

COURSE SYLLABUS



MODERN SRI LANKAN POLITICS

Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education Program (ISLE) Program

Suggested US semester credit hours: 4

Contact Hours: 60

Course Code: PO282-05 and IS282-05

Course Length: Semester

Delivery method: Face to Face

Language of Instruction: English

Suggested cross-listings: Politics; International Studies

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The objective of this course is to introduce the salient features of the politics of modern Sri Lanka. Special attention is paid to the issues of post-colonial state-building and crises in governance in the broad context of the political dynamics of post-colonial developing societies.

Even though Sri Lanka was identified as a model welfare state and a model democracy in the third world during the early years of independence, image of Sri Lanka changed since eruption of ethnic violence and war in the subsequent era. Hundreds of thousands of its citizens had fled the country as either political or economic refugees. Conclusion of the thirty year-civil war in Sri Lanka in 2009 has opened up opportunities for Sri Lanka to embark on a new journey towards achieving sustainable peace and building a cohesive society. At the same time, a number of serious challenges have emerged in Sri Lanka internally and externally that need to be addressed carefully in the post-war political context. In the period immediately following Independence from the British colonial rule Sri Lanka showed its capacity in maintaining, with relative success, a Western style liberal democratic framework of governance and was acclaimed as a 'model third world democracy'. However, during the period of the youth uprising and the internal war much of these democratic forms and processes eroded, and at times the survival of the country even as a "formal democracy" came to be threatened seriously. Intolerance of democratic opposition, interference with the judicial process, restriction of the space for civil society activities, undermining of free and fair elections, widespread political violence, erosion of human rights and the heightened trends of power centralization came to figure as regular features of the political system.

The course is designed with a view to present initially, an overview of the post-independence political heritage of the country focusing on the political culture, institutional framework and the main actors in the political process. Introducing the main challenges confronted by the fragile democracy of the country will then follow it. These include (a) the rebellion of the majority Sinhalese youth under the banner of a socialist revolution, (b) the separatist war by the minority Tamils with the objective of carving out an independent Tamil state (Eelam), (c) centralization of political power (d) problems related to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and (e) prospects and challenges for reconciliation in the aftermath of the internal war.

TEXTBOOK

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Government and Politics in South Asia by Craig Baxter, Yogendra Malik, Charles H. Kennedy and Robert C. Oberst, Sixth Edition, 2008, will be used as a basic text. Part 4 of this book contains 6 chapters dealing on Sri Lanka. More specialist readings are listed under each theme identified in the class schedule below.

Additionally, students are expected to read at least one Sri Lankan daily newspaper on a regular basis during the period of the Course, and maintain a Political Diary in which important developments in the political system are noted and commented upon on a day-to-day basis. (The currently available English language daily newspapers are *Daily News* (state owned), *The Island*; and *The Daily Mirror* and the main English language week-end newspapers are *The Sunday Times* (sister paper of *The Daily Mirror*), *The Sunday Island*, *The Sunday Observer* (state owned), *The Sunday Leader*, *The Nation* and *Lak Bima*.)

EVALUATION METHODS

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Class participation - 30%

Political Diary - 30%

Two Short assignments - 40%

(Each short assignment is about five to six pages (1500-2000 words) and they will be distributed at regular intervals concentrating on any two of the following: (1) a political personality (2) a political event (3) a political process and (4) a political institution.

ATTENDANCE

Students studying on an IFSA program are required to attend all regularly scheduled classes, studios, recitations, workshops and laboratory sessions. Failure to attend classes may result in a loss of credit and a fail on your transcript. The specific application of the attendance guidelines is at the instructor's discretion. Lateness or absence can affect the student's grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

Session	Topics	Readings, viewings
1	Sri Lankan Society and aspects of political culture	Baxter, Craig, Yogendra Malik, Charles H. Kennedy and Robert C. Oberst. <i>Government and Politics in South Asia (6th edition)</i> . Boulder: Westview, 2008. (Chapter 19. Political Culture and Heritage)
2	Postcolonial state and state-formation in Sri Lanka: approaches and processes	Keerawella, Gamini. <i>Post-Colonial State-Building in Sri Lanka since 1948: Approaches, Attempts and Challenges</i> (ISLE Library)
3	Trimming the sails: evolving institutional structures of governance	Baxter, Malik, et al. <i>Government and Politics in South Asia</i> (Chapter 20. Government Structure)

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4	Political parties, representation and elections	Baxter, Malik, et al. <i>Government and Politics in South Asia</i> (Chapter 21. Political Parties and Interest Groups)
5	Patterns of ethno-political mobilization	Sivarajah, Ambalavanar. "The Rise of Militancy in Tamil Politics." <i>Security Dilemma of a Small State Pt. II- Internal Crisis and External Intervention</i> . Mahinda Werake and P.V.J. Jayasekera. Eds. New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1995: 120-46
6	Politics of National Development Discourse: Regimes and Approaches	Tilakaratne, W.M. "Economic Change and Political Instability in Sri Lanka." <i>Security Dilemma of a Small State –part II. Internal Crisis and External Intervention</i> . Mahinda Werake and P.