos, according to him, was to be found in the village life of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru, on the other hand, envisaged a modern India on the lines of industrial development and planned economy, models derived selectively from the capitalist and the socialist worlds of the west.

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#### Structure

The course will involve an intensive 10-week schedule of lectures which every student is expected to attend. An outline of the schedule is provided.

#### Week 1

Introduction : The multifarious discipline of Indian philosophy, overview of traditions and methodologies.

#### Week 2

Four major Vedas : Rig, Sama, Yajur, Artha; Vedanta - The Upanishads (a study of 3 major ones); the Gita

#### Week 3

Six Orthodox Schools of Indian philosophy: Mimansa, Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaishesika, Vedanta.

#### Week 4

Three Heterodox Schools of Indian Philosophy: Buddhism, Jainism, Carvakas.

#### Week 5

The rise of various religions ( besides Brahmanical Hinduism ):Islam, Sikhism, Christianity

Week 6

Rise of Bhakti Movement, Vaishnavism and Shaivism

Week 7

Reform movement in modern india - the "Indian Renaissance" - Arya Samaj, Brahamo Samaj and prarthana Samaj

Week 8

Modern social and political philosophies: Selected works of Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru

Week 9

Modern Indian philosophers: Maharishi, Ramakrishnan Paramhans, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Ambedkar.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

The student will be graded on the basis of submission of short paper in the 5<sup>th</sup> week and one long paper at the end of the semester. Topics for each assignment must be chosen in advance in consultation with the course director.

The student will receive a consolidated grade at the end of the course.

### **Course 3**

## **ARTISTIC/CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN INDIA : EVOLVED & EMERGENT**

**Course Duration: 45 hours (10 weeks)**

**Course Credits : 3**

### **Objectives**

This course has been structured with a view to present to the foreign students visiting India, an overarching picture of the evolution and growth of various facets of Indian

culture; culture, as it has been learnt and communicated in its traditional art forms, in its encounters with music, dance, drama, architecture, sculpture, Rituals, cinema, fashion and media images/perceptions.

The students would be equipped with information about some meaningful zones of India's material and abstract aspects of culture. One of the objectives of the course would be to provide an outline of the significant symbols, language and behavioral patterns in the way of life of Indians.

To understand the basic ideals and aspirations of India's culture, we would first and foremost, have to acquaint the foreign student with the diversity of its components. Our task would be to interpret (in a simplified manner) the richness of India's culture in its various hues. The students would be introduced to the unique cultural innovations and the all-pervasive modern, despite spiritual tones of India, as it has developed in its everyday/artistic interpretations.

The foreign students would be given an introductory lecture on emergence of composite aspects of India's culture and how this has been a reason for its creative character. Presenting, the constant interaction of the traditional and the modern aspects of Indian way of life would be another aim of the course.

After this course, the foreign student would feel much more familiar and comfortable with the complex character of India's artistic/cultural identities. The course would also enable deconstruction of the 'other' image, by countering prevailing myths about India, and giving the foreign student a feel of its distinction modernity.

### **Week 1**

Introduction: Understanding Culture in India

Brief overview of Unity, despite Diversity.

Modernisation of Indian Tradition; Contesting the idea of a single tradition; Heterogeneity as a value.

### **Week 2**

## History Overview of Art & Cultural

Pre Colonial; Colonial/Revolutionary expressions; Post Independence/Popular Art & Culture

### **Week 3**

Introduction to Indian Music

Basic music forms – North India & Carnatic

Khayal, Dhrupad, Dhamar; Semi-classical forms – Thumri, Chaiti, Kajri, Ghazal, Tappa.

Introduction to Gharanas, Time Cycles; correlation of Time to Ragas; Siwar, Laya, Taal.

Music in Religion (Sufi, Bhakti Traditions)

Music as cultural revivalism

### **Week 4**

#### Nature & Forms of Indian Dance

Natyashastra; Five classical forms; Relation between folk and classical; Performative aspects/symbolism; Dance drama; Martial Arts

**NOTE :** Both (3) & (4) will be covered with the help of Lecture – Demonstrations by specialists in the fields plus screening of films/videos

### **Week 5**

Rituals/Rites of Passage and their significance in dissemination of cultural Values/beliefs in Indian society.

### **Week 6**

#### Architecture/sculpture

One case study for instance, a visit to :-

- Taj Mahal – as a symbolic site

OR

- Khajurao

OR

- any other place of architectural significance in/around Delhi.

