

GOVT1101.104 Power and Politics: Identities in Contemporary India

Spring 2014 – First Year Writing Seminar
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:10 – 11:00 am, STIMSON 206
Office hours: by appointment

Dubbed as the ‘world’s largest democracy,’ India is expected to vote this spring to elect a new Parliament (‘Lok Sabha’). Democracy in India is a puzzle for political scientists in many ways: the size and the diversity of its population, deep social inequalities do not easily ‘predict’ the survival of a democratic regime. Against all odds however, and unlike its neighbors, India has since independence in 1947 remained a democracy. This course proposes an investigation of political identity in India through different topics of current Indian politics that also speak to broader themes in political science, such as nationalism, agrarian politics, ethnicity, violence and civil war, etc. In this seminar, students will not only gain a thorough understanding of the different issues at stake but will also be expected to develop argumentative skills to engage the literature critically.

Identity is a fundamental concept in political science. India, with its deep cultural and economic cleavages offers a unique opportunity to understand the different aspects of political identity. Specifically, the course will help students understand different arguments made in political science on current Indian politics, such as the importance of caste or the role of the state in the economy. Are caste-based politics incompatible with class-based politics? Are parties in India bound to be the expression of specific communities? How does economic growth affect traditional perception of identities? The course will also help students develop effective ways to engage these arguments. Engaging these arguments will involve critically analyzing the proposed materials but also developing individual responses through written assignments. The written assignments will allow students to put the different issues and arguments in perspective.

Below are the learning goals and outcomes for this class:

1. Gain an understanding of the different aspects of political identity in contemporary India, such as the rise of Hindu nationalism, the emergence of caste-parties and regional parties, but also of the different political debates in India such as the empowerment of minorities through quotas or the different approaches to economic development.
2. Develop argumentative skills to engage not only the academic literature but also other sources that affect our understanding of Indian society and culture.
3. Strengthen written communication skills necessary to make arguments in political science but also for success in any career requiring the ability to write persuasively for a specific audience. You will develop your competency in the following areas:
 - use of primary and secondary sources, including the ability to locate and clearly summarize the central argument of a text,
 - preparing writing strategies such as drafting, revising and peer review,
 - construction of theses and persuasive arguments and use of evidence, organization, and proper mechanics in writing,
 - familiarity with a variety of writing styles for both academic and professional pieces

Course Requirements

Attendance: Attendance is vital to learning the material presented in this course and to facilitating the writing

process, and it is required. You have one free pass, meaning one unexcused absence for which you are not required to notify me ahead of time that you will miss class. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce your participation grade by one third of a letter. If you are unable to attend due to an illness or emergency, you must notify me before section begins to have your absence excused.

Reading: The weekly readings for this class are designed to provide you with ample time to complete the writing assignments. It is expected that you will complete all assigned reading before class on the day for which it is assigned. Please bring the readings with you to class; you will need to refer to specific pages when you, your instructor, or your classmates are discussing texts.

Course Materials

There are no 'texts' for this class. However I recommend that you purchase **three** books:

1. Khilnani, Sunil. 1999. *The Idea of India*. New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
2. Adiga, Aravind. 2008. *The White Tiger*. New York, NY: Free Press.
3. Rushdie, Salman. 2005. *Shalimar the clown*. NY: Random House.

We will use them throughout the semester and I hope you will want to keep them in the future! I have not placed an order with the bookstore, and you should be able to find all of them online. Should you not want to purchase them, I can arrange for them to be placed on course reserve in Uris library. Because I know ordering books online can take a few business days, I will post the readings for Week 1 online. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard (and are indicated with a *). **Note that while I do not expect the class schedule to change significantly throughout the semester, I reserve the right to amend the reading list occasionally, in which case you will get advance notice (at least one full week).**

Additionally, I highly recommend that you purchase a copy of the style guide used by your prospective field. If you are unsure which guide to select you can consult the "Style Guide" document in the Writing Resources folder on the course Blackboard page, or ask a professor in that field. I am also happy to help you review different resources and help you decide what is best for you.

Participation: Class participation will play a primary role in both assisting with the writing process and applying the concepts we discuss in class to your assignments. Please come to class prepared to engage thoughtfully, listen attentively, and interact with your peers respectfully. Differences in opinion and background provide an opportunity for intellectual growth, and we all stand to benefit from being aware of and welcoming these differences. We can only have a successful discussion if the classroom is a comfortable space for all participants. Confrontational or disrespectful behavior and offensive language will not be tolerated. If you are uncomfortable participating in class, please visit me during my office hours so that we can discuss strategies for increasing your participation.

