

POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA: DEMOCRACY AND IDENTITY

POLI4497
Spring 2026

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Office Hours	Wednesdays 4:30–6pm, always by appointment
Time	M 4:30–7pm
Venue	McGuinn 226

Course Description

This advanced undergraduate seminar offers a survey of contemporary Indian politics. Since becoming independent in 1947, India has defied all odds and survived as a liberal democracy (despite a short authoritarian phase from 1975–1977). Not only was the promise of universal franchise fulfilled, but the country’s constitution created opportunities for the political incorporation of traditionally marginalized communities, such as the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Constitutional amendments passed in 1992–1993 have empowered local government, resulting in a significant, if uneven, democratic deepening.

The first decades of the 21st century however have seen the rise of majoritarian politics and the political assertion of Hindu nationalism. Once dominant, the Indian National Congress, the party that led the freedom struggle against British colonialism has been largely replaced by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as India’s main party, both at the national and state levels. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian government has moved to introduce a religious test for citizenship, and has sought to change the status of the state of Kashmir, legislative changes that appear ominous to India’s large Muslim minority.

How has India’s democracy evolved since Independence in 1947? What explains the transformation of its party system? How does the rise of Hindu majoritarianism threaten India’s democratic institutions? The course will offer some tentative answers to these questions, going back to the founding of India’s democracy and the evolution of its politics since Independence in 1947, using some of the latest research to understand the evolution of state–citizen relations, the role played by political parties and electoral cleavages, and the importance of identity and religion in shaping these electoral cleavages.

Attendance and participation

Class sessions will be taught in a seminar format, with an emphasis on critical discussion of weekly topics and readings and student presentations. The reading load for this course averages between one hundred and one hundred and fifty pages a week. Assigned readings are listed under the “Required reading” heading. I have listed additional background reading on each topic to identify important works that we will not be able to cover in the course. Students are expected to have done all of the assigned readings before each class.

Students are increasingly making use of emerging AI tools in the classroom and outside, such as those developed specifically for note-taking (Otter.ai, Coconote, etc.). Please note that per Massachusetts Law, recording lectures and class discussions without the consent of the participants involved is prohibited. Faculty have the right to prohibit such recordings except when they have been approved by the Disability Services Office for students with disability accommodations.

Class attendance and participation will account for 20% of your final grade. Students are expected to attend all classes. This class is a seminar which means that your participation is absolutely critical. Each week, one student will share a discussion memo with the rest of the class, and another student will serve as discussant.

You are expected to have read all materials before class and should bring copies of the reading with you to class.

More than one unexcused absence over the course of the semester will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade. If you have a legitimate reason why you cannot attend a class (for example, due to a health or family emergency, approved athletic events, or religious observances), you must notify me and receive prior approval for the absence.

Office hours and communication

I will hold office hours on Wednesdays 4:30–6pm, *by appointment only*. You are invited to use the following link to make an appointment with me: <https://calendly.com/thibaud-marcesse/office-hours>. When you come for your appointment, please knock on my door and wait *outside* until you have been called. Do not interrupt an ongoing meeting.

I will strive to respond to your email requests within 24hrs, and emails sent over the weekend will receive a response by the following Monday 5pm, at the latest.

Submitting your assignments

Written assignments, such as the final paper, should be submitted in soft copy. All work is due on the dates stated in the syllabus, and must be submitted before the start of class. Please let me know in advance if you are unable to complete an assignment on time. If there is a legitimate reason (for example, a health or family emergency), I will work with you to find a suitable arrangement. Petitions for extensions after the deadline will not be considered.

Late work: Late work will lose one letter grade (10%) per day. Work submitted after the start of class on the due date, even if submitted the same day, will be considered a full day late.

Formatting: All assignments should be double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman. You must provide citations (footnotes or parenthetical) in the text, accompanied by a full bibliography. Please refer to the BC Libraries citation guide (<http://bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/citation/formatting.html>). The clarity of your writing matters greatly. Please copy-edit all work. For writing assistance, contact the Connors Family learning center (<http://bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/writing.html>).

Academic integrity

All students are expected to know and comply with the university's policies on academic integrity. Your work must be fully your own. It is necessary to acknowledge the work and ideas of others with proper citations. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and no forms of borrowing without acknowledgement are acceptable. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the academic code. See: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/html>; <http://www.bc.edu/publications/ucatalog/policy.html#integrity>.

While AI can be a powerful tool for research, and academic work in general, remember that your work must be fully your own. The Center for Teaching Excellence has produced guidelines on the use of AI tools, which you are welcome to consult and refer to. See: <https://cteresources.bc.edu/documentation/artificial-intelligence-in-teaching-and-learning>.

