

**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University**

Sociology of South Asia

(Compulsory Course for M.A.)

Total Credits: 04

This course is centrally focused on the following question: what does South Asia mean for anthropologists and sociologists? And how could sociology and anthropology engage with the question of South Asia? Unearthing various facets of South Asia, pertinent for sociological-anthropological engagements, this course persuades students to undertake an examination of any chosen aspects of South Asia, and deliberate on it for sociological-anthropological enrichment. In so doing, the course underlines a sociology and anthropology of the region that brings together the two disciplines, and centralizes the aspects of culture and politics, knowledge and discourse, and creates bridges between national contexts in the regional framework, among other things. In terms of format, this course is organized as a reading and discussion-based seminar accompanied by lectures. Students are expected to read and discuss the prescribed materials as well as to explore issues that arise in discussions so that they get a sense of what the Sociology of South Asia looks like; what its strengths are; where its weaknesses lie, and how some of these issues might be addressed. In doing so, we would be asking ourselves how South Asia itself manifests in the way its sociology has been practiced over time. The course persuades students to explore the ‘sociology of South Asia’ in diverse ways.

The course will not pay equal attention to each country situation in the region. This is because the sociological enterprise in the region is uneven where some countries or national contexts have produced a comprehensive corpus of works, while others have not. We will also try to understand the reasons for this uneven production of knowledge.

Taken together, the course will be both a brief survey of sociological practice in South Asia as well as a cartographic imagination of South Asia itself through possible regional parameters for sociological research.

Unit 1: South Asia as an Idea and a Place and its Politics and Poetics

In this unit, we will deal with two issues. First, we will discuss what South Asia is and what it means as an idea, and how it has manifested in the realm of ideas in political practices and potential anthropological-sociological ruminations. Is the imagination of what might have been South Asia in the past and what it is today, the same? Within this context, we will attempt to understand what the broader geo-physical and cultural space is, within which a sociology of South Asia might be located?

Essential Readings

Kanak Mani Dixit. Ed. 2012. *The South asian Sensibility*. Delhi: Sage

Sugata Bose & A. Jalal. 2001. *Modern South Asia*. Oxford: OUP

R. C Guha. 2016. *Makers of Modern South Asia*. Harvard University Press

S. Banaji. 2010. *South Asian Media Cultures: Audiences, Representations, Contexts*. Anthem Press

D P Mines & S Lamb, ed. 2011. *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Indiana University (chapters to be distributed to students)

Pathak, Dev Nath. 2017. *Another South Asia!* Delhi: Primus.

Nandy, Ashis. 2005. 'The idea of South Asia: A personal note on post-Bandung blues.' In, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 6:4, pp. 541-545.

Filmography:

Little Terrorist (2004, Ashwin Kumar)

Kabul Express (2006, Kabir Khan)

Bajrangi Bhaijan (2015, Kabir Khan)

Filmistan (2012, Nitin Kakar)

Khuda Ke Liye (2007, Shoeb Mansoor)

Raj Kahini (2015, Srijit Mukherjee)

Unit 2: Sociologies & Anthropologies in/of South Asia

In this unit, we deal with the institutional histories of sociology in our region with a focus on both teaching and research while paying attention to the major sociological themes, which have been developed in each location. In situations where this development has not taken place or is underdeveloped, we would attempt to see what reasons might explain this state of affairs. Also, in this unit, we underline the importance of the relation of sociology and anthropology in the context of South Asia.

Essential Readings

Talal Asad. 1973. *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*. Ithaca Press

Partha N. Mukherji. 2005. *Sociology in South Asia: Indigenisation as Universalising Social Science* *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (September - December 2005), pp. 311-324

T N Madan. *Sociological Traditions: Methods & Perspectives in the sociology of India*. Delhi: Sage

Sujata Patel. Ed. 2016. *Doing Sociology in India: Genealogies, Locations and Practices*. Delhi:

OUP

Patricia Uberoi et al. 2008. *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black

Michael Jacobsen & Tester, 2013. Talking sociology: An interview with Zygmunt Bauman on sociology, celebrity and critique, *Thesis Eleven* 114(1) 103–113

Dev Nath Pathak, “Being and becoming (of/with) Burawoy: An anxious Apprehension of public sociology in South Asia”, *International Sociological Review*, 2022, Vol. 37(5) 557– 568

Akbar Zaidi. 2002. *Dismal State of Social Sciences*, EPW

S H Alatas. 1974. Captive Mind and Creative Development. *International Social SCIENCE JOURNAL*,

Gouldner, Alwin. 1970. *The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology*. New York: Basic books

Unit 3: Particulars and Regional- Histories and Practices

In this discussion, stewarded by the students, we take note of the examples from different country-contexts of South Asia and explore unstated linkages in the institutional histories.