Assignments and Grading: As per the requirements of the Knight Institute, this course will have **six major writing assignments**, and one of them will be a 'rewrite' assignment. Additionally, several of them will go through multiple stages of development including outlining, drafting, and peer review. The assignments will require you to cultivate both academic and professional styles of writing commensurate with the products that might be required of someone doing academic work in political science. You will also participate in short, ungraded writing activities in class. These activities will be used to work on specific writing skills and to help you develop ideas for your formal assignments.

All assignments should be handed in by email (in Microsoft Word or PDF format). Do not consider an e- mailed assignment turned in until you have received written confirmation from me.

Late assignments will be docked one half of a letter grade for each day after the due date they are received unless you can provide documentation of a family or medical emergency. If you think that you will not be able to submit an assignment on time due to illness, emergency, or a conflict with work required for other courses, please let me know as early as possible. I understand that your first year can be an incredibly stressful time, and I am willing to work with you to make reasonable accommodations.

In order to facilitate peer editing and review and to learn from and about each other's academic interests, writing styles, and techniques, all writing assignments done for this class may be shared and read by all members of the class.

Brief Description of Assignments

Assignment 1: What do I (not) like about my writing?

This first assignment is intended to help you (and me) assess what are the different strengths and weakness of your writing. I am assuming that most of you took a FWS in the fall semester and I would like you to critically assess the main piece of writing that was produced in that class (be it a research paper, an article, a review, etc...). You will first be asked to describe what your different strengths and weaknesses are and you will be asked to describe the ways in which you want to build on these strengths to correct your weaknesses. It is fine to quote your own work to emphasize what you think worked and what you think did not. **(two to three pages, double-spaced)**

Assignment 2: Understanding an argument

This assignment will ask you to analyze an argument to be chosen among the different readings assigned thus far in the course (Chapter 1 of *The Idea of India*, both chapters from *Ideologies of the Raj*, chapter from Tagore's *Nationalism* and chapter 7 from *The Argumentative Indian*). Specifically, you will be asked to examine the ways an argument is made, the logic behind it and the different mechanisms that articulate it. This assignment should read as an essay, and as such should include an introduction and a conclusion. You should feel free to use the template distributed in class with the different questions asked but your essay should not simply consist in your answers to those questions. **(three to four double-spaced pages)**

Assignment 3: Developing a voice (1)

This assignment will build upon Assignment #2. You will first be asked to incorporate my comments and feedback to Assignment #2 and will then critically assess the piece, contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. For instance, you will assess the extent to which the author takes the reader's knowledge for granted, whether the author leaves some questions unanswered. You are free to develop your own personal response to the article, and may use the first person if you want to. **(two to three additional double-spaced pages)**

Assignment 4: Making an argument (1)

This assignment builds on prior work such as our review of introductions, thesis statements, paragraphs and quoting/referencing (APA and MLA). It is intended to help you craft a proper essay in response to a specific prompt, rather than a specific reading (as was the case in Assignment #3). The goal is 1/ to enhance the way you make an argument, by spending enough time on an introduction, thesis statement and 2/ make sure you follow established standards across the disciplines as you cite sources. I am aware that you all have different interests but I would like you all to focus on the basic mechanics of essay writing. Regardless of your discipline, the reasoning remains the same. **(four to five double-spaced pages)**

Assignment 5: Developing a voice (2)

This assignment is intended to help you develop your own voice by contrasting the different aspects of an argument. In doing so, you will also work to improve the way you relate evidence to argument and considering counterarguments and evidence that do not support your own position. The prompts below offer two different approaches to a discussion of political violence, which is the theme of Weeks 10 and 11. This assignment will also help you explore different ways to develop your own 'voice' and as part of this assignment, you will be expected to make a judicious and effective use of the first person. You will still be expected to follow the standards we reviewed earlier this semester for introduction, thesis and paragraphs. You are encouraged to make a strategic use of citations in this assignment as well. **(four to five double-spaced pages)**

Assignment 6: Research paper

This last assignment will help you use all the different skills developed throughout the semester and the different mechanics of writing. You will be given a list of prompts (or may write a paper on the topic of their choice). **(six to eight double-spaced pages)**

Final Portfolio

You will collect each of your six assignments and submit them to me with a self- evaluation of your progress in written communication.

