PG SOCIOLOGY

LESSON PLAN

SEMESTER 1

SOCL : 0701

CLASSICAL THINKERS

4 Credits

Compulsory Paper

Course Description: Students who come for PG course in Sociology have some prior knowledge about classical western thought. They have a specific paper on Western Sociological Thinkers at the UG level. The aim of a Masters level course on thinkers is to engage them with primary original works of the masters themselves. The epistemological break in a UG course and a PG course on Thinkers can be heuristically somewhat achieved by making a distinction between commentaries and original texts/monographs. While UG course primarily initiates students to the thinkers via commentaries and texts on the thinkers, the PG course is a compulsory, detailed, cover to cover, text reading of the originals. The main objective of this course is on Classical Thinkers is to introduce students to the thinkers directly devoid of any mediating agency. This will help them in understanding original ideas and thus they would be able to construct and deconstruct the theoretical and pedagogical systems build around each thinker.

Week wise Lesson Plan: 16 weeks (4 classes each week)

Module 1

Karl Marx:

Text: The German Ideology (1846, 1932)

Introduction: Biography, Young Marx and Hegel: 1 week

Critique of Political Economy: 1week

The Leipzig Council: Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner: .5 week

True Socialism: .5 week

Theses on Feuerbach: 1week

Module 2

Emile Durkheim:

Text: The Division of Labour in society (1893)
Causes of Division of Labour: 1 week
Consequences of Division of Labour: 1 week
Law and Division of Labour: 1 week
Happiness and Types of Division of Labour: 1 week

Module 3
Max Weber:
Text: Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism (1905)
Capitalism: 1 week
Sects of Protestantism: 1 week
Calvinism in focus: 1 week

Module 4
Louis Althusser:
Text: Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays (1968)
Structuralism and Ideology: 1 week
State Power and State Apparatus: ISA, RSA: 1 week
Interpellation: 1 week

Internal Assessment: 2 weeks
Individual presentation by students

Basic Readings
Marx, Karl & Engels, F (1888), Manifesto of The Communist Party, Kolkata, National Book Agency(P) Ltd.
SOCL : 0702

KINSHIP

4 Credits

This is a postgraduate course that familiarizes students with sociological and anthropological research on Kinship. It problematizes the notion of Kinship itself as well as its intellectual origins in the 19th century. Students are taught the various possibilities of descent and residence and about the theories surrounding lineage and inheritance. A significant portion of the course also attempts to provoke students to think about the various ways in which political, technological and legal changes have restructured understandings about kinship in everyday life.

Module 1

What is Kinship?

The Nature Culture Debate

The Invention of Kinship: Lewis Henry Morgan’s contribution to Kinship Studies

Radcliffe-Brown’s Work on African Kinship

Levi Strauss’s work on Incest, Reciprocity

Readings


Studying Kinship

Levi Strauss’ work on Exogamy and endogamy

David Schneider’s contribution to theorizing Kinship
Rules of Descent
Consanguineous Kins
Marriage and Affinal Kins
Residence and Inheritance
Bourdieu’s Official and Practical Kinship
National Honour, Politics, Religion and the Family

Readings


Module 3

**The New Normal: Transformations in the Family and Marriage**
Cultural Constructions: Fictive Kinship and Genealogical Memory
Carsten’s Theory of Substance and Relationality

Reproductive Technologies and Kinship
Reconfigured Kinship owing to Sperm and Egg Donors

Debates on Kinship around Surrogate Mothers
Reconfigured Families and Gay Kinship

Gay Kinship, Legislation and Heterosexual Kinship
Friendship as Kinship
Relationality and Friendship

Readings


Module 4
Contemporary Debates on Kinship

Kinship and Genetics
Kinship and National Identity
Kinship, Technology and Religion
Incest, Reciprocity, Exchange and Relationality in Media and Fiction

Readings


Internal Assessment: Presentation of Core text, Term papers, and end semester examination

SOCL : 0703

POLITICS

Credits: 4

Political system is the important institution of social sciences. Students will learn from this course the theoretical and empirical approaches in understanding the different political and social issues in the contemporary world. It will enable the students to international political economy, gender and sexuality, international development, etc. and how race, class, caste, gender, etc. is politicized. It will also enable students to learn about how the revolutions and welfare states influenced the institutional structures. It will also deal with how personal experiences in people’s affect and are in return affected by social processes like globalization, industrialization, etc. It will enable the students learn about the concept of cultural hegemony as created by Italian Marxist Gramsci. He said that the dominant classes successfully create a definition of the reality in such a way that consensus develops among other classes to accept the world as shown by them, and anyone who tends to defy such a view is marginalized.