### **Week 7**

Indian Theatre

Preformatted aspects

Parsi Theatre

English Theatre

Regional Theatre

Staging of A play/street theatre by students

### **Week 8**

Indian Cinema

Its evolution & development from silent film era to contemporary times.

Cinema & Nationalism

Popular Cinema

Parallel Cinema

Portrayal of Women, Hero/Anti Hero

Use of cinema for furthering social themes/movements

Change in Technology/market values.

### **Week 9**

Food Habits/Commensality

### **Week 10.**

Consumerism, Media & Construction of 'an' Indian image

Category of 'Ethnic'/Folk

Fashions

Indian Modernity

**NOTE:** The above mentioned course structure will include other demonstrative/field

Trip aspects like : - A walk through Old Delhi

- A visit to Fatehpur Sikri/any other monument of interest
- Screening of Films/staging of plays/lecture demonstrations.

### **EVALUATION**

The students would be required to write a paper on any one aspect that they wish to research in greater detail, amongst the given topics in the course. A comparative study of India & the country of the foreign student would be encouraged.

- students would also be evaluated on the basis of their participation/involvement in the ‘demonstrative’ aspects of the course i.e. – visits/field trips/screening of films etc. – attendance for which would be compulsory.

#### **Course 4**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY INDIA**

**Duration of the Course** : 45 hours (10 weeks)

Course Credits: 3

**Course Objective** : This course caters to the growing need to tackle environmental challenges that India faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the fifty years following independence India has opted for developmental strategies and rapid industrialization that has had a significant impact on the environment as well as social, economic, political and cultural life patterns. There is an increasing need to plan ahead towards a sustainable society that draws upon but does not diminish the environment that nurtures us. Environment is a pressing global issue; at the same time, India as the largest Asian subcontinent, with its varied land forms and climatic conditions, its diverse religion and culture, its ancient traditions and multilingual literatures offers a unique case study. We envisage a well-integrated, holistic course that will enable students to get a balanced insight into the various aspects of the problem.

**Structure** : This course caters to under graduate students from both science and humanities stream. Therefore it has been kept general and non-technical, though care has been taken to make the course as comprehensive and in-depth as possible. It has been divided into Five modules with each module covering a specific area of study. Individual modules include classroom lectures, supplemented with resource material prepared by

experts in the field. Since the course attempts to familiarize the students with the Indian scenario, a lot of data specific to the Indian condition is made available as input material. Audio visual aids are added to make the study interesting. Workbooks and other evaluative methods will be prepared to gauge the response of students. Besides, regular workshops will be held where students will have to make short 15 minutes presentation on any topic that is either part of the curriculum or of special interest to them. An important component of the course would be field trips to areas of interest in and near Delhi. Unit 3 has been specially designed with this in mind. Finally, Open House Discussions will be periodically organised where public figures, who are actively involved with environmental issues will be invited to participate.

## **Unit 1**

### General Ecological Principles

- A. Biotic components of ecosystems
  - a) Biotic communities
  - b) Population : human and cattle
    - i) Age structure of population
    - ii) Population growth curves
    - iii) Population dispersion : migration, immigration, and regulation of population size.
  - c) Intraspecific and interspecific interactions.
    - i) Intraspecific: types of association, aggregations and social organisations
    - ii) Intraspecific: mutualism, parasitism, predation and competition.
  - d) Global habits.
  - e) Biogeochemical cycles.

- B. Abiotic components of ecosystems.
  - i) Atmosphere: structure, composition, reactions and meteorology
  - ii) Hydrosphere: property, classification and hydrological cycle.
  - iii) Lithosphere: soil formation, soil profile and soil texture.
  
- C. Harnessing of natural resources and its constituent. Remote sensing and resource Estimation of natural resources: The Indian Context.
  
- D. Biodiversity.

