COURSE SYLLABUS

ETHNICITY AND POLITICS IN SRI LANKA
Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education Program (ISLE) Program

US semester credit hours: 4
Contact Hours: 60
Course Code: PO382-10 / IS382-10
Course length: Semester
Delivery method: Face to face
Language of Instruction: English
Suggested cross-listings: Politics; International Studies

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to ethnicity and politics in Sri Lanka. The course begins with a conceptual discussion on ethnicity, identity politics, ethno-nationalism, and changing dynamics of ethnicity. The discussion topics include the impact of ethnicity on electoral politics, conflict, democracy, governance, development and reconciliation. The aim of the course is to explore why and how ethnicity has emerged as an important factor in shaping social processes, political dynamics and social conflict in contemporary Sri Lanka. The war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE ended in May 2009 but the ethnic divide and the tensions continue in different ways. The course discusses, how, in the aftermath of the war, instead of promoting ethnic reconciliation as such, the state has celebrated the military victory. Further, the state has prioritized a program of economic development in the North and East over a process of Social Reconciliation. The course considers the upsurge in ethnicity and nationalism not as a uniquely Sri Lankan phenomenon, but a worldwide process that stands in stark contrast to the expected trajectory of globalization. Students are encouraged to reflect how ethnicity as well as religion has played a role in conflict, politics and development in the past and how they continue to be important in a variety of ways in Sri Lanka.

COURSE DELIVERY

The course will include lectures (twice a week), a seminar by invited guest speaker, field visits and weekly journals on ethnically driven political activities in Sri Lanka.

Students are expected to read the assigned articles in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students’ thoughtful engagement with the topic.

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in the IFSA ISLE Program whenever possible (based on the philosophy of transformative learning).

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course are expected to:
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1. Critically approach and review the concepts of ethnicity, identity politics and politicization of ethnicity in the modern world.
2. Explain the political process in Sri Lanka through the lens of ethnic politics.
3. Assess the significance of ethnicity as a basis of group formation, collective bargaining and conflict in a developing country setting.
4. Make connections between ethno-nationalist politics and challenges for democracy, development and reconciliation in a post-war scenario.
5. Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in the Sri Lanka program

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Introduction to the Course

Date: 25 Sep, 2018
Instructor: Dhammika Herath, and R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle classroom, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Silva, Niluka

J. Spencer, J. Goodhand, S.H. Hasbullah, B. Klen, B. Korf and K.T. Silva
Read “Chapter Two: East as a Complex Religious Field” pp. 27-35.

Session 2: Concept of Ethnicity and Approaches to Understanding Ethnicity

Date: 27 Sep, 2018
Instructor: Dhammika Herath
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Wimmer, Andreas

Eriksen. T.H.
2010. Ethnicity and Nationalism: anthropological Perspectives. (Read Chapter 1)

Yang, P. Q.
Session 3: Nationalism

Date: 2 Oct, 2018
Instructor: Dhammika Herath
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Eriksen, T.H.
2010. Ethnicity and Nationalism: anthropological Perspectives. (Read Chapter 6)

Anderson, Benedict.

Session 4: Patterns of ethno-political mobilization

Date: 4 Oct, 2018
Instructor: R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Bass, D

Sivarajah, Ambalavanar.

Session 5: Sinhala Nationalism

Date: 9 Oct, 2018
Instructor: Dhammika Herath
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

De Silva, K.M.
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Nanayakkara, Sankajaya.


Session 6: Buddhist Sangha in Contemporary Sri Lankan Politics

Date: 11 Oct, 2018
Instructor: K. T. Silva
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Seneviratne, H.L.

Silva, K.T.

Session 7: Field Trip

Date: 12 Oct, 2018
Instructors: Dhammika Herath and R. Ramesh
Venue: Provincial Council in Kandy, Badulla or Monaragala (to be finalized)
Time: 6:00-20:40

Session 8: Discussion on Field Trip

Date: 16 Oct, 2018
Instructor: Dhammika Herath and R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle Lecture Room
Time: 8:00-10:30

Session 9: Tamil Nationalism

Date: 18 Oct, 2018
Instructor: R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Cheran, R.
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Coomaraswamy, Radhika & Perera-Rajasingham, Nirmala

Sivathamby, Karthigesu

Session 10: LTTE and Tamil Politics

Date: 23 Oct, 2018
Instructor: R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Perera, U.

Somasunderam, Daya

Session 11: Diaspora and Tamil Politics

Date: 25 Oct, 2018
Instructor: R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Kadirgamar, Ahilan

Maunaguru, S.

Session 12: Identity Politics among Muslims

Date: 30 Oct, 2018
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Instructor: R. Ramesh
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Fazeeha, A.

Hasbullah, S. H.

McGilvray, D.B.

Session 13: Buddhist Muslim conflicts in Sri Lanka

Date: 1 Nov, 2018
Instructor: Dhammika Herath
Venue: Isle classroom, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Dhammika Herath and Harshana Rambukwella.

Jayawardena, Kumari

Kannangara, A. P.

Session 14: Ethnicity and Politics of Development

Date: 6 Nov, 2018
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Instructor: Dhammika Herath
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Herath, Dhammika

Loganathan, Ketheshwaran.

Session 15: Seminar on Prospects for Peace and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka

Date: 8 Nov, 2018
Panel: to be identified
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Assigned Readings

Herath, Dhammika

LLRC

Silva, K.T.

Session 16: Student Presentations on How to Promote Peace in Sri Lanka

Date: 13 Nov, 2018
Panel: Students Enrolled in the Course Participants: Students from University of Peradeniya
Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

Session 17: Review and Reflections

Date: 17 Nov, 2018
Instructors: Dhammika Herath and R. Ramesh
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Venue: Isle class room, Faculty of Arts
Time: 8.00-11.15

RESOURCES

Students are requested to visit the following website for updates regarding peace and ethnic relations in Sri Lanka.

http://www.groundviews.org
http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/
http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/14731
Colombo Telegraph
FT online.lk

Students are also advised to read newspaper reports regarding ethnic relations and political developments in the country.

EVALUATION METHODS

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements, with percentages of your total grade indicated for each assignment.

Class participation & quizzes 20%
Report on the field visit and Student Presentations in Seminar 30%
Term Paper 50%

Timely Submissions
Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student’s original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA resident director as well as your home institution.