Through this course the students would learn to critically think and would be able to develop original ideas to see how society and politics are related in different way and operates at different levels in society. It will create more knowledge about the relation held between citizens, state and society. How political policies will be influenced by social forces and structures of domination, what led to the formation of modern state, and inequality among various groups influence politics, how social movements, public opinion, etc. influence formal politics are all a part of this course. The course will also encompass a detailed analysis on how power relations are formed between and within the various social groups.

A. The Vocabulary of Classical Political Philosophy
Janoski, Thomas et al: The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies and Globalization, [Political Sociology in the New Millennium].


Time taken to cover: 3 weeks

B. Introduction to Political Anthropology


Marx, K (1932), Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, Progress Publishers.


Time taken to cover: 2 weeks

C. Power

Janoski, Thomas et al: The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies and Globalization, [Political Sociology in the New Millennium].


Time taken to cover: 3 weeks

D. Trends in Political Thought and Action in India

Gandhi, M.K. (1910), Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule.


Time taken to cover: 3 weeks

IA: students are asked to write a term paper (not less than 3000 words) on any social issues related to politics. They are also encouraged to conduct an original research work in this area to enrich their understanding in the field of politics and society. (15 marks)
SOCL : 0704

ANTHROPOLOGY OF ECONOMY

Credits: 4

The aim of this course is to situate economy in the wider discipline of sociology and anthropology in order to understand that economy is not an autonomous institution divorced from the category of the ‘social’. This course entails in-depth understanding of all those processes which constitute the economy as a practice in the real world. In order to explicate this the course has been divided into four distinct modules.

Module 1

Production

4-5 weeks

Understanding production as a socio-economic process is the core idea that is explored in this module. The political economic approach exhibited in Karl Marx’s writings are taken to explicate this point. Karl Polanyi’s theory of socially embedded nature of production takes a step further strengthen Marxist ideas on production. Similarly modes of production debate explores various transformations that have appeared in production at different historical junctures. Global and local convergences also throw ample light on the way in which production is understood in contemporary times and Immanuel Wallerstein and Althusser’s writings are taken to understand these new debates in this context.

Core Readings:


Module 2

Exchange

4-5 weeks
This module endeavours to look at socio-anthropological theories of exchange and move beyond the common sensical understanding of exchange as only a medium of buying and selling things in a market situation. The idea of exchange is situated in the spatio-temporal realm in order to see the nuances it entails. Theoretical distinction between gift and commodities which appeared in the works Bronislaw Malinowski and Marcel Mauss is crucial to understand the entire process of exchange. Transitions in modes of exchange from barter system to modern price making markets and consequent changes in the notion of value is also explored in detail in this module.

Core readings:


Module 3

Consumption

4 weeks

This module locates the process of consumption that emanates from the womb of the twin processes of production and exchange. the very idea of consumption is explored from the perspective of sociology i.e. how consumption creates class distinctions and niche habitus as exemplified in the theory of Pierre Bourdieu . Consumption is embedded in the social and cultural context of different societies but modernity and globalisation is striving to geneate a homogeneous understanding of consumption, is it actually happening ? this question is integral to understand theoretical and practical conception of consumption. How class culture and consumption are produced in societies is another thought provoking question which is deelberated upon in this module.

Core readings

Internal Assessment=15 Marks

For Internal assessment students have to write a term paper on any one of the themes studied in the course.

Module 4

Material Culture

4 weeks

This module is designed specifically to see the linkages between culture and the basic product of any economic phenomena which is things or commodities. How these things produce and reproduce culture in society is the aim which is under consideration in this module. Things have a motion and it creates value in the process of this movement hence there is a biography embedded in things itself which needs exploration in social theory. The concept of materiality is yet another aspect which is discussed herein. Dualism between subjects and objects and its continual mutual co-constitution for example how clothes define not only culture but self and identity of groups and individuals and on the other hand clothing itself has a history which is rooted in the social context. These dimensions are matter of deliberation in this module of the course.