(Six Hours)

**Unit 2 :**

*Interaction of Man and Environment : Pollution.*

- A. Pollution : Man as polluter and victim
  - B. Sources
    - i) Pollution due to Industries
    - ii) Pollution due to vehicles
    - iii) Pollution due to agriculture
    - iv) Pollution due to domestic activities
    - v) Pollution due to energy systems
    - vi) Noise pollution
  
  - C. Impact : health and environment (human, plants, animals and monuments)
- (Six hours)

**Unit 3:**

*Environmental Degradation : Case studies.*

- i. Industrial :
- ii. River: Ganga action plan.
- iii. Mountains: Deforestation of Lower Himalayas
- iv. Monuments: Taj Mahal
- v. Nuclear: Pokhran
- vi. Hydel Projects: Narbada
- vii. Thermal Projects: ITO crossing, New Delhi
- viii. Mining open coal mining at Bihar/Bengal. Marble mining at Jaipur
- ix. Ground water: Arsenic poisoning in W. Bengal.
- x. Oil spills: Bombay High.

***Towards Conservation of Environment:*** Case studies

- i. Project Tiger
- ii. Aforestation project

( This module will also include additional field trips)

**Unit 4 :**

*Environmental Conservation*

- i. Conservation of Natural Resources
- ii. Alternative Energy Resources
- iii. Waste Management and Re-cycling
- iv. Appropriate Technology
- v. Aforestation
- vi. Protection of Environment through Legislation and Education

(Six Hours)

## **Unit 5:**

### *Socio-economic-political aspects of Environment*

- i. Colonial factors and Environment decay
- ii. Environmental movement in India
- iii. Tribal way of living
- iv. Sustainable Development and the Gandhian Model
- v. Ecological Conflicts and the special role of Culture and Media
- vi. Indian Literature and Environment
- vii. Environmental Psychology
- viii. Women and Environment.

(Six Hours)

### **Evaluation**

Each student will be expected to present a short paper in class on a pre-decided topic towards the middle of the semester. At the end of the semester, the student will hand in a detailed report on any of the field projects/trips undertaken by the class during term.

Topics for both paper and report should be chosen in consultation with the course director.

The student will receive a consolidated grade at the end of semester.

## **Course 5**

### **CONTEXTS OF INDIAN BUSINESS PRACTICES TODAY**

**Course Duration: 45 hours ( 10 Weeks)**

**Course Credits: 3**

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this course is to acquaint the students with Indians' involvement in International business and the foreign trade problems and

### **Context/ Background**

India's share in world trade declined from 2 per cent in 1951 to 1 per cent in 1965 and to 0.5 per cent by 1991. The major reforms in policy introduced during the 1990s depict unilateral as well as multilateral characteristics. Unilateral reforms have been undertaken with regard to exchange rate policy, foreign investment, external borrowings, import licensing, custom tariffs and export subsidies. The multilateral aspect of India's trade policy reforms refers to India's commitments to WTO with regard to trade in goods and services. India has been reducing its import tariffs and relaxing quantitative restrictions on imports and exports since 1991. India now looks forward to integrating itself with the global environment, which itself is subject to a rapid change. Another aspect, which needs careful analysis, is the likely impact of formation of regional trading blocs on India's economy. India is a founder member of GATT (1947) as well as of WTO, which came into effect from January 1, 1995. By virtue of its WTO membership, India automatically avails of Most Favored Nation (MFN) treatment and National Treatment (NT) from all WTO members for its exports and vice versa. It is thus important to know the legal and regulatory aspects of international trade. Risks and uncertainties of trading in a global economy need to be clearly identified. The trade in services has become a major component of India's receipts on current account due to a massive contribution from software sector. Thus, trade in services needs serious attention for future growth of foreign exchange earnings.

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<b>WEEK</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
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1. Scope of International trade in India – Environment analysis for International Business – Economic, Geographic, socio-cultural, commercial, legal, political,

Etc.,

Current trends and issues in international trade, pattern & structure of world Trade.

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2. Foreign investments : types, motives and effects, present structure of foreign Investments, Multinational Corporations – nature, role, operations policy Trades MNCs.
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3. Regional Trade Blocks/Groups : NAFTA, SAFTA
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4. GATT/WTO  
Role of WTO and other agencies in global trade and investments.
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5. Regional trade Blocks/Groups :  
ASEAN, APEC, CNEA, EU
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6. Export Regulations/financing and trade financing: International business contracts Types, formation etc., legal dimensions dispute settlements, Export and Import Documents
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7. Export Finance : Facilities, encentives, and procedure for pre and post stipment Finance, Business risle coverage, cargo, credit and foreign exchange resle Coverage, cargo insurrence, role and scheme of ECGC and commercial regulations and formalities.
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8. Liberalisation policies : Foreign exchange situation prior to July 1991, introduction of economic reforms, reforming the reforms.
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9. Indian Industries : Present and future : major industries in India, Industrial policy Resolution of 1948, Industrial policy resolution of 1956, seriousness in Industrial policy of 1956, Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951
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10. New Industrial Policy 1991 role of small scale and cottage industries in Indian Economy, Public sector, industrial sickness in India and issue of privatisation, Industrial development during planning period.
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### **Evaluation**

