POLITICS OF MODERN SOUTH ASIA
GO-348
SKIDMORE COLLEGE
Spring 2016
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Class Meeting: T/Th 12:40-2:00PM
Office Hours: T/Th 2:00-3:00pm
Class Location: Ladd 207
& by appointment at Ladd 314

COURSE DESCRIPTION
An examination of the politics and society of South Asian states, with a special focus on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. Students will develop substantial regional knowledge and learn to apply social scientific reasoning to tackle the major puzzles and policy issues facing South Asia. Students will gain knowledge of the region and investigate the big and enduring questions of political inquiry: What is the relationship between development and democracy? What is the role of history in shaping political outcomes? Is nonviolent resistance more effective than violence? In addressing these questions, students will engage closely with classic and contemporary social scientific texts on South Asia.

READINGS
All readings (except the book below) will be accessible through Blackboard. As important current events unfold throughout the term, I will email short newspaper articles. Reading these articles is also a requirement of this course. The following book is available for purchase:

## REQUIREMENTS

The following are the main requirements for this course*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; attendance</td>
<td>• Attendance is mandatory; see note (below) on class participation.</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>• Lead class discussion based on the assigned readings.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis Paper (1)</td>
<td>• 5-6 pages, double-spaced.**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>March 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Covers material from January 28 through, and including, February 25.</td>
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<td>(Hard copy due in class)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students have the option of revising one of the first two synthesis papers.</td>
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<td>The revision is due May 10, no later than 5:00pm.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students also have the option of writing an 18-20 pages (double-spaced) research paper in lieu of the three synthesis papers. Those selecting this option must inform the instructor by February 18, 3:00pm, and will subsequently receive detailed instructions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>• Class presentation (group of 2-3).</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>• 20-minute presentation + 10-minute Q&amp;A.</td>
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<td>• Select a topic related to the material covered during the week of your presentation.</td>
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<td>• Topic selected by group in consultation with instructor.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ See instructor during office hours to discuss presentation topic and plan at least 2 weeks in advance of the presentation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis Paper (2)</td>
<td>• 6-7 pages, double-spaced.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>April 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Covers material from March 1 through, and including, April 7.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Hard copy due in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis Paper (3)</td>
<td>• 7-8 pages, double-spaced.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>May 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Covers material from April 12 through, and including, May 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No later than 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This syllabus provides an approximate schedule for our course. The instructor reserves the right to change assignments and due dates. Any such changes will be announced in class.

** Use Times New Roman font and Chicago citation style for all writing assignments.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

Part of your course grade will be based on your participation in class. Participation is not only talking. It is being prepared for class, doing all the assigned readings before the class meets, arriving on time, careful listening and note-taking, and engaging meaningfully in class discussions and activities. In order to participate, you must be present, so attendance is required. An attendance sheet will be circulated at the beginning of every class meeting. Unexcused absences will impact
your overall letter grade. Medical and athletic excuses must be accompanied by a written note from your doctor, nurse, or coach.

**MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments will be penalized, with the exception of bona fide medical or other emergency as validated by appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor or nurse’s note). For each day an assignment is late, 10% of its total worth will be deducted.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Students are expected to comply with the honor code.\(^1\) Because this class involves writing, it is essential that students develop good habits of citation and scholarship. Plagiarism – appropriating another person’s ideas or words (spoken or written) without attributing those words or ideas to their true source – and cheating will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about how or when to cite another’s work, please consult the instructor. Academic Integrity Handbook\(^2\) is also a good resource. Remember: it is better to err on the side of overly generous citation.

**WRITING SKILLS**

In line with the requirements of a liberal education, the Government Department emphasizes the importance of good writing skills. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with *The Writing Requirement in the Department of Government* and the Checklist for Grading Writing Assignments in Government. All papers will be graded according to the grammatical and composition standards outlined in these documents.

Guidelines are available at: www.skidmore.edu/government/writing_guide/index.php

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available at the Skidmore Writing Center. In addition to the individualized assistance the Center provides to students throughout the school year, it also runs regular workshops aimed at improving writing skills.

**ACCOMMODATION**

If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.), please contact the instructor so that your learning needs may be appropriately met (all discussions will remain confidential). You must formally request accommodation from Meg Hegener, Coordinator for Student Access Services (SAS). You will also need to provide documentation which verifies the existence of a disability and supports your request. For further information, please call (518) 580-8150 or stop by the office of Student Academic Services in Starbuck Center.