Essential Readings

(Afghanistan)

A. Monsutti, Alessandro. 2013. ‘Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters.’ In, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 42, pp. 269–85.

(Bangladesh)

Islam, Nazrul and S. Aminul Islam. 1997. ‘Sociology in Bangladesh.’ In, *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (September), pp. 566-568.

Karim, A. H. M. Zehadul. 2014. ‘Anthropology in Bangladesh: Its Emergence in Relevance to Global Context.’ In, *Anthropologist*, 17 (3), pp. 957-965.

(India)

Uberoi, Patricia, Satish Deshpande and Nandini Sundar. 2010. ‘Introduction: Professionalization of Indian Anthropology and Sociology: People, Places and Institutions,’ pp. 1-63. In, Patricia Uberoi, Satish Deshpande and Nandini Sundar eds., *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.

(Maldives)

Forbes, Andrew D.W. 1983. 'The Mosque in the Maldiv Islands: A Preliminary Historical Survey.' In, *Archipel*, Vol. 26; pp. 43-74.

(Nepal)

Bhandari, Bishnu. 1990. 'The Past and Future of Sociology in Nepal. In, *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 2, pp. 13- 23.

Mishra, C. 2007. 'Social Research in Nepal: A Critique and Proposal,' pp. 323-350. In, Chaitanya Mishra, *Essays on the Sociology of Nepal*. Lalitpur: Fine Print.

(Pakistan)

Zaidi, S. Akbar. 2002. 'Dismal State of Social Sciences in Pakistan.' In, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 35 (August 31 - September 6), pp. 3644-3661 (available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4412553>)

(Sri Lanka)

Pieris, Ralph. 1988 (1957). 'Sociology as a 'Calling': A Desultory Memoir.' In, *Modern Sri Lanka Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1988 , pp . 01-33.

Unit 4: Possibilities for Sociology of South Asia

In this unit we will briefly explore – on the basis of selected thematic areas – some of the areas of intellectual possibilities, which have emerged from these country settings in recent times. This will also point out the new areas, which can aid in the contemporariness of sociology of South Asia, such as visuals, performance, arts, folklore, cinema etc. In such a light we will explore the possibilities of a South Asian sociological practice in terms of crosscutting theoretical, methodological as well as thematic imperatives, and attempt to understand why such a regional intellectual practice has not emerged so far in any degree of seriousness.

In the context of the country specific scenarios of sociology from previous units, the final unit of the course will ponder over the possibilities of a Sociology of South Asia focused on the following questions: a) what would be the theoretical inclinations of a sociology that would span across the region? b) Can such sociology be imagined on common thematic interests? c) Can such sociology have methodological orientations that might make sense across national borders?

Essential Readings

Open the Social Sciences, Gulbenkian Commission Report

Nisbet, Robert. 1976. *Sociology as an Art Form*. OUP

Radhakamal Mukherji, *Art as Social Science*, *The Sociological Review*, Volume a36, Issue 1-4

Pathak, Dev Nath & Perera, Sasanka. 2018. *Culture and Politics in South Asia: Performative*

Communication. London and Delhi: Routledge (Introduction)

Pathak et al. *Seeing South Asia: Visuals Beyond Borders*. Routledge

Gopal Guru and Sarukkai. *Experience, Caste and Everyday*

Gita Chadha and M T Joseph ed. 2018. *Reimagining Sociology in India: Feminist Perspective*.
Delhi: Routledge

Smitha Radhakrishnan & Gowri Vijayakumar. 2012. *Sociology of South Asia: Postcolonial
Legacies, Global Imaginaries*. New York: Palgrave