Accommodation and disability services

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugankka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disability, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Course requirements

Assignments

1. Response memos

Each student will write a short discussion paper based on the week's readings, and will also serve as a discussant/commentator on a discussion paper written by a colleague. Discussion papers should be short, critical essays (not more than two pages double-spaced) focused on a specific issue or issues from the week's readings; they should not simply summarize the readings, and they do not have to discuss all the different readings for the week. Discussion papers should try to locate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches, identify key areas of debate, and pose follow-up questions for the class discussion. The papers should be circulated to the rest of the class by 6pm on the day before the class meets. Discussants will be given 5- 10 minutes to comment on the main themes addressed in the discussion paper.

2. Group presentation

You will have to work collaboratively and present in front of your peers on a number of topics listed below (in the course schedule). These topics are synched with the different themes covered by the readings. You are therefore welcome to use the readings when preparing the presentation. These presentations will be no more than 20 mn long, and will lead to a class discussion. You are welcome to make the use of PowerPoint but that is not required. Likewise, you are free to use any media source (videos, movie clips for instance. . .).

3. Final paper (scaffolded assignment)

Every two to three weeks, you will be expected to submit a short written assignment (between 500 and 750 words) that will help you find a paper topic, identify the relevant literature, make an argument and contrast it with the existing literature, and finally write an outline, which will grow more detailed as the semester goes by. These cumulative assignments are intended to help you write the final paper which will be due at the end of the semester. Part of the writing process will also involve reviewing the work of your peers, approximately one week after submitting your written work. I will assign every one of you the work of one of your peers, which you will be expected to comment on and provide feedback for. These sessions will be relatively short (no more than 30 mn in total), but you should see them as helping you craft your argument and write an effective paper.

Grading policy

Three components will determine your grade: Class Participation (including Response memos and discussant assignments), Group presentations and the Final paper. The relative weight of each assignment is as follows:

Class participation	20%
Group presentation	20%
Final paper (including interim assignments)	60%

Grade scale

A+/A/A-	96-100/93-95-90-92
B+/B/B-	86-90/83-85/80-82
C+/C/C-	76-80/73-75/70-72
D+/D/D-	66-70/63-65/60-62

Course Schedule

Recommended Background Readings

There is no assigned textbook in this class. However, because you may not be entirely familiar with the history and the politics of modern India, I recommend the following books to get a better grasp of some of the more important aspects of India's culture and history, particularly in the contemporary period:

- Metcalf, Barbara D. and Metcalf, Thomas. (2002). *A Concise History of India*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Adeney, Katherine and Wyatt, Andrew. (2010). *Contemporary India*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Corbridge, Stuart and Harriss, John. (2000). *Reinventing India: liberalization, Hindu nationalism, and popular democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Corbridge, Stuart, Harriss, John and Jeffrey, Craig. (2013). *India today: economy, politics and society*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Kothari, Rajni, and Manor, James. (eds.). (1970, reprinted 2010). *Caste in Indian politics*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Guha, Ramachandra. (2010). *Makers of modern India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Ambedkar, B.R. (2016). *Annihilation of caste*. New York, NY: Verso.

Any unexpected changes to the schedule will be announced in-class (with at least one week's notice). The readings listed below will all be made available on Canvas via course reserves. Do let me know if you have any trouble accessing the readings online.

Week 1 (01/12): India as an unlikely democracy?

The first class will introduce some of the main themes of the course.

Required Readings:

- Michelutti, L. (2007). The vernacularization of democracy: popular participation and popular politics in North India. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(3): 639–656.
- Kohli, A., & Singh, P. (2013). Introduction. Politics in India – an overview. In *Routledge Handbook of Indian Politics* (pp. 1–18). Routledge.

Recommended readings:

- Ahuja, A., and Chhibber, P. (2012). Why the Poor Vote in India: 'If I don't vote, I am dead to the state', *Studies in International and Comparative Development*, 47(4): 389–410.
- Kaviraj, S. (2011). *The Enchantment of Democracy in India*. Permanent Black.
- Kaviraj, S. (2010). *The Imaginary Institution of India*. Permanent Black.
- Jayal, N. Gopal. (2013). *Citizenship and its Discontents: An Indian History*. Cambridge University Press.

Note: No class on January 19th, Martin Luther King's Day.

Note: No class on January 26th due to inclement weather.

Week 3 (02/02): The colonial legacies of India's democracy

At the time of Independence, few expected India to endure as a unitary state, let alone as a democracy. And yet within a few years after becoming independent, India wrote a constitution that not only guaranteed universal

franchise but also created opportunities for the incorporation of traditionally marginalized communities through affirmative action policies. What explains the institutionalization of democracy in India?