**USE OF LAPTOPS AND TABLETS IN CLASS**

Laptop, tablet, and phone use in class is not allowed. Students with a disability are permitted to use a laptop if SAS approved.

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\(^1\) [www.skidmore.edu/student_handbook/honor-code.php](http://www.skidmore.edu/student_handbook/honor-code.php)

BLACKBOARD AND EMAIL

Students should check Blackboard regularly for announcements, links to assigned texts, and links to websites and articles related to the course. Students should also check their Skidmore email accounts regularly for emails from the instructor regarding the course.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment and grading in this course follows the general guidelines identified in the Skidmore College Catalogue. Grades are assigned on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Distinguished work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-, B+, B</td>
<td>Superior work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-, C+, C</td>
<td>Satisfactory work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-, D+, D</td>
<td>Passing, poor-quality work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure, no credit earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) is not Pass/Fail, and an “S” is a grade of C or higher.

A WORD OF ADVICE

Succeeding in this course is a function of your own effort. Here are some tips:

- *Do the reading.* The lectures are not a substitute for the readings. The assignments will demand familiarity with material not covered in lecture but found in the readings.
- *Come to class.* Likewise, lectures may include material not in the readings and will help you to build critical thinking skills.
- *Read critically.* Focus on the big picture to glean the main arguments in the texts. Think about the logic of the arguments and draw linkages and contrasts among the texts.
- *Ask questions.* Do not hesitate to ask questions or raise issues in class. Your comments will enrich the course.
- *Come to office hours.* I am here to help and also invite you to share your responses and reactions to the material.
- *Follow relevant issues outside of class.* Reading about current (or not so current) events in important journals and newspapers will help you to assess and apply the concepts you encounter in the course. Among the useful sources are:
  - *Indian Express* (India)
  - *Dawn* (Pakistan)
  - *The Daily Star* (Bangladesh)
  - *The Express Tribune* (Pakistan)
  - *Himal Southasian* (Nepal)
  - *The Friday Times* (Pakistan)
  - *The Independent* (Bangladesh)
  - *The Caravan* (India)
  - *The Hindu* (India)
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Why South Asia

Tuesday, February 26 – Welcome
- Review syllabus

Thursday, February 28 – US Interests and Beyond

*** Discussion Leader date selected in class

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Week 2: British Colonial Legacy

Why were the British in India? How were they able to achieve and maintain control over India and its people? How has colonial legacy shaped South Asia?

Tuesday, February 2 – Institutions of British Rule

Thursday, February 4 – **Colonizing the Mind**


**Week 3: Resistance to Colonialism**

*How did the freedom movement emerge? What was Gandhi’s approach, and why was it successful? Was the outcome of nonviolent resistance unique to the India case, or could it work in other contexts?*

Tuesday, February 9 – **Gandhi’s Challenge**


Thursday, February 11 – **Nonviolent Resistance**


**POLITICS OF IDENTITY**

**Week 4: Midnight’s Child: Pakistan**

*Why were two nations born instead of one when the British departed in 1947? What were the major points of contestation between Muslim nationalists and those who sought a united India? Were Muslims united in their quest for Pakistan? What have been the long-term implications of Pakistan’s national origins for the future of the country?*

Tuesday, February 16 – **Nationalism and Partition**


Thursday, February 18 – **Competing Views and Jinnah’s Legacy**


Week 5: Midnight’s Grandchild: Bangladesh

*Why was Bangladesh born? What are the major debates surrounding the birth of the country? What are the points of contention? How do the different interpretations of Bangladesh’s history influence politics today?*

Tuesday, February 23 – **Nationalism and Partition**

- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Directorate of Intelligence, “East Pakistan: An Independent Nation?” Intelligence Memorandum (Secret), March 1, 1971; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Thursday, February 25 – **Politics of Memory**

Week 6: Inter-Ethnic Relations

What are the underlying and proximate causes of the Hindu-Muslim conflict? What are the drivers of inter-ethnic peace?

Tuesday, March 1 – Hindu-Muslim Divide

***Synthesis Paper 1 Due

☐ “Parents in Western UP Turn to ‘Monk’ to Free Daughters from Muslim Lovers’ Spell,” Times of India, August 2, 2014.

Thursday, March 3 – Bridging Divides

Documentary: Meet the Patels (2014)


Week 7: Religion and Caste

What are the foundations of social order in South Asia? What are the sources of continuity and change within the existing social hierarchies?