For participation in the class	40%
For presenting a seminar	50%
For class test	10%

### **Course 6**

#### **INDIAN ECONOMICS: EVOLUTION, LIBERALIZATION AND AFTER**

**Course Duration: 45 hours**

**Course Credits: 3**

Objective:

The principal objective of this course is to introduce to the student the evolution of India's economy during the era of its democratic planning and growth after it became independent in 1947. The subject is important for someone who would like to study

contemporary India. Various other facets of the economy relating to social and political aspects are directly or indirectly dependent upon economy's performance. Moreover, with its efforts towards liberalization, the economy is fast getting integrated into the global economic structure. It thus becomes even more important to know about various recent developments in India's economy so as to understand their international impact.

#### Context:

This is an introductory course to evolution of the Indian economy during the post-independence period of 1947-1991 and the liberalization of the economy thereafter. It begins with a brief description of India's development strategy adopted in its five-year planning structure commencing 1951 with three broad objectives, namely, economic growth self-reliance and social justice. India entered into an era of ambitious industrialization program during the mid-1950s with emphasis on import-substitution, heavy industries and a central role for the public sector. Export pessimism was widely prevalent among the then developing countries. The trade policy environment slowly got transformed into a highly protectionist and regulated regime over the years with tariff levels touching very high levels by the end of 1980s. The domestic industry, heavily insulated from international competition, was under strict regulation. This type of development strategy had a built-in "anti-agricultural" bias since this sector was implicitly "taxed" by trade policy even though there is very little incidence of direct taxation in Indian agriculture. High protection of industry alongwith over-valued exchange rate, were the policy instruments that led to implicit taxation of this sector. The political economy of food shortage led India into an era of technological upgrading of agriculture starting in the mid-1960s. In the summer of 1991, India found itself in one of its worst balance of payments crises since 1947. Matters were made worse by an accompanying double-digit inflation in 1990-91 and the oil price increase resulting from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. This crisis led to the emergence of long overdue economic reform of the Indian economy. India commenced its tryst with globalization in 1991. The government initiated a program of macroeconomic-stabilization in July 1991. It consisted of reducing the fiscal deficit, controlling the money supply and correcting the overvalued exchange rate by a major devaluation of the

rupee. Apart from macroeconomic reforms, long overdue microeconomic or “sectoral” reforms with a medium term perspective were also launched. Major structural reforms were introduced in the industrial and trade policy regimes and in the financial sector with a view of improving the efficiency, productivity and international competitiveness of India’s manufacturing sector. Such reform measures represent a significant departure from the policy framework of the preceding four decades. They are consequently of crucial importance in influencing the future course of the Indian economy.

**Structure :**

It is proposed that the course would be taught over a period of ten weeks during each semester. Overhead projector shall be used to enhance the value of teaching. The evaluation shall be done through assessing a) student-presentations in the classroom on relevant topics of their choice; and b) a short and a long term paper on a relevant topic decided by the students in consultation with the instructor.

The following is the weekly course content :

**WEEK – 1 :**

**Indian Economy : Historical Perspective**

Economic Growth and Development : Factors and Strategies

Colonialism : British Rule and Exploitation of the Economy

**WEEK – 2 :**

**India’s Development Experience**

Objectives of Indian Planning : Development Strategy : Introduction to the Five Year Planning Process.

**WEEKS – 3 AND 4 :**

**Agriculture**

Features of Indian Agriculture : Factors Responsible for Backward Agriculture and Low Productivity; Land Reforms; New Agricultural Strategy (Green Revolution); Price Policies for inputs and Output; Problems Relating to Rural Credit; Agricultural Marketing.

**WEEKS – 5 AND 6 :**

**Industry**

Industrial Structure : Industrial Policy; Industrial Licensing; Role of Public Sector; Role of Cottage and Small Scale Industries; Concentration of Economic Power; Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act; Industrial Finance; Reforms in Industrial Policies since 1991.