Core Readings


SEASON 2

SOCL : 0801

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

4 Credits

There is a certain uneasiness in the relationship between domains of thought disciplinarily labeled as ‘social sciences’ and ‘philosophy’. For this course, we will strategically use the metaphor of ‘debt’ to characterize this relationship, and frame the social sciences as the debtor party. We would like to tell our interlocutors, that as disciplinary practitioners of the social sciences, we present ourselves as ‘insolvent debtors’ to ‘philosophy’; we stand as bankrupt, colonized, and consumed by this debt, so much so that we have lost ourselves in the other. This course begins as a journey to recover the self, surely not as a pristine unity brimming in the ideological conviction of autonomy, but more as a fraught terrain where a wanderer ventures out to find traces of encounters. These wanderings would become entanglements, as in the process of this journey, we would turn this debt inside out to interrogate the constitutive conditions of the relationship which tries to separate ‘philosophy’ and the ‘social sciences’ as two distinctive, analytically autonomous domains of thought and practice. But let us suspend such interrogations temporarily, and turn towards the debt, and its nature.

Almost all over the world practicing social science means carving out the domain of the social with a box of tools and techniques commonly known as method. This box has a deep relationship, which often goes unnoticed and untheorised, with the canonical vocabulary of a variety of European philosophical traditions. The relationship is so deep, and the lack of the acknowledgement of this depth so glaring, that we end up, as social scientists, reproducing the very images of society we wish to critically investigate by being completely unreflective of critique itself. In this course, therefore, we wish to take some tiny tottering steps towards being more reflective of our own enterprise of simultaneously thinking the ‘social’, and inhabiting it. Setting an immediate agenda to this monumental task, we plan to keep in mind the production of the categories of the ‘subject’ and the ‘object’, and the fashioning of changing forms of relationship between the two, throughout this course. In the process, we hope to reflect on questions of epistemology and ontology, and their relatedness in and through the writings of a small selection of great thinkers.

We begin by paying attention to Descartes’s *Meditations*, as one of the foundational texts of ‘reason’ and ‘rationalism’, while probing critically into its constitutive conditions. Along with that we consider briefly David Hume’s framing of the problematic of ‘induction’ and ‘empiricism’, as contending conversations between two fundamental formulations of epistemology in European philosophy, and its consequences for social science method. From there we move towards Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* which was one of the greatest attempts to generate a grand formulation of self-reflexivity by reflecting on the constitutive condition of knowledge itself. Moving away from the density of this text, we then turn towards scattered reflections on the tradition of idealism in Germany, focusing on Hegel. For our
purposes, we wish to take a closer look into the idea of the ‘geist’ in Hegel, and the question of history, self-consciousness, and the ‘social’. As we draw towards the end of the course, we discuss, as varying forms of inquiry in the tradition of phenomenology, ideas of ‘being-in-the-world’ in Martin Heidegger and ‘embodiment’ in Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Modules

1. Rationalism and the Cartesian subject

Readings


Michael Della Rocca, ‘Descartes, the Cartesian Circle and Epistemology without God’, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 70, 1, 2005 pp 1-33

2. Empiricism and the object-world

G.H.R. Parkinson (ed.) Routledge History of Philosophy Volume V: The Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century Rationalism (chapter 4: Francis Bacon and Man’s Two-Faced Kingdom)

David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, OUP (selections)

3. The Kantian problematic: conditions of knowledge


Sebastian Gardner, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant and The Critique of Pure Reason, Routledge: 1999 (select chapters)

Rashbehari Das, A Handbook on Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, Progressive Publishers (select chapters)

4. Idealism, being, and embodiment
Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, CUP: 1975 (select chapters)


**Internal Assignment (IA):** 15 marks

**Mode of Assignment:** Individual presentation in class, and submission of the same, as a short paper (2500 words), based on single/multiple texts chosen from within, or outside the list of readings.

**SOCL : 0803**

**RELIGION**

**Credits:** 4

The aim of this paper is to help students conceptualise the vital role religion plays in the social world and personal life-worlds of people. Religion is analysed both as a cultural construct and as an experienced reality with its own agency. This course discusses a number of related questions. It begins with analyses of religion which understand it as a system and studies its varied modes of creating coherence. These include explanations of the classical sociological thinkers, traditions of interpretive sociology, studies of symbols, signs and mythical structures of religious cultures, analyses of cosmologies and ritual systems, and Foucauldian analyses of the construction of religion itself as a category. It then moves on to studies which highlight the embodied dimensions of religion, its experiential and sensory nuances in different contexts. These include for instance, classical Turnerian ideas, various psychological approaches, and later phenomenological developments including the analyses of interfaces among gender, religion and the body. The crucial role played by religion and its different constructions in the transnational globalized space, and the socio-political implications of diasporic religion, are also addressed. Students are encouraged to relate to the theoretical questions and cross-cultural practices by thinking about religiousities which are more familiar to them. For instance, the course discusses Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Islamic constructions of religious worldviews. It also
analyses classical and folk mythical traditions in these systems, popular transgressive religious practices including tantric ones, experiential dimensions including trance, meditation, yogic rituals and many other bodily practices, and the public lives of these religions, including their relations with secular democratic systems and negotiations in the global space.