Tuesday, March 8 – Construction and Contestation


Thursday, March 10 – Rise of Hindu Nationalism


Week 8: Spring Break (no classes)

Week 9: Gender

What is gender, why does it exist, and when does it matter? What role does gender play in the politics and the everyday lives of people in South Asia?

Tuesday, March 22 – Feminist Perspective


Thursday, March 24 – Gender and Policy


DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Week 10: Democracy and Authoritarianism

How has India been able to maintain its status as the world’s largest democracy? What explains the recurrence of authoritarianism across South Asia?

Tuesday, March 29 – India’s Democratic Miracle


Thursday, March 31 – Authoritarianism


**Week 11: Economic Development**

What accounts for the cross- and sub-national differences in development outcomes? What successes have been achieved, and what challenges remain?

**Tuesday, April 5 – Explaining Developmental Trajectories**


**Thursday, April 7 – Looking Ahead: Prospects and Challenges**


**REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY**

Why has South Asia been called “the most dangerous place in the world”? What are the underlying causes of the major security challenges facing, and emanating from, South Asia?

**Week 12: Insurgency and Terrorism**

**Tuesday, April 12 – Violent Resistance**

***Synthesis Paper 2 Due***

- Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America’s War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), pp. xix-xxxiv; 152-153 (focus on the definition of insurgency); and 321-324.

**Thursday, April 14 – The Drone Debate**


Week 13: Kashmir

*How did Kashmir become the most militarized zone in the world? What have been the local, regional, and international consequences of the Kashmir conflict?*

Tuesday, April 19 – **Origins of Intractability**


Thursday, April 21 – **Consequences of Conflict**

**Guest Speaker (Live from Kashmir via Skype): Dr. Samir Ahmad**


Week 14: Conventional and Unconventional Warfare

Tuesday, April 26 – **Armies, Self-Defense Militias, and Death Squads**


Thursday, April 28 – **The Nuclear Stability Debate**


Week 15: Conclusions

Tuesday, May 3 – **Wrap Up**
The classroom experience is the heart of liberal education, and as such is the most important aspect of your Skidmore College education. Presumably, if you did not agree you would not be attending Skidmore. The faculty of the Government Department takes this understanding as the basis of our educational efforts. It is in an attempt to honor the centrality of the classroom experience that we offer this department policy on civility and comportment.

As is stated in the Student Handbook, your presence at Skidmore College is contingent upon your acceptance of, and full adherence to, the Skidmore College Honor Code. This honor code is distinct from the oath you take when writing a paper or taking an exam—it is in fact much more all-encompassing, and much more demanding.

The Code includes the following statement: “I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.” Elsewhere, the Code also calls all Skidmore students to “conform to high standards of fair play, integrity, and honor.”

What does it mean to do act honestly, with integrity, and according to high standards of fair play, particularly in the classroom? In our view, it includes, minimally, the following.

1. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by arriving late to class.

2. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by leaving the classroom while class is in session, except for true medical emergencies.

3. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

4. No student shall disrupt the learning experience of others in the classroom by talking to a neighbor, writing notes to other students, reviewing one’s mail, reading the newspaper, completing homework for other classes, or playing with the laptop computer, while class is in session.

5. No student shall disrespect other Skidmore students, professors or the housekeeping staff by putting feet on the desks or other furniture in the classroom, or by leaving trash, food, or recyclables in the room at the end of the class session.

While we will hold all students to these minimal expectations, we also have some suggestions for those who seek to go beyond the bare minimum of civil classroom comportment to become the type of mature, responsible, active learners who are an asset to any classroom and society at large. These include the following.

6. Every student should take copious and meaningful notes both on assigned readings and during classroom sessions. Note taking is an important skill—if you do not already possess it, you should acquire it.
7. Every student should take some time to review the notes that he or she has taken on the day’s assigned reading before each class meeting. You will be amazed how much more invested and engaged in the class you will feel if you go into the classroom well-prepared.

8. Disruptions in class can be a significant impediment to learning, and no member of the Skidmore community—including faculty and students—should tolerate them. Thus every student should take responsibility for holding his or her peers and classmates to both high academic standards and high standards of civility. If people around you are chatting, passing notes or otherwise detracting from the overall quality of YOUR classroom experience, don’t let them get away with it.

9. Individual faculty members in the Government Department will determine the level of sanctions for disruptive behavior.