

## PS 327: Indian Politics in Comparative Perspective

Department of Political Science  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Fall 2017

Class times: Mondays, 1:20-3:15pm in Social Science 6116  
Professor: Rikhil R. Bhavnani  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30AM in 312 North Hall. To ensure that I can see everyone, please sign up in advance at <https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/DxXsyyez.html>.  
Email: bhavnani@wisc.edu

**Course overview:** Comparative politics seeks to explain variation in socio-economic and political outcomes across the world. In this course, we will seek to understand how India's experiences comport with, and inform, major theories of comparative politics that explain the outcomes (also known as dependent variables) of regime type, economic development and conflict. We will spend four weeks on each of these outcomes. In the first of these weeks, we will review extant explanations for variation in the outcome, considering why political scientists argue that some countries are democracies, while others are dictatorships; why some countries are poor, while others are rich; and why some countries experience high levels of violence, while others are peaceful. In the next class, we will consider whether and why India comports with standard theories that explain the outcome considered. We will also discuss how standard theories might be revised in light of the Indian case. In the third class, we will map subnational variation—across regions, and over time—in the outcome being considered, and try to explain it. In the fourth class, we will assess reforms being considered by the Indian state to further democratic and economic development, and to reduce conflict. Students will learn about India's politics in a structured manner, and will gain an appreciation of the power and limitations of the political science method.

**Expectations:** This class is a seminar. Class attendance is compulsory, and informed class participation is essential. Students are expected to have read all assigned materials closely. Reading responses, described below, are intended to help you think through the readings.

**Assignments and grading:** The class grade will be based on the following components—

- Seminar attendance and participation, for 25% of the class grade. For each class, those absent will receive an F, those present and not participating will receive a C, those present and who spoke when prompted or minimally will receive a B, and those present who actively participated will receive an A.
- Two-page reading responses, due alternate weeks, for 25% of the class grade. Summarize each of the week's readings in separate paragraphs. Synthesize them briefly, and conclude with questions for discussion. Responses should be posted on the class website at Canvas by 8 PM the Sunday before class.

- One 20-30 page research paper on a topic of your choosing, due one week after the last class, on 12/18.

All assignments must be on standard 8.5x11" paper, with 1" margins all around and in 12 point *Times New Roman*. Page limits must be strictly adhered to.

**Contacting me:** Feel free to speak with me before or after class, come to my office hours, or send me an email.

**Books:** There is no required textbook for this class. Readings are listed in the class plan below and are posted on Canvas. The following book is recommended by way of background: Guha, Ramachandra. 2007. *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. New York: Ecco.

**Disabilities:** Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact me during the first week of class. All information will remain confidential. You may, in addition to contacting me, contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center ([www.mcburney.wisc.edu](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu)) at 1305 Linden Drive and 608.263.2741 regarding questions about campus policies and services.

**Class plan (subject to modification; readings are on Canvas):**

Class 1 (9/11): Introduction.

**Dependent variable 1: Regime type**

Class 2 (9/18): We start by defining what a regime is and the values this variable can take. We then consider the major explanations for regime type across the world.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1960. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Pages 27-58.

Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pages 1, 15-16 and chapter 4.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2005. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2.

Class 3 (9/25): We consider the degree to which India's regime type may be explained by the theories discussed previously. How might we revise standard theories of democracy in light of India's experience?

Tudor, Maya. 2013. *The promise of power: The origins of democracy in India and autocracy in Pakistan*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 1998. "Why Democracy Survives." *Journal of Democracy* 9 (3):36-50.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2015. *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy since Independence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Selections.

Class 4 (10/2): We will map, and try to explain, subnational variance in democracy in India, over time and space.

Bohlken, Anjali. 2016. "Democratization from Above: The Logic of Local Democracy in the Developing World." New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Tudor, Maya, and Adam Ziegfeld. 2011. "Subnational Democratization in India: Colonial Competition and the Challenge to Congress Dominance."

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2000. "Is India Becoming More Democratic?" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59 (1):3-25.

Class 5 (10/9): We consider India's pioneering and long experience with electoral quotas, and the question of whether—and in what form—electoral quotas for women should be extended to the national and state legislatures.

