

**Department: International Relations**

**Faculty: Social Sciences**

**Course Title: International Politics of Non-State Actors (MPhil/PhD, Optional)**

**Number of Credits: Four**

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed for the M.Phil programme being offered by Department of International Relations, South Asian University. The primary objective is to facilitate critical enquiry on the significance and relevance of studying non-state actors in world politics. Approaching the subject through a theoretical prism, and engaging with key debates on the subject, the emphasis is on underlining the ‘social dimensions’ of international relations, whereby the role of norms, ideas, individuals, networks and collectives are studied. While cases ranging from human rights, women movement, conflict induced grievances, disarmament, environment, internal displacement, amongst others, would be studied, the syllabus in due course would also address questions related to ethics, morality, justice, interests and rational choice in international politics.

The world today is changing, with myriad of challenges (traditional and non-traditional) being posed to the ‘nation-state’. With a variety of actors operating in world politics, the course underlines the presence of existing frameworks and analytical tools to study international relations. It thus goes beyond state-centric analysis, thus taking into account domestic and trans-national actors in international politics. How agendas are framed, interests shaped and actors lobbied and influenced will be critical questions of enquiry. Rather than assuming that the existence of non-state actors as given, their affiliations and organisational strategies/structures are also studied. Overall, at the end of this seminar course it is expected that new analytical tools of enquiry and engagement equations between state and non-state actors are identified, questioned and explored.

**Course Structure:**

**Unit One: Introduction to Non-State Actors: Definition and Typologies (Week One-Five)**

In this module certain key themes will be picked for discussion. These are: Defining Non-State Actors, identifying various typologies and forms of non-state actors and understanding the historical and contemporary background behind the evolution of NSAs

**Unit Two: The Discourse on Non-State Actors (Week Six-Seven)**

The rise of NSA’s has both broadened and deepened the study of international relations. While the number of issues and actors has both increased in IR, many have critiqued and questioned the “broadening” of international relations. The existing conceptual frames are studied in this context. A few redefined debates in IR are touched upon as they have primarily been made visible due to the presence of non-state actors. Arguments which question the state-society dichotomy in international politics are also discussed.

### **Unit Three: Engaging with IR theory (Week Eight)**

With two key concepts of ‘socialisation’ and ‘competition’ as departure points, this module would focus on ‘social’ dimensions of international relations. How various actors interact in world politics and what impact does it have on the broad contours of the discipline is touched upon. It would also engage with the structure-agency debate in international relations.

### **Unit Four: Going Beyond the State—The Inside-Out Perspective (Week Nine-Ten)**

This module delves into the role played by ideas, norms, institutions, individuals and collectives in world politics. The debate is studied in context to the role played by non-state actors. The focus is on how beliefs, agendas, perceptions and interests are shaped and formed. Focusing on alternative viewpoints, the key objective of this module is to identify factors which shape state behaviour.

### **Unit Five: Political Economy of Non-State Actors (Week Eleven)**

This module looks at the driving factors behind the functioning of non-state actors. Ideological as well as economic concerns are studied.

### **Unit Six: Critiquing NSA: Relevance to IR (Week Twelve)**

This module does not have any prescribed/specific reading. The students are supposed to prepare a seminar paper that will be presented in the class. This is a participatory seminar, where the paper will be commented upon by fellow colleagues as formal discussants.

### **Reading Suggestions:**

Steve Smith, “The Contested Concept of Security” in Ken Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, New Delhi: Viva Books Private Ltd and Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2005

Johnathan Hearne, *Theorising Power*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”, *International Organisation*, 52 (4), 1998. pp. 887-917

Neera Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, *Democratization* 8 (2), 2001.

Alexander Cooley and James Ron, “The NGO Scramble: Organisational Insecurity and Political Economy of Transnational Action”, *International Security*, 27(1), Summer 2002, pp. 5-39

Martin Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations: Sociological Concepts and Political Perspectives*, London: Blackwell and Polity Press, 1994.

John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* New York: University of Cambridge, 2003. Peter Willet, “Transnational Actors and International Organisations in Global Politics” in John

Partha Chatterjee, *Lineages of a Political Society*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011

Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination", *International Organisation*, 46 (1), Winter 1992, pp. 1-35.