**WEEK – 7 and 8 :**

**Foreign Trade**

Role of Foreign Trade in Economic Growth; Changes in Direction and Composition of India's Foreign Trade; Role of Foreign Capital; Trade Policy Reforms Since 1991; WTO and India.

**WEEK – 9 :**

**Fiscal Policies**

The role of current monetary and fiscal policies in India

**WEEK – 10 :**

## **Major Problems**

Infrastructure; Demography; Poverty; Unemployment; Inflation.

## **Course 7**

### **GENDER IN INDIA AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM**

**Course Duration: 45 hours (10 weeks)**

**Course Credits : 3**

## **Description**

This will be an inter-disciplinary course that will attempt to provide an overview of the status of women and their work in different spheres of public and private life in India at the turn of the millennium. It will briefly trace the development of women in the fifty years following India's independence in 1947, and create the necessary background for understanding the advances and the problems of gender on various fronts in present-day India. Starting with a discussion on the relevance of 'feminism' and such a movement in India, the course will then cover women in Indian history, economics, politics and society, at home and in the workplace, in urban and rural context, in their environmental concerns, and in their artistic/cultural contributions. The course, therefore, will study Indian women today in the light of their past, and try to evaluate their status and their condition as they move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Objectives**

The primary objective of this course is to provide a panoramic view of the status of women in India today. Clearly, it will be difficult to provide much in-depth knowledge of women in each particular sphere of life/work in India today in the limited time available. It is intended, therefore, that the course be able to offer students a larger, more general,

understanding of the historical, economic, social, political, and cultural contexts of gender in India after fifty years of independence. It is hoped that the course will arouse enough interest from students in the variety of complex gender issues in India that it will encourage them to then pursue a more in-depth study of any particular sphere, perhaps for a research paper at the end of the semester. Guidance for further study in any area chosen by the student will be provided during the course.

## **Background**

The Constitution of independent India declared equality between sexes a fundamental right. This document also guaranteed equal protection of the law, equal opportunities in public employment, and prohibited discrimination in public places. The Hindu Code Bills (governing the majority religion of the secular Indian state) passed between 1950-55 rewrote for Hindus the laws of marriage and divorce, adoption and inheritance, with the intention to provide equal status to women. Adult suffrage added women to the electoral roles and political parties pledged their commitment to women's issues. However, if the key to women's status is their economic position, all the indexes – property, resources, salaries, food, medical care access, sex ratio – indicate that Indian women are not yet the equal of Indian men. The question then remains: to what extent have women's lives improved – and by what measure – since independence? The first women's movement in India, dubbed in retrospect, 'first wave feminism', condemned tradition and religion for women's suffering and sought redress in education and legal change. The contemporary feminist movement emerged in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Replacing pan-Indian women's organisations were a large number of autonomous groups joined through the connections of their leaders, an emerging feminist press, the general media's coverage of women's issues and periodic meetings and conventions. Rape, and dowry-deaths, have been two of the issues that have energised the contemporary women's movement in India. Indian women entered the 1990's disappointed in new legislations ostensibly floated for their development and troubled by ethnic and communal conflict that impedes general progress. They would certainly argue at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the road to absolute gender justice in India is still going to be a long and weary one.

## Structure

As an inter-disciplinary course, we shall draw upon resource persons and materials from as varied a horizon as possible. Particulars of films/documentaries to be screened, theatrical/literary/artistic events to be organised or attended, and activist-speakers to be invited cannot be provided at this time, but such activities will constitute a large and important part of the course curriculum. Given below are broad outlines of topics/areas that will be covered in the duration of the course. Further details will be available closer to the start of the semester.

### Week 1

Indian Feminism, its relevance and prospects. A discussion of the theoretical aspects of gender study in India. What is postcolonial/Third World feminism?

How does it apply to India?

### Week 2

Feminist Movements in India. The issues and programmes. Can they be evaluated? In which direction is feminist activism headed? (Presentation by activist/leader)

### Week 3

Women in Indian history and politics. The preeminence of women in the early centuries of Indian civilisation; the decline in status of women and their reemergence in the late nineteenth century. The role of women in Indian politics in the nationalist movement and post-independence. Case Study: Indira Gandhi, late Prime Minister of India.

### Week 4

Social roles for women in India. Problems of abuse: female feticide, child sexual abuse, adult rape, dowry deaths. Managing the home and the workplace and balancing traditional expectations of wife/mother roles with changing patterns of society. Emergent sexualities.

