



**SOCI 360 Contemporary India**  
**The Alliance for Global Education Contemporary India: Development,  
Environment, Public Health Program, Fall 2009**  
*Dr. Shrikant Paranjpe*

**Course Description**

This is a course on India, as one understands it today. The purpose is to acquaint the students to contemporary India – its culture and society, the current politics, political economy, and foreign relations. It deals mainly with the current happenings in India with a little history as a point of reference.

**Learning Outcomes and/or Expected Student Competencies**

The purpose of this course is not to develop an instant expertise on all dimensions of the country under study, but to understand them in their various elements. A simple test would be based on the reading of a standard newspaper or viewing any TV channel that provides a glimpse of India in its diversity. Would you understand the news, the stories, the drama of life and views that you read in a newspaper or watch on the TV? The media would present you images of the society, the polity, economic changes; they would also discuss things like corruption, religious riots and caste conflicts along with the construction of big dams and power plants. The purpose is to make sense out of what you read and see about the country. No one can be an area study expert with one course; but one can start looking towards that direction with an understanding of the dynamics of the country.

**Course Requirements**

The lectures are both informative and analytical with a large scope for discussion. Each student is required to have read something from the available newspapers, magazines that he/she may be able to discuss in the classroom – either to tell a human interest story, or to gain more information through discussion. The lectures would flow along the lines that discussion takes place in the classroom on the topic under consideration. I have specified the number of lectures for each section. However, I may take more time on some topics and less on others, depending on the discussions in the classroom.

**Evaluation and Grading Structure**

1. Tests: A test would be conducted during the course. Students are required to write an essay on any topic from amongst those given for the test. Each test is worth 15 marks. (Total marks 10)
2. Classroom discussion: The discussion would be initiated by students and will be based on articles from Indian/South Asian newspapers and/or magazines like *The Times of India*; *the Indian Express*; *the Hindu*; *Outlook*; *India Today*; *Frontline*; etc. OR discussion will be based on any topic that the class feels the need to debate. Students will make presentations on any article that they have read and submit a summary of the same. The summary must contain an abstract

with student commentary. The length of each assignment is one to two pages (handwritten) (Total marks 40)

3. Oral presentations: Students will make a presentation that reflects their experiences in India since the day they arrived. They are free to choose any topic. (20 marks)

4. Students would be taken for two field visits, one to see rural setting and one to experience urban setting in India. They would have to make a written and oral presentation on their experiences of the visit. (20 marks)

5. Attendance: 10 marks

### **Grading Structure**

Research Assignments, Field Exercises,  
Short Response Essays, Journal Entries: 30%

Mid-Term (exam or paper): 20%

Final (exam or paper): 30%

Class presentation: 10%

Attendance: 10%

### **Attendance Requirements**

Class attendance is mandatory. As this is an intensive program, it is essential that students participate fully in coursework and all required academic activities. Excused absences may only be approved by the Resident Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Students may not make up for unexcused absences, and will be given a grade of zero for any missed work.

### **Reading Material**

A set of photocopy material will be provided as basic reading for each topic at the beginning of the course.

Students are advised to read the following as additional reading material for better participation in the classroom:

1. Indian newspapers like *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express*, *The Hindu*; or Magazines like *India Today*, *Outlook*, *Frontline*, etc. All of these are available on the internet.

You may want to look at the following books (Latest edition):

1. Norton, James K. *Global Studies: India and South AsiaU*. Guilford, CT: Duskin Publications Group, 8th Edn, 2007.

2. Baxter, Craig, Yogendra K. Malik, Charles H. Kennedy and Robert C. Oberst (ed) *Government and Politics of South AsiaU*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001.

3. Panandikar, V.A. Pai and Ashis Nandy (eds), *Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill, 1999)

### **Course Syllabus**

1. Understanding India: History, Society and Political Culture (includes aspects such as religion, caste, ethnicity, language, etc.)

Readings: Norton, James K. *Global Studies: India and South AsiaU*. Guilford, CT: Duskin Publications Group, 8th Edn, 2007. pp. 3-15 and 34-45.

2. Introducing the Structural Dynamics of the Indian Political System (in comparison with the United States) *Readings*: Reading material prepared by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for their course on India

3. A survey of important social/cultural/political/economic developments and trends since Indian independence that would help students' understanding of the contemporary Indian political system.

4. A survey of important social/cultural/political/economic developments and trends since Indian independence that would help students' understanding of the contemporary Indian political system. *Readings*: Norton, James K. *Global Studies: India and South Asia*. Guilford, CT: Duskin Publications Group, 8th Edn, 2007. pp. 34-45.

5. *Discussion*: Students to make presentations on any article that they have read and submit a summary.

6. Religion and Politics in India: Political Culture, Revivalism, Fundamentalism and Secularism (Session I) *Reading*: T.N. Madan 'Religion and Politics in India: Political Culture, Revivalism, Fundamentalism and Secularism', in Panandikar, V.A. Pai and Ashis Nandy (eds), *Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill, 1999) pp. 318-336

7. Understanding Indian Society and Culture: Gender Issues and Affirmative Action for the Underprivileged. *Readings*: Reading material prepared by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for their course on India

8. *Discussion*: Students to make presentations on any article that they have read and submit a summary.

9. Understanding India's Political Economy *Readings*: Reading material prepared by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for their course on India

10. Impact of Globalization and Liberalization on India. *Readings*: Reading material prepared by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for their course on India

11. *Test*

12. India and the World: Key Features of Indian Foreign Policy *Readings*: Reading material prepared by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for their course on India

13. *Discussion*: Students to make presentations on any article that they have read and submit the summary.

14. Current Issues of Concern in India: Terrorism *Readings*: *India: an Assessment 2006*, in Norton, James K. *Global Studies: India and South Asia*. Guilford, CT: Duskin Publications Group, 8th Edn, 2007. pp. 94-97.

15. *Review and open ended discussion*. Students will make presentations on their experiences in India and how they have sought to understand a new culture and society.

16. *Oral Presentations*

17. *Oral Presentations*

18. *Feedback*