Required readings:

- Tudor, M. (2013). Chapters 3 and 4 in *The Promise of Power: The Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan* (pp. 67–152). Cambridge University Press.
- Khosla, M. (2020). Chapter 2 in *India's Founding Moment: The Constitution of a Most Surprising Democracy* (pp. 72–109). Harvard University Press.
- Shani, O. (2018). Chapter 1 in *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of Universal Franchise* (pp. 20–51). Cambridge University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Gandhi, M.K. (1909) [1997]. *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- De, R. (2018). *A People's Constitution: The Everyday Life of Law in the Indian Republic*. Princeton University Press.
- Frankel, F. (2004). Chapter 2 in *India's Political Economy: 1947–2004* (pp. 28–70). Oxford University Press.
- Sarkar, S. (2001). Indian democracy: the historical inheritance. In Kohli, Atul, ed. *The Success of Indian Democracy* (pp. 23–46). Cambridge University Press.
- Rudolph, S., and Rudolph, L. (1967). *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Hajari, N. (2015). *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacies of India's Partition*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Wilkinson, S. (2015). *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy since Independence*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 4 (02/09): From dominance to decline: the Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress won every single national and state election from 1952 to 1967, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. The first two decades after Independence saw the consolidation of democratic institutions and the implementation of the “Nehruvian consensus.”

Required readings:

- Corbridge, S, and Harriss, J. (2000). Chapters 2 and 3 in *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (pp. 20–66). Polity Press.
- Guha, R. (2007). Chapters 8–11 in *India After Gandhi* (pp. 161–248). HarperCollins.
- Wiener, Myron. (1967). Chapter 3 in *Party-building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress* (pp. 30–54). The University of Chicago Press.

Recommended readings:

- Brass, P. (2006). *The Politics of India since Independence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, B. Jr. (1967). Chapter 6 in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (pp. 314–410). Beacon Press.

Week 5 (02/16): Populism and crises of governance

Nehru's succession created a power vacuum that was quickly filled by Indira Gandhi, his daughter. Mrs. Gandhi's tenure opened a new and arguably tumultuous chapter in Indian politics, with increasingly populist appeals and a short authoritarian phase during the Emergency (1975–1977). Some are arguing that the rise of Narendra Modi and the BJP reflect a “silent emergency.” Is that the case?

Required readings:

- Frankel, F. (2004). Chapter 9 in *India's Political Economy: 1947–2004* (pp. 341–387). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. & Pratinav A. (2020). Chapters 7 and 10 in *India's First Dictatorship: The Emergency, 1975–1977*. Hurst.
- Kaviraj, S. (2010). Chapter 6 in *The Trajectories of the Indian State* (pp. 171–212). Permanent Black.

Recommended readings:

- Rudolph, L. I. & Rudolph, S (1987). Chapters 4 and 5 in *In Pursuit of Lakshmi* (pp. 127–177). University of Chicago Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2003). Chapter 4 (Indira Gandhi, the populist repertoire and the aborted reform of Congress') in *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India* (pp. 115–143). Columbia University Press.

Group Presentation #1: Has populism strengthened or weakened Indian democracy?

Paper preparation: First writing assignment due

Note: No class on February 23rd due to inclement weather.

Note: Spring break March 2–7

Week 8 (03/09): Subaltern politics

The consolidation of democratic institutions allowed the political assertion of groups that had previously been marginalized in Indian politics, such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs) – dubbed the “Silent Revolution” – and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), following the Mandal Commission report. In the 1970s and 1980s, parties emerged that represent these social groups to make claims on the state independent of the Congress Party.

Required readings:

- Ahuja, A. (2019). Chapters 2–4 in *Mobilizing the Marginalized: Ethnic Parties without Ethnic Movements* (pp. 33–84). Oxford University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2003). Chapters 10 and 11 in *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India* (pp. 335–425). Columbia University Press.
- Jensenius, F. (2017). Chapter 4 in *Social Justice Through Inclusion: The Consequences of Electoral Quotas in India* (pp. 81–98). Oxford University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Chauchard, S. (2014). “Can descriptive representation change beliefs about a stigmatized group? Evidence from rural India,” *American Political Science Review*, 108(2): 403–422.
- Béteille, A. (1992). *The Backward Classes in Contemporary India*. Oxford University Press.
- Béteille, A. (1996). *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*. Oxford University Press.
- Witsoe, J. (2013). *Democracy against Development: Lower-caste Politics and Political Modernity in Post-colonial India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brass, P. (1983). *Caste, Faction, and Party in Indian Politics* (Vols. 1 and 2). Chanakya Publications.
- Gidla, S. (2018). *Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

First peer-review workshop

Week 9 (03/16): Urban vs. rural India

While India has in recent decades urbanized at a fast rate, the majority of the population continues to live in the countryside. This has important implications for democratic competition, since parties must court rural voters to win elections. How has Indian democracy accommodated rural interests and reconciled them with urban interests?