**Modules:** each lasting for approximately four weeks

1. **Religion as an anthropological category**
   Select readings:

2. **Theoretical approaches to religion**
   Select readings:

3. **Body and subjectivity in studies of religion**
   Select readings:

4. **India and religion**
Select readings:


Assessment: A 15 mark internal presentation on any text related to the course, and a written submission of a term paper.

SOCL : 0804

INDIAN SOCIETY

4 credits

Undergraduate students coming for post graduation in Sociology have had some understanding on Indian society. There are many papers at UG level familiarizing them with the history, process of development, theories, ideas and institutions. This course offers them a detailed understanding on the nature of Indian society, the multiple narratives of nationhood, nation building often contested and relentlessly debated. Post Colonial India and its institutions like Family, Marriage, Kinship and Caste are understood as intertwined complex on the basis of monographs that are more contemporary, ethnographically time and region specific and yet beyond time and space. Processes of change like industrialisation and globalisation are studied in relation to structural changes and identity formation. The scope of this paper being very wide, an attempt has been made to initiate students to the existing
debates and important ethnographic, theoretical works. However the list is only indicative and not exhaustive.

Week wise Lesson Plan: 16 weeks (4 classes per week)

Module 1:

Nature of Indian Society

Cambridge School: Metcalf, Said’s critique: 1 week

Nationalist School: A R Desai, Bipan Chanda: 1 week

Subaltern School: Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakraborty and Gayatri Spivak Dialogue: 1 week

Post Colonial Predicament: Sumit Sarkar, Partha Chatterjee: 1 week

Readings:

Desai, A.R (1948), Social Background of Indian Nationalism. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Sarkar, S (2002), Beyond Nationalist Frames, Delhi: Permanent Black
Guha, R.(1985), Subaltern Studies 1V, New Delhi: Oxford
Said, E.(1978), Orientalism, Pantheon Books

Module 2:

Institutions:

Family, Marriage, Kinship, Caste: 3 weeks

Understood in relational dynamics through the works of ethnography. The indicative names are Patricia Uberoi, Veena Das, TN Madan, Surinder Jodhka, Prem Chaudhury, Renuka Singh

Readings:


Module 3:

Processes:

Westernisation, Modernisation, Sanskritisation, Industrialisation, Globalisation: 3 weeks

The works and ideas of the following sociologists are brought into play: M N Srinivas, Y Singh, T K Oommen, A Appadurai,

Readings:

Bose, N.K (1975 ), The Structure of Hindu Society.
Mandelbaum, D.G (1972), Society in India, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
Srinivas, M.N (1962), Caste in Modern India and Other Essays. Bombay: Asia Publishing House

Module 4:

Identities:

Rural, Urban, Civilian, Citizenship, Consumer Class: 3 weeks

The works and ideas of the following social scientists are discussed: D Gupta, KLSharma, G Partahsarathy, R Bhargava, TK Oommen, A Palackal, C Jaffrelot

Readings:

Jaffrelot, C., P. van der Veer (eds) (2008), Patterns of Middle Class Consumption in India and China, New Delhi: Sage
SEMESTER 3

SOCL : 0901

FIELD METHODS

4 Credits

Field of sociology emerged as late as 19th Century. It had no model which it can follow at that point of time. Therefore, the discipline started as an objective and descriptive method to explain the social world in quantitative terms. Auguste Comte the father of sociology coined the term sociology and claimed it to be a “positive” science and said invariant laws of nature- observation, experimentation, and comparison can be used to study sociology. The method of Verstehen as proposed by Max Weber was an interpretative understanding of society and is close to the anthropological concept of participant observation. The aim of this kind of field work was to develop an intimate familiarity by living inside a social setting to gain deeper understanding of the group and their lives.

This course aims to instill in its students the interplay between theory, epistemology and the detailed practice of research.