The goals of this class are to teach you the different aspects of political identity in contemporary India while encouraging you to develop and improve your ability to communicate through writing. As such, the grades for this class will reflect progress toward both goals. You will receive a grade for each assignment commensurate with the quality of the finished product (as you would in any class). A significant portion of your grade will also reflect your effort and the improvement of your writing over the course of the semester. The breakdown will be as follows:

80% Assignments	{	Assignment 1 (ungraded) Assignment 2 (15%) Assignment 3 (5%) Assignment 4 (15%) Assignment 5 (20%) Assignment 6 (5%) Assignment 7 (20%)
10% Participation	{	Attendance Class discussion Peer review exercises
10% Improvement	{	Portfolio of past assignments

All discussions of graded work should take place in person and not via email. (Cornell policy prohibits providing specific information about grades via email.) Once grades are returned there is a 24-hour "cooling off" period before I will entertain appeals. After that period, if you still feel strongly that the grade you received on the assignment does not reflect your performance on that assignment you may challenge the grade. All grade challenges must be submitted to me in writing. You should present a cogent argument, employing evidence from your paper, to support your contention that the grade be reconsidered.

Instructor Conferences: The final course requirement is your participation in two one-on-one meetings with the instructor about your progress. While I hope you will take advantage of my office hours more frequently, the

Knight Institute mandates at least two meetings over the course of the semester in which we discuss your work. The first conference will occur shortly after you submit your third assignment, and the second conference will take place as you work on assignment five.

Other Course Information

E-mail Policy: Please feel free to e-mail me with quick questions or to set up a meeting. Longer discussions and all discussions about grades must take place in person. I will guarantee a response to e-mails within 24 hours during the school week and will check my e-mail more frequently the day before assignments are due. However, please do not wait until the last minute. While I am online frequently throughout the day, there is no guarantee that I will receive, read, and be able to respond to last minute requests or questions.

Electronic Devices in Class: Technology has revolutionized the way we work, but laptops, tablets, and cell phones can be distracting during class. As such, the use of laptops/tablets in class is strongly discouraged. If you feel that your note taking will be severely inhibited without computer assistance, please speak to me at the beginning of the semester. The use of cell phones is not permitted during class except under emergency circumstances.

Academic Integrity

A Cornell student assumes responsibility for the content and integrity of his or her academic work in any course or lab. Students are guilty of violating the Cornell Code of Academic Integrity and are subject to proceedings under it if, for example, they

1. represent the work of others as their own;
2. use, obtain, or provide unauthorized assistance in any academic work;
3. fabricate data in support of laboratory or field work;
4. forge a signature to certify completion of a course assignment or recommendation to graduate school;
5. unfairly advance their academic position by hoarding or damaging library materials;
6. misrepresent their academic accomplishments.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of Cornell University actively to support equality of educational and employment opportunity. No person shall be denied admission to any educational program or activity or be denied employment on the basis of any legally prohibited discrimination involving, but not limited to, such factors as race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability. The university is committed to the maintenance of affirmative-action programs that will assure the continuation of such equality of opportunity. Sexual harassment is an act of discrimination and, as such, will not be tolerated.

Campus Resources

Knight Institute's Walk-in Service: Some students may wish to get additional help with their writing. Writing tutors are available at the Knight Institute's Writing Walk-In Service and can help you develop either general writing skills or discuss a particular written assignment. More information can be found at <http://www.arts.cornell.edu/writing>. This is a great resource and one that is available to you throughout your career at Cornell.

Cornell University Learning Strategies Center: The Learning Strategies Center offers students a variety of resources for improving basic study skills, learning time management strategies, and managing the academic experience at

Cornell. According to a study commissioned by the college, the overwhelming majority of students who make use of the Learning Strategies Center have higher GPAs than students who don't engage with the center's resources. You can find more information online at <http://lsc.cornell.edu/aboutLSC.html>.

Student Disability Services: Students with disabilities may contact Student Disability Services, Cornell University, 420 CCC, 254-4545. Cornell University is committed to assisting those persons with disabilities who have special needs. Other questions or requests for special assistance may also be directed to both offices. You can find more information online at <http://sds.cornell.edu/>.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan. 22 and 24): Introduction

No required readings.

- Meet and greet. Course nuts and bolts.
- Building on the work so far/How do I know if I am a good writer?

Jan. 24 - *Assignment 1 Distributed*

Week 2 (Jan. 27, 29 and 31): 'The Idea of India:' India, Hindustan, Bhaarat, how many definitions and voices?

Readings:

Introduction and Chapter 1 ('Democracy') of *The Idea of India* (pp. 1-60).

Assignment 1 Due on 01/29 by Noon

Week 3 (February 3, 5 and 7): Colonial legacies.