#### Week 5

Women at work: rural and urban contexts. In villages, women work both at home and outside for subsistence. Is this work evaluated and remunerated? In urban areas, is there a glass ceiling? What kind of work are women most hired for? Do they get equal pay for equal work? Is there sexual harassment in the workplace?

#### Week 6

Women and the law. What legal rights do women have in India, in marriages, in offices? What are the ways in which they can seek redressal? What are their inheritance and property rights in a patriarchal system like India's?

#### Week 7

Women and the environment: issues, involvement and activism. The relevance of eco-feminism in India.

#### Week 8

Women writers. Is there a feminist literature in India? What are the gender issues that concern these writers, and is social activism through writing a part of their agenda? Reading Mahasweta Devi's short stories.

#### Week 9

Women and the fine arts: art, music, theatre. Looking at feminist creativity in India

#### Week 10

Women and the Cinema. The last two decades have seen the evolution of the Indian women film Course Evaluation director, making both 'art' and 'mainstream' cinema. Is this the birth of feminist cinema in/from India? Case study: Aparna Sen/Deepa Mehta.

### **Evaluation**

- Short presentation : All the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> week, students will make short (10-minutes presentations on a topic they have identified for a team project. This project proposal will be presented to the class for discussion and suggestions.
- Team paper : Students will submit a long paper at the end of the course on a topic they have chosen earlier in consultation with the course Director, and presented as a proposal to the class in the 6<sup>th</sup> week.

Students will be given a consolidated grade upon evaluation of class programme and the team paper.

### **Course 8**

#### **INDIAN LITERATURES: THE MANY VOICES WITHIN**

**Course Duration: 45 hours (10 weeks)**

**Course Credits: 3**

#### Description

This course, conducted in English, will provide an introduction to the rich and varied traditions of literature in India. The vast body of literary work that has been produced in India over centuries in the many Indian languages - of which English is but one - cannot possibly be covered in a single semester. This course will therefore attempt to give students an overview of the numerous ways in which Indian literatures have developed and progressed through the years. In recent times, there has been a growing debate about whether there is a single identifiable Indian literary tradition, or whether the character of Indian literatures) is defined by its heterogeneity, not just linguistic, but also regional, cultural, historical and religious. This course will seek an answer to that question by looking at the major components that make up Indian literatures today. While introducing

students to the ancient classical traditions - the epics, for example - the course will concentrate on developments in literature in the last fifty years, and identify the trends that will define the paths ahead at the turn of this century. We will pay particular attention to two components of the course that are most accessible to international students, Indian writing in English and Indian writing in translation.

### Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the breathtaking richness and vastness of Indian literatures, and to give them a sense of how these literatures reflect the heterogeneity of Indian culture. There is no one Indian literature, just as perhaps there is no single homogenous Indian culture. It is also an objective of the course to make students aware of the most sophisticated developments in the various Indian literatures over the second half of the century just past, that includes most visibly the rise of Indian writing in English as a global phenomenon. The course will make available to its students the best translations of regional Indian literatures - including those written in classical Indian languages - and provide guidance in appreciating, analysing and critiquing trends as well as texts. It is hoped that students will gain an insight into the diversity of Indian literatures by the end of the course. They will be encouraged to identify an area of Indian literature in which they are most interested, and to pursue its study in greater detail in consultation with the course director.

### Context/Background

**Classical and Regional Indian Literatures** The most important debates that have arisen at the end of the twentieth century about Indian literature focus on the following questions: does a single Indian literature exist, can it exist? Does it have plural identities? If so, is there a hierarchy, that delineates what is more Indian, and what is less? What is the place of Indian English in this field? Is translation - primarily into English, from the Indian bhashas (languages) - the future of Indian literature in the global context?

The debates have been heated, and there are often no easy answers. While a school of critics and scholars have firmly held to the belief that while there is diversity (particularly since there are so many Indian languages), there are still enough "unities" underlying the differences in Indian languages to allow for "the idea of an Indian literature", in the singular. Others have been putting forward the notion that to homogenise Indian literature

into a single identifiable mass is to do injustice to the importance of its differences and variety, and even at the cost of risking a "falling apart", we should recognise the value of "Indian literatures" in the plural.