A. Observation method: Participant and Non Participant Observation


Geertz C (1973), The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays, Basic Books.

Time taken to cover: 3 weeks
B. Interview Method: Open, Semi Structured and Structured


Given, L (2008), The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods ol 1 & 2, Sage Publications.


Time taken to cover: 2 weeks

C. Case Study: Strategies, Techniques and Issue of Values

Given, L (2008), The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods ol 1 & 2, Sage Publications.


Time taken to cover: 3 weeks

E. Archives, Visual Ethnography and Discourse Analysis


Given, L (2008), The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods ol 1 & 2, Sage Publications.


Time taken to cover: 3 weeks

IA: students are asked to write a term paper (not less than 3000 words) on any social facts applying field methods. They are also encouraged to conduct an original research work in this area to enrich their understanding in the field of qualitative research methods. (15 marks)

SOCL : 0903

METHODOLOGY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

4 Credits

The aim of this course is to make students familiar with the profound transformation in theoretical practice that took place in Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. The tremors of this transformation were many, all of which can be seen as effecting redefinitions in a grand network of allied yet autonomous traditional disciplinary formations, like literary criticism, anthropology, history, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and, philosophy. While recognizing the multiplicity, heterogeneity, and even singularity of these movements in various fields of knowledge, we will be looking for an unity in this variegated field of force. We wish to explain this unity as a method, and call it structuralist. Structuralism, for our purposes, is a method of critical theoretical practice, which continues to have tremendous bearing on the analytical reservoir of contemporary social sciences. This course will examine the formation of this method across a variety of works, by assembling generalities in and through a close reading of specificities. In conversation with our previous course, we will, at times, revisit the question of the theoretical relationship between ‘philosophy’ and ‘social science’, or the ‘transcendental’ and the ‘empirical’, in the light of the new analytical possibilities offered by structuralism as a method. Further, taking up terms like ‘unity’ and ‘method’, we will ask what the much-abused ‘post’ in ‘post-structuralism’ means. Finally, we will probe into the bearings of these strategies on politics, as field of radical activity.
Modules

1. The Structuralist moment
Readings:


2. Analytical maps
Readings:


3. Tools and texts

Ferdinand de Saussure, *A Course in General Linguistics*, (Select chapters, to be specified)


4. Plays and Plateaus


Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974 (pp 6-64)


Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, Columbia University Press, 1991 (Select chapters, to be specified)

**Internal Assessment (15 marks):** Students will be asked to write a term paper as their internal assignment (2500 words) the topic of which will be given in the first lecture.

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**SEMESTER 4**

**SOCL : 1001**

**GENDER**

**4 Credits**

**Course description:**

The course will introduce students to the theories of sexuality in relation to gender and to the approaches that interrogate the naturalness of the category sex. These theories will be explored in relation to a range of substantive topics including heterosexuality, same sex sexualities, the politics of sex and the sexualisation of culture. The concept of heteronormativity will be explored in the creation of dominant masculinities and the subordination of female sexualities and marginal masculinities. The cultural politics of gendering and sexualisation is then examined in the sexualisation of race and the creation of gendered nations. The project of nation building and the making of modernity and its gendered underpinning is traced within the South Asian context. How the discourse of nationalism in connected with masculine desire, hope and humiliation on one hand and the project of recasting the bhadramahila, the respectable, upper and upper middle class Hindu women, on the other is explored in the context of Bengal. In this regard the interlocking spaces of gender, race, religion caste and class will
be theorised by drawing upon various perspectives and approaches from postcolonial and post modern feminist thoughts and feminist epistemologies. Finally, the course will look at the concepts of performance and performativity in shaping sexual identities. It will also introduce queer theory and ask how far queer theory can help in the understanding of gender and sexuality and if it has the potential to destabilise gender and sexual binaries and initiate new spaces of gendered and sexual imagining and practice. While the course's disciplinary focus is sociology, it will draw substantially from gender studies, feminist theory, post colonial history, masculinity studies, lesbian and gay studies, cultural studies, and Queer theory.