Women's reservation bill—text and analysis at <http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/womens-reservation-bill-the-constitution-108th-amendment-bill-2008-45/>.

Chauchard, Simon. 2014. "Can Descriptive Representation Change Beliefs about a Stigmatized Group? Evidence from Rural India." *American Political Science Review*, 108(2): 403-422.

Bhavnani, Rikhil R. 2009. "Do Electoral Quotas Work After They Are Withdrawn? Evidence from a Natural Experiment in India." *American Political Science Review* 103 (1):23-35.

### **Dependent variable 2: Economic development**

Class 6 (10/16): We define economic development, and examine its proximate and deep causes.

Lerner, Daniel. 1958. "The Grocer and the Chief: A Parable." In *The Passing of Traditional: Society Modernizing the Middle East*. London: Glencoe Collier Macmillan. Pages 19-52.

Bates, Robert H. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development*. 1st ed. New York: Norton. 17-83, 101-104.

Rodrik, Dani, Arvind Subramanian, and Francesco Trebbi. 2004. "Institutions Rule: The Primacy of Institutions over Geography and Integration in Economic Development." *Journal of Economic Growth* 92:131-65.

Class 7 (10/23): We consider why India is and remains an underdeveloped country.

Kohli, Atul. 2004. *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, 7.

Bardhan, Pranab K. 1984. *The Political Economy of Development in India*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press. Chapters 6-9.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 1995. *Democracy, Development and the Countryside*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 8.

Class 8 (10/30): India's poverty masks subnational variation in development outcomes. What is the observed subnational variation, and what explains it?

Banerjee, Abhijit, and Lakshmi Iyer. 2005. "History, Institutions and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India." *American Economic Review* 95 (4):1190-1213.

Singh, Prerna. 2015. "Subnationalism and Social Development: A Comparative Analysis of Indian States." *World Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 3.

Lee, Alexander. 2016. *Development in Multiple Dimensions: Social Power and Regional Policy in India*. Introduction.

Class 9 (11/6): Corruption is thought to impede growth in India. How can these problems be addressed?

Vaishnav, Milan. *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics*. Yale University Press, 2017. Selections.

### **Dependent variable 3: Violence**

Class 10 (11/13): Countries vary in the degree to which they experience violence within their borders. What accounts for such variation?

Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1):75-90.

Collier, P. 2000. "Doing well out of war: An economic perspective." In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War*, eds. M. Berdal and David M. Malone. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., p. 91-112.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

Class 11 (11/20): We characterize the state of human security in India, and try to understand the degree to which conflict in India is consistent with our theoretical expectations.

Paul R. Brass. 1994. *The New Cambridge History of India: The Politics of India since Independence*, New York: Cambridge University Press. "Part II Introduction" and Chapter 6.

Kohli, A. 1991. *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2011. "Why is Democracy in India so Violent?" *Seminar* 620.

Class 12 (11/27): India's relative peace masks substantial subnational variation. What is this variation, and what explains it?

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press. Pages 3-18, chapter 5.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 5.

Bhavnani, Rikhil R., and Bethany Lacina. 2015. "The Effects of Rainfall-Induced Migration on Sons of the Soil Violence in India." *World Politics* 67(4): 760-794.

Class 13 (12/4): We consider two reforms that have been proposed to improve human security in India: a communal violence bill and police reforms. What are the theoretical assumptions that such reform measures make? Are they likely to be successful?

Verma, Arvind. 2005. "The Police in India: Design, Performance, and Adaptability." In *Public Institutions in India: Performance and Design*, ed. P. B. Mehta and D. Kapur. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

On police reforms—<http://www.prsindia.org/theprsblog/2010/04/08/modernization-of-police-forces-in-indian-states/>

On the proposed communal violence bill—  
<http://www.prsindia.org/theprsblog/2011/06/09/the-nac-communal-violence-bill-prevention-of-communal-and-targeted-violence/>

Read Baseline report and Preanalysis plan at <http://www.macartan.nyc/projects/vaw/>.

Class 14 (12/11): Class themes; incomplete research agendas.

Research papers due, 12/18