India has never been uni-lingual, even though nineteenth century Indologists from the west created a perception of a pan-Indian literature based solely on the Sanskrit language. By the beginning of the twentieth century, literature in new languages had started to emerge all over the Indian subcontinent, expressions of regional aspirations in protest against the hegemony of Sanskrit and its associated culture. Today, India is a unique "linguistic field" with more than twenty written languages and over a thousand dialects. Amongst the most well known literatures/languages, we have Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Kashmiri and Sindhi in the north, Bangla, Oriya, A fainil5 Malayalam, Telegu and Kannada in the south. English is perhaps the only pan- Indian language today, a legacy of British colonialism in India. The constitution of India has delineated Hindi and English as state languages.

Any understanding of the character of Indian literature has to start from its chequered history of regional languages and aspirations. Once the jigsaw puzzle of differences and specificities fall into place, it will be easier to grasp to grasp the essence of unity-in-diversity that gives Indian literature its amazingly polyglot profile.

### Indian Writing in English

Literature from India, written originally in English, is also often placed in categories such as "Postcolonial literature" or "Third World literature". This "voice" in Indian literature is a result of India's colonization by the British, who brought English language education to India and created generations of Indians who grew up to be as fluent in English as in their mother tongues. In a quick introduction to this important component of Indian literature today, postcolonial Indian writing will be surveyed in two sections, 1950-80, and 1980-2000. This demarcation is a recognition of the Salman Rushdie phenomenon, whose *Midnight's Children* marked, in the early eighties, a watershed in this nascent genre of literature in India.

We will explore questions of language and hegemony, and notions of place/space, identity, displacement and migration, both as larger, general perceptions and with reference to a few chosen texts. As Indian writers in English now command laudatory international attention – in the form of prizes like the Booker as well as astronomical publishers' advances – where is this “elite” component of Indian literature headed in the new century.

### Indian Writing in Translation

In the much-publicised feud between Indian literatures in regional languages and Indian writing in English, the latter is accused of nurturing elitist dreams of capturing the world market as ‘authentic’ Indian literature simply because the regional literatures are restricted to their linguistic circuits. This divide can clearly only be bridged through translation (primarily into English). This realisation has dawned rather late, so Indian writing in translation can easily be considered the newest kid on the block that houses such a rich diversity of Indian literatures. Respectable publishing houses have only in the last decade or so taken on translation as a valid and worthwhile pursuit, and now there is a mad scramble to produce “quality translations” of the best of Indian regional literatures. This component of the course will analyse both the problems and the possibilities of translation in India. It will take up important theoretical aspects of translation studies (an -emergent discipline the world over) and attempt to apply them to specific issues pertaining to translation in India. It is a cliché that “we gain some, we lose some” in the process of linguistic and cultural translations. What is it that we lose and gain in translating Indian literature? And is translation the real future of Indian literature?

### Structure

Given below are broad outlines of topics/areas to be covered in the course. Additional arrangements - for students to meet Indian writers, to attend dramatisations and films of well-known literary work, to visit locations that have provided inspiration for literary creations - are not being detailed here. A list of texts - in translation - to be read for this course will be provided before the start of the semester.

#### Week 1

Indian Literatures: Origin and Development. A brief overview of the beginnings of Indian literature.

#### Week 2

The Great Debate: Is there an Indian Literature? Arguments for/against the singular and plural constructions.

#### Week 3

Introduction to Indian Critics and Scholars. A survey of those that study Indian literatures, both in India and in the western academy.

#### Week 4

The Indian Epics : The Ramayana and the Mahabharata. What they are and how they have influenced the development of all subsequent Indian literatures.

#### Week 5

Oral and Fold Traditions in Poetry and Drama. In a largely non-literate country, how such traditions are a vibrant contribution to "literature".

#### Week 6

The Rise of the Indian Novel. The western import and its transformations. The growth of the most popular genre of Indian literature today.

#### Week 7

Modern Indian Poetry and Drama

#### Week 8

## Contemporary Regional Fiction: Novels and Short Stories

Week 9

Indian Writing in English

Week 10

India in Translation

Evaluation

This course will require the student one short paper at the end of the 5th week and one long paper in the last week of the semester. Topics for the two papers will be decided upon in consultation with the course director, and should cover two separate areas of the course. The student will be expected to participate in class discussions, and do a short presentation in class on his/her research for the long paper. The student will receive a consolidated grade at the end of the semester.