Modules:

1. Gender and sexuality: theory and epistemology

Select Readings:


2. Gender and modernity: the project of nation building

Select Readings:


3. Intersections: gender, sexuality, class, religion, race.

Select Readings:


4. Queer theory: Gender borders and transgressions

Select Readings:


**Internal Assessment:**

**Internal Assignment (15 marks):** A term paper of (2500) words has to be submitted and presented in class based on the application of theory/theories of gender and sexuality to any aspect of contemporary Bengali society.
OPTIONAL COURSES

THE SOCIOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

This is an optional course developed to introduce students to the subdiscipline of Childhood Studies. It teaches a number of core texts from Sociology and history spanning the development of the concept of childhood as a particular biographical phase, to theoretical debates about socialization and agency as well to popular discourses about the end of childhood. Through debates and research within Anthropology from the 1980s, the course also trains students to think of possible directions of research on childhood in their social context. It also problematizes the concept of “generationing” by introducing students to very contemporary theoretical debates on childhood and gender.

Module 1

From the Discovery of Childhood to its End: Childhood as a Conceptual Category

Readings


Module 2

Theoretical Strands in the Sociology of Childhood: Socialization Theories; The ‘new’ Childhood Studies; Contemporary Criticisms of the ‘new’ Childhood Studies.

Readings


Module 3

Children and Childhoods in Different Contexts

Readings


Module 4

Contemporary Concerns in Childhood Research: Agency, Childhood as Moratoria, Compliance, Generational Order

Reading


**Means of Evaluation: Tex Presentation, Termpaper and End Semester Examination**

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**GLOBALIZATION AND INDIAN SOCIETY**

**4 Credits**

This course has been designed around contemporary theoretical conceptualizations of globalization and introduces students to look at the developments of India from the perspective of these. It charts out some of the key theoretical debates about globalization from Wallerstein’s World Systems to Ulf Hannerz's concept of transnational connection. Through debates from Sociology, Political Science, History and Culture Studies, it attempts to understand the contemporary Indian context, and also problematizes the utility of the concept of globalization.
Module 1

Historical Development of Globalization; Distinction between world systems and world empires; Theoretical Debates about Transnational Connections and Scapes.

Readings


Module 2

Globalization and Indian Economy; Economic Liberalization and the Indian Middle Class; Social Mobility from the 1990s

Readings


Module 3

Society, Culture and Globalization:
Transnational popular Culture, Religion, Caste and Class Identities after Economic Liberalization

Reading


Module 4

State, Politics, Civil Society and Globalization

Reading


Means of Evaluation: Text presentation, Term Paper and end semester Examination

**SOCIIOLOGY OF THE BODY**

**Credits:** 4

**Description:** This course aims at introducing students to recent developments in the anthropology and sociology of the body, and studies in embodiment. Beginning with ideas about shifts in social science debates in the 1980s when the body started emerging as a distinct field of studies in the social sciences, with new relations with the subject, the course goes back to the concepts of the critical phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Representationalist paradigms of understanding the body are discussed along with critiques. Certain important historical, philosophical, and ethnographic works are analysed, which reflect upon notions of the social construction of the body, the problems of such perspectives, and other possible modes of narrativising corporeal experience. As cases in point, significant approaches to the problem of pain are analysed. Some of the debates that ensue are thus about the mind-body and emotions-affect problems. The importance of cultural tropes in understandings of bodies is also emphasised, with Indian examples and their significant relations with debates in Indian philosophy.

**Modules:** each extending for approximately four weeks

1. **The Body: Experience, perception, and embodiment**

Select Readings:


Select Readings:


3. Sensory Anthropology and Affect

Select Readings:


4. India and Emotion

Select Readings:


Assessment: A 15 mark presentation on any key text or theme related to the course, and a written submission of a term paper. Or, an assessment of five answers to questions announced at the beginning of the course.
DALITS

4 Credits

The present course has been conceptualized with the primary objectives to generate awareness on the socio-economic, political, and cultural issues pertaining to Dalits, who are still treated as ‘minorities’, remain marginalized and socially excluded section of the Indian population. The course aims to achieve this by encouraging inter-disciplinary research and creating awareness disseminating views and opinions concerning Dalit issues. In so doing, it attempts to:

1. understand the historical construction of the concept of Dalit;
2. understand the social exclusion, exploitation, violence and atrocities experienced by Dalits over the ages;
3. familiarize the students about the work of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and their take on Caste system and social Injustice;
4. Dalit’s Struggle for self-liberation and the Dalit Assertion in Independent India

MODULES


Readings:


2. **From Untouchable to Dalit: A journey from Colonial to Post-colonial Discourse.**


3. **Situating Dalit Women.**

Rege, Sharmila, 2013, *Writing Caste/ Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women’s Testimonies*, Zubaan Publisher.