Required readings:

- Rudolph, L. and Rudolph, S. (1987). Chapters 12 and 13 in *In Pursuit of Lakshmi* (pp. 312–392). University of Chicago Press.
- Varshney, A. (1995). Chapters 1 and 4 in *Democracy, Development and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India* (pp. 1–27, 81–115). Cambridge University Press.
- Dasgupta, A. (2018). Technological Change and Political Turnover: The Democratizing Effects of the Green Revolution in India, *American Political Science Review*, 112(4): 918–938.

Recommended readings:

- Bardhan, P. (1998). *The Political Economy of Development in India*. Oxford University Press.
- Etcheverri-Gent, J. (1993). *The State and the Poor: Public Policy and Political Development in India and the United States*. University of California Press.

Group Presentation #2: Did the Green Revolution made India more democratic or not?

Paper preparation: Second writing assignment due

Week 10 (03/23): Subnationalism and regional politics

India's democratic institutions have proved particularly well suited to accommodate the diversity of a "continent that masquerades as a country." The 1956 States Reorganization Act allowed regional identities to coalesce and created new spaces of political competition that have put states on different trajectories of development and welfare.

Required readings:

- Sinha, A. (2005). Chapter 6 in *The Regional Roots of Developmental Politics in India: A Divided Leviathan* (pp. 160–211). Indiana University Press.
- Singh, P. (2015). Chapters 3 and 4 in *How Solidarity Works for Welfare: Subnationalism and Social Development in India* (pp. 64–147). Cambridge University Press.
- Palshikar, S. (2013). Regional and Caste parties. In Kohli, Atul, and Singh, Prerna, eds. *Routledge Handbook of Indian Politics* (pp. 91–104). Routledge.

Recommended readings:

- Heller, P. (1999). *The Labor of Development: Workers and the Transformation of Capitalism in Kerala, India*. Cornell University Press.
- Wyatt, A. (2009). *Party System Change in South India: Political Entrepreneurs, Patterns and Processes*. Routledge.
- Ziegfeld, A. (2016). Chapters 6 and 7 in *Why Regional Parties?: Clientelism, Elites, and the Indian Party System* (pp. 150–202). Cambridge University Press.
- Bose, S. (2003). *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict*. Harvard University Press.
- Weiner, M. (1978). *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*. Princeton University Press.

Second peer-review workshop

Week 11 (03/30): Gender and sexuality in contemporary India

When it comes to gender, India offers a contrasting picture. It was one of the first countries to elect a woman Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi (1966–1977; 1980–1984). It was also one of the first countries to introduce quotas for electoral representation at the local level. Yet while descriptive representation has dented patriarchal norms, it has not entirely defeated them. And these norms continue to shape sexuality and relationships in an increasingly urban society.

Required readings:

- Brûlé, R. (2020). Chapters 2, 3 and 5 in *Women, Power, and Property: The Paradox of Gender Equality Laws in India* (pp. 19–56, 57–69, 118–163). Cambridge University Press.
- Chattopadhyay, R. & Duflo, E. (2004). Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment. *Econometrica*, 72: 1409–1443.
- Bedi, T. (2011). Violence, aggression and militancy: reexamining gender, and nonliberal politics,” in I. Clark-Decès, ed. *A Companion to the Anthropology of India*, pp. 313–331. Wiley-Blackwell.

Recommended readings:

- Forbes, G. (1996). Chapter 8 in *Women in Modern India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kumar, S. & Gupta, P. (2015). Changing patterns of women’s turnout in Indian elections. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 3(1): 7–18.
- Spary, C. (2019). *Gender, Development and the State in India*. London: Routledge.
- Agarwal, B. (1994). *A Field of One’s Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Basu, A. (1992). Feminism inverted: the real women and gendered imagery of Hindu nationalism. *Bulletin for Concerned Asian Scholars*, 25(4): 25–36.
- Ray, R. (1999). *Fields of Protest: Women’s Movements in India*. University of Minnesota Press.

Week 12 (04/06): The politics of poverty alleviation

India faced many challenges at the time of Independence, such as political instability resulting from Partition and crushing levels of poverty. Democracy was able to consolidate in India, but at the price of redistributive reform. Yet, the country has achieved significant gains in poverty alleviation, particularly in recent years. What role have democratic institutions and democratic citizenship played in reducing poverty?

Required readings:

- Auerbach, A. (2020). Chapter 4 in *Demanding Development: The Politics of Public Goods Provision in India’s Urban Slums* (pp. 92–113). Cambridge University Press.
- Krishna, A. (2002). Chapters 3, 5 and 7 in *Active Citizenship and Social Capital: Tracing the Roots of Development and Democracy* (pp. 32–54, 85–114, 141–162). Columbia University Press.
- Kruks-Wisner, G. (2018). Chapters 4 and 5 in *Claiming the State: Active Citizenship and Social Welfare in Rural India* (pp. 87–147). Cambridge University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Gupta, A. (2012). *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*. Duke University Press.
- Auerbach, A. (2016). “Clients and Communities: The Political Economy of Party Network Organization and Development in India’s Urban Slums,” *World Politics*, 68(1): 111–148.

Group Presentation #3: Does Indian democracy work against the Poor?

Week 13 (04/13): Political parties, campaigns and elections

India is usually described as a “patronage democracy” in which voters routinely support candidates to elected office for material incentives. Why have non-programmatic linkages—as vote buying, patronage and clientelism are usually referred to—endured in India? Is clientelism so widespread?

Required readings:

- Chandra, K. (2004). Chapters 2–6 in *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (pp. 33–142). Cambridge University Press.
- Thachil, T., and Auerbach, A. (2018). How clients select brokers: competition and choice in India's slums, *American Political Science Review*, 112(4): 775–791.
- Bjorkman, L. (2014). 'You can't buy a vote.' Meanings of money in a Mumbai election, *American Ethnologist*, 41(4): 617–634.

Recommended readings:

- Thachil, T., and A. Auerbach. (2022). *Migrants and Machine Politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Chhibber, P., and Verma, R. (2018). The Myth of Vote Buying. In *Identity and Ideology: The Changing Party Systems of India*. Oxford University Press.
- Piliavsky, A., ed. (2014). *Patronage as Politics in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bussell, J. (2019). *Clients and Constituents: Political Responsiveness in Patronage Democracies*. Oxford University Press.
- Dunning, T., and Nilekani, J. (2013). Ethnic quotas and political mobilization: caste, parties and distribution in Indian village councils, *American Political Science Review*, 107(1): 35–56.

Group Presentation #4: Are Indian parties undemocratic?

Paper preparation: Third writing assignment due

Week 14 (04/21): Civil conflict and violence

The modern Indian state was born out of the trauma of Partition and the considerable level of violence that accompanied the transition to an independent state. Violence has occasionally plagued the relationship between Hindus and Muslims, and parts of India have experienced armed insurgencies. What explains enduring violence and how has India's democracy coped?

Required readings:

- Naseemullah, A. (2022). Chapters 2 and 6 in *Patchwork States: The Historical Roots of Subnational Conflict and Competition in South Asia* (pp. 27–50, 133–170). Cambridge University Press.
- Wilkinson, S. (2004). Chapters 2 and 5 in *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (pp. 19–62, 137–171). Cambridge University Press.
- Varshney, A. (2002). Chapters 7 and 8 in *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (pp. 171–218). Yale University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Shani, O. (2007). Chapter 6 in *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat* (pp. 156–188). Cambridge University Press.
- Pai, S., and Kumar, S. (2018). *Everyday Communalism: Riots in Contemporary Uttar Pradesh*. Oxford University Press.

Third peer-review workshop

Week 15 (04/27): The “Saffron Wave” and the rise of Hindu nationalism

Note: our seminar will meet on Tuesday, April 21st to reflect the Monday substitution schedule.

The rise of Hindu nationalism represents an important development in contemporary Indian politics. Its main political avatar, the BJP, has evolved from a fringe party before the 1980s to being India's dominant party both at the national and state levels. What explains the rise of Hindu majoritarianism and what does it say about Indian democracy?

Required readings:

- Blom-Hansen, T. (1999). Chapter 5 in *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (pp. 154–201). Princeton University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (1995). Chapter 1 in *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (pp. 10–79). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Shani, O. (2007). Chapter 5 in *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat* (pp. 135–155). Cambridge University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Thachil, T. (2014). *Elite Parties, Poor Voters*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thachil, T. (2011). Embedded Mobilization: Nonstate Service Provision as Electoral Strategy in India, *World Politics*, 63(3): 434–469.

Group Presentation #5: Is India a failed democracy?

Final paper due Monday, May 4th.