Information session at the library on February 7th

Readings:

*Metcalf, Thomas. 1995. *Ideologies of the Raj* (pp. 1-28 and pp. 66-111).

Writing themes:

- Abstracting from details.
- Summarizing and presenting information.

Week 4 (February 12 and 14): Nation and Nationalism.

No class on February 10.

Readings:

*Tagore, Rabindranath. 1917. *Nationalism* (Chapter 1: pp. 1-61)

*Sen, Amartya. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian* (Chapter 7 - pp. 121-161).

Writing themes:

- Understanding and ‘dissecting’ an argument.

Week 5 (February 19 and 21): Nation and Nationalism (continued)

No class on February 17 (Presidents’ Day – Cornell February break)

Readings:

*Renan, Ernest. 1882. *What is a nation?* Lecture given at the Sorbonne University in Paris.

Writing themes:

- Critically assessing an argument.
- Peer-review exercises.

Assignment 2 Due on 02/19 by Noon.

Week 6 (February 24, 26 and 28): Democracy and Development: which comes first?

Required readings:

*Sen, Amartya and Jean Dreze. 2013. *An Uncertain Glory: India and its contradictions*. Chapter 1 and 2 (pp. 17-42)

The White Tiger (pp. 1-95)

Writing themes:

- Opening and closing an argument.
- Thesis statements (1)

Week 7 (March 3, 5 and 7): Poverty, class, urban/rural divide

Required readings:

*Sen, Amartya. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian*. Chapter 4 (pp. 204-219).

The White Tiger (pp. 96-189)

Movie: ‘Peepli Live’ (March 10th)

Writing theme:

- Thesis statements (2)
- Developing an argument and building strong paragraphs (1)

Assignment 3 Due on 03/03 by Noon.

Week 8 (March 10, 12 and 14): Caste and ethnicity

Required readings:

The White Tiger (pp. 191-276)

Writing themes:

- Developing an argument and building strong paragraphs (2)
- Quoting, paraphrasing, and properly referencing published work (1)
- Peer review workshop

Week 9 (March 16, 18 and 20): To be a woman in India

Required readings:

*Dufflo, Esther. 2003. 'Impact of Reservation in Panchayati Raj: Evidence from and Nationwide Randomized Experiment.' *Economic and Political Weekly* 39(9): pp. 979-986

*Sen, Amartya. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian*. Chapter 11 (pp. 220-251).

Writing themes:

- Quoting, paraphrasing, and properly referencing published work (2)

Assignment 4 Due on 03/21 by Noon

Week 10 (March 24, 26 and 28): Political violence and ethnicity

Readings:

*Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Violence*. Part 1 (pp. 25-49 and 107-111)

Writing themes:

- Developing your own voice and making a judicious and effective use of the first person.
- Peer review workshop.

Spring break

Week 11 (April 7, 9 and 11): Politics at the margins: between violence and compromise (1)

Readings:

Rushdie, Salman. 2005. *Shalimar the Clown*. (pp. 43-133 and 243-323)

Writing themes:

- Developing your own voice and making a judicious and effective use of the first person.

Outline for Assignment 5 Due on 04/11 by Noon.

Week 12 (April 14 and 16): Politics at the margins: between violence and compromise (2)

Readings:

*Harriss, John, 'What is going on in India's 'Red Corridor'? Questions about India's Maoist Insurgency: A literature review' in *More than Maoism, Politics, Policies and Insurgencies in South Asia* (pp. 25-41)

*Banerjee, Sunanta, 'Reflections of a One-time Maoist Activist,' in *More than Maoism, Politics, Policies and Insurgencies in South Asia* (pp. 47-66)

Final version of Assignment 5 Due on 04/16 by Noon.

Writing themes:

- Peer review workshop
- Expanding and varying vocabulary.

Week 13 (April 21, 23 and 25): India beyond its borders: what role for the diaspora?

Readings:

*Kapur, Devesh. 2006. *Diaspora, Development and Democracy*. (pp. 124-161)

Writing themes:

- Striving for clarity and avoiding jargon.
- Proofreading strategies.

Week 14 (April 28, 30 and May 2): How India represents itself: fiction and film

Movie: 'Delhi 6'

Writing themes:

- Peer review workshop

Outline for Assignment 6 Due on 04/30 by Noon.

Week 15 (May 5 and 7): Wrapping up

No required readings.

Writing themes:

- Peer review workshop.

Assignment 6 (Research Paper) Due on 05/07 by Noon.

Final portfolio due May 16th, 4pm