4. **Dalit Autobiographies: An Alternative?**


Dangle, Arjun, *A Corpse in the Well: Translation from Modern Dalit Autobiographies*. 
SOCIOLOGY OF MEDIA

4 Credits

Sociology of Media encourages the study and analytical assessment of new and old media machineries. It helps to comprehend the key conceptions, methods and moulds underlying diverse theories of media from an inter-disciplinary approach that covers numbers of different disciplines, like Anthropology, History, Language studies, Cultural studies, Media studies, Sociology, Mass communications, Gender studies etc. In this course "Media" involves all forms of representational media, ranging from oral to written or visual. It also includes mass media, i.e. print, television, radio, film; and the new media, like the multimedia, Internet, or the social network. The old and new media with their supplementary technologies both defines and are defined and redefined by the social and cultural institutions. The centrality of media in opinions, politics, economy, world view, culture, along with the present and historical influence of media on individuals and societies are the core topics covered by this course. It also demonstrates focussed comprehension and critical considerate of numerous fields of media studies, that include authorship, national and transnational media, genre, texts, and cultural theory.

Modules

Module 1: What is Mass Media (4 weeks)

Reading List:


Module 2: Understanding the Language of Media: Media as a ‘text’, Visual methodology, Syntax, Phenomenological understanding of media (4 weeks)

Reading List:


**Module 3**: Theorizing Media: Production of ‘Texts’, Consumption of ‘Texts’, Ideology, Politics of Representation, Feminism and Media (4 weeks)

Reading List:


**Module 4**: Media and Everyday Life: Understanding Audiences, The Impact of New Media, Media and Social Change, Reality within Hyper-reality (4 weeks)

Reading List:


**Internal assessment**:

1 Presentations: Right after the third module.
DEATH AND DYING

4 Credits

From its origin, Sociology has been predominantly associated with the problems of life, rather than with the issue of death. Peter Berger, for the first time, has pointed out that the tumultuous nature of death necessitates individuals to create a canopy of meaning and purpose as shelter; and to neglect death is to disregard one of the few universal parameters in which social and individual life is fabricated (1967). As Sociology examines the construction of social order in the face of disordered nature of human life, the human approach to dying, death and bereavement provides the opportunity to acknowledge some of the most fundamental properties of these social constructions. The fundamental problem posed by death and dying is not the bodily pain. Individuals can withstand all types of pain if it is meaningful, as long as pain makes sense to us. Pain becomes unbearable if it comes from irrational, meaningless suffering, i.e. suffering, which cannot be explained logically. Sociologically, death poses problems at two levels: for the stability of social structures, and for the individual meaning that sustain ontological security (Seale 1998). This course is an attempt to discuss the reality of death as a social fact and the institutional accommodation against the disturbing impact of death and dying. Starting from religion as the sole legitimising agency of death to the modern hospice care under advanced medical science and ethics, all institutions have tried to adjust to the existential angst fashioned by the very existence of death. Broadly this course looks into this discourse of death and dying.

Modules

Module 1: Understanding Death and Dying Across Time and Space (4 weeks)

· Philosophy and Social History of Death and Dying
· Key Theories and Debate in the Sociology of Death and Dying
· Medicalisation of Dying and Death

Reading List:


**Module 2:** Death, Dying and Social Institutions (4 Weeks)

- Mortuary Rituals and Funeral Practices
- Hospice Movement
- Politics of Death
- Economy of Death

Reading List:


**Module 3:** Representation of Death (4 weeks)

- Death, Dying and Bereavement in Art, Literature and Popular culture
- Obituary as Popular Memory

Reading List:


**Module 4:** Ethics of Death and Dying (4 Weeks)

- The Euthanasia Debate
- Suicide
- Abortion
- Capital Punishment

Reading List:


