



MANIPAL
UNIVERSITY

Global and Public Health

SOCI 350: *Contemporary Indian Culture*

Please refer to the [faculty page](#) for this semester's instructor.

Course Description

India is a curious country with pre-modern, modern and post-modern cultures living together under one roof. The past and the present co-exist; both are inextricably connected and one cannot be understood without the other. Hence, all three words in 'contemporary Indian culture' have complex meanings and give rise to much more complex meaning when they are put together. The course introduces different dimensions of 'contemporary India', its roots and culture(s) in a comprehensive sense with a special reference to its philosophy, society and arts.

Learning Objectives

1. To have an overview of 'contemporary Indian culture' in all its complexities to move towards a better world order
2. To have an idea about different dimensions of Indian culture (s).
3. To have a better understanding of India which is neither completely 'esoteric' nor completely 'negative'
4. To learn how to conduct field interviews with local citizens, field observations and incorporate field research with textual sources.
5. To participate in class discussions and debates, and articulate clear, evidence-based opinions.

Course Schedule

NOTE: each session accounts for one week of classroom meeting. Class meets for three hours each week.

Session 01/14 **Understanding Indian culture**

Different strands of culture; ancient, modern and post-modern schools; India- past and present; making sense of contemporary Indian culture

Readings:

Ananthamurthy U R. (2007). Indian Culture: An End of the Century View. In Chakravarthy, Manu N (Ed.), U R Ananthamurthy Omnibus. Gurgaon. India: Arvind Kumar Publishers.

Sen, Amartya. (2005). The Argumentative Indian. London, England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Sessions 02-03/14 Geography and history

An overview of India: regions and languages; a view of ancient, medieval and modern history, freedom struggle and post-Independence; contemporary issues

Readings:

Nehru, Jawaharlal. (1946). The Discovery of India. New Delhi, India: Penguin Books India Ltd.

Guha, Ramachandra. (2012). Makers of Modern India. New Delhi, India: Penguin Books India

Sessions 04- 05/14 Philosophy and Religions

Vedas and Upanishads, systems of philosophy; Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity; contemporary issues

Readings:

Hiriyanna, M. (1994). Outlines of Indian Philosophy. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Chattopadhyaya, Debiprasad. (1993). Indian Philosophy: A popular introduction. New Delhi: People's Publishing House.

Madan T N. (2013). Religion in India. New Delhi. Oxford University Press.

Sessions 06 – 08/14 Society and Polity

Varna, ashrama, purushartha, caste system, women, struggles of liberation; democracy – constitution and electoral system; contemporary issues

Readings:

Guha Ramachandra (Ed) (2010). The Oxford India Srinivas. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press

Srinivas M N (1966). Social Change in Modern India. (Reprint) New Delhi, India: Orient Black swan Pvt Ltd

Guha, Ramachandra. (2008). India after Gandhi. London, England: Picador.

NOTE: The week of session 06 will include the midterm test in addition to regular class meetings.

Sessions 09 – 11/14 Arts and literature

Indian aesthetics, music, dance, theatre, painting, English and Bhasha literatures, film; contemporary issues

Readings:

Hiriyanna, M. (1997). Art Experience. New Delhi, India: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

Rastogi, Alka (Ed.) (2012). Explorations in Aesthetics. New Delhi, India: Sarup Publishers.

NOTE: The week of session 11 the research paper is due.

Sessions 12- 13/14 Economy and Ecology

Debates about development, dominant and alternative paradigms; contemporary issues

Readings:

Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya (2013). India - Development and Participation. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Shiva, Vandana. (2011). Staying Alive - Women, Ecology and Survival in India. New Delhi, India: Women Unlimited

Nandy, Ashis. (2010). Re-Imagining India and other essays. New Delhi, India: Orient BlackSwan.

NOTE: The week of session 13 will include the final test in addition to regular class meetings.

Session 14/14 Final presentations

Required Course Materials

Please note that copies of all assigned reading will be provided to students in country.

Purchase of these texts by individuals is not required

Course Textbooks

Sen, Amartya. (2005). The Argumentative Indian. London, England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Evaluation

Attendance & Class Participation	10%
Homework Assignments	10%
Midterm Test	15%
Final Test	20%
Research Paper	25%
Final Paper Presentation	20%

Assessment Criteria

Attendance

A student is allowed 2 excused absences. An excused absence is an absence related to a medical or other emergency about which the student has communicated to the Resident Director and concerned faculty prior to class.

Any additional absence or ANY unexcused absence results in a two point loss to the overall attendance score. Please note attendance requirements through your program as well.

Participation

Faculty give full participation marks to students who are punctual, attentive and engaged in class. Students who are late or inattentive will have points removed from their participation score at the faculty's discretion.

Homework assignments

There will be short assignments given throughout the course based upon teaching and reading.

Mid-term test

Will cover material from the first five class sessions. Objective test questions will account for 5 marks and analytical questions will account for 10 marks.

Final test

Will cover material from the seventh to twelfth class sessions. Objective test questions will account for 5 marks and analytical questions will account for 15 marks.

Research Paper

There will be a research paper assignment of a minimum of 3000 words. The topics, which need to be connected to contemporary Indian culture, must be finalized in consultation with the course professor. Methodology, formatting, citation and other requirements will be communicated in class.

Presentation

Students will be required to give a presentation on the research paper submitted by him/her. Presentations are expected to be twenty minutes in duration with discussion taking place afterward.

Grading

Alliance programs utilize the follow standard grading policy well accepted by most US institutions.

Excellent	A	93-100%	Good	B+	87-89%	Acceptable	C+	77-79%
	A-	90-92%		B	83-86%		C	73-76%
				B-	80-82%		C-	70-72%
						Unsatisfactory	D+	67-69%
							D	63-66%
							D-	60-62%
						Failing	F	<60%

Course Policies

Exams and Assignments

Students are required to take all regularly scheduled exams in courses for which they are registered, and to submit all assignments on time. Any compelling academic, personal, or medical reason that might justify a rescheduled exam or assignment must be brought up to both the Resident Director and course faculty. Failure to take scheduled exams or submit the requisite assignments for a course will adversely affect your grade as per the stated grading criteria for each course.

Classroom Conduct

Student punctuality is extremely important in India. Please do not be late for classes or other activities, as it is considered impolite to do so. It is improper to eat in class, to engage in other activities such as texting, or to slump or nap. Students are expected to be alert and engaged as a sign of respect for their professors.