INTIMATE RELATIONS

4 Credits

The course provokes certain questions and brings us to discuss, debate and explore the defining parameters and paradigm of this rather new field of academic enquiry. We begin by asking, what is the study of personal life? What new insight can sociology offer in studying the personal? What is the personal? Is the personal, private? Is intimacy a part of personal lives? Can it be studied sociologically? How and Why? Why hasn't it been studied for long in sociology? What is the epistemic violence within the discipline of mainstream male-stream sociology itself that marginalises the enquiry of the personal? How is the personal imbued with the politics of gender, class, caste, race, religion and sexuality? How is the category of the personal itself always already political? What are the theoretical perspectives of reading the personal? What are the epistemological standpoints of locating it? Through what methods can it be analysed and interpreted? How do the categories of time, narrative and memory constitute the personal space and redefine the very idea of space itself? How is intimacy as part of the personal intertwined with the discourse of modernity and the rise of the individual? What are the late modern theories of intimacy? Theories of reflexive modernisation as they call themselves talk about a reflexive transformation of love and intimate relations. In what way is this reflexivity reflexive? In what way they fail to be reflexive of their reflexivity? What narratives of self and intimacy do Giddens, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, Bauman talk about? How do Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field critique these narratives? How do Foucauldian categories of power, difference and otherness interrogate the very category of the self? What do feminists take from these notions of power in defining the intimate and what do they critique about Foucault? How do intimate personal lives within South Asian contexts dialogue with theories of intimacy within the west. What are their contexts and narratives? What stories do they tell of their personal life? Was the idea of self amongst the Bengalis, for instance, always already a part of their lives? Or were the Bengalis self-less before the writings of Tagore? How did Tagore rediscover the term? Is the concept of self in the writings of Tagore a western import or a contextual imagining? How does the modern discourse of intimacy arrive in Tagore's works? How does his preoccupation with ordinariness, interiority and individuation make his language of intimacy modern? Or make possible an intimate language itself?

Modules:
Course duration is 16 weeks. Each module will extend for up to 4 weeks approximately.

1. **Locating and theorising the personal and the intimate**

   Readings:


2. **The politics of the personal and the ordering of the intimate**


3. **Intimate space, time, memory and narrative**


4. **Cultural artefacts, personal possessions and intimate belonging**


**Internal Assessment:**

Internal Assignment (15 marks): A term paper of (2500) words has to be submitted and presented in class based on a narrative study of an aspect of personal life within the field of contemporary Bengal.

**AGRARIAN SOCIETIES**

4 Credits

This is an optional course designed to understand a specialised field of study within sociology that is agrarian societies. Agrarian studies or study of rural societies emerged as an important field of sociological investigation because it was observed that almost all societies around the world have agrarian context which has its own typical specificity. Though Theodore Shanin a noted agro economist pointed out that the western capitalist world defined itself as a ‘world without peasants’. The division of societies into ‘modern’ and ‘backward’ in the evolutionist schema of early social theory meant that conceptually the agrarian populations, or the peasants, were reduced to an unspecified part of the mixed bag of ‘the remainders of the past’. This very neglect has indeed led to a skewed understanding of societies and a partial understanding of social change. Neither agrarian structures in all societies are similar nor do all agrarian structures undergo similar kind of transformations, each has its own socio, economic and historical context. Agrarian studies emerged in the late 1960s in various departments of
sociology in both western and eastern universities when agro economics became popular way to understand impact of capitalism in both context and space. The course has been divided into four modules as followed.

Module 1

Classical political economy and the agrarian question in the 19th century.

4 weeks

Credit: 1

Classical political economy approach became the primary method to understand agrarian societies its structures and systems to explore its complexity in the wider socio-economic context. Some prominent agrarian questions were raised by marxists to probe the impact of intervention of capitalism in agriculture.

Module 2

Marxism and peasantry, Russia and China

4-5 weeks

Credit: 1

Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation of capital and feudal mode of production provide a standard analysis of characteristics of agrarian society in totality. The very idea of peasantry and farmers became a point of departure to distinguish between purely feudal structures and capitalist feudal relations. Russian and Chinese contexts provide a fair ground for exploring socialist mode of production and its impact on societies based on agrarian structures. Russian and Chinese peasantry were very distinct and both these countries experienced great transformations under socialism and communism respectively.

Module 3

Limits of economism culture and agriculture

4 weeks

Credit: 1

This module explores the limitations of viewing agriculture purely as an economic phenomena. It situates the debate between culture and agriculture. It takes up readings which demonstrate agriculture as way of life in societies which produced a distinct cultural practices in societies. Agriculture and agrarian systems are not merely looked upon as transitory phase in the process of industrialisation and development, this argument is probed in detail through this module.

Module 4
From village as India to village in India

4 weeks

Credit 1

In this module Indian villages are centre of investigation to understand agrarian structures prevailing in Indian societies. The idea of village is discoursed upon by looking works of colonial ethnographers and Indologists and contemporary sociologists.

Reading Material


INTERNAL ASSESSMENT -15 MARKS

Students are required to write a term paper on any one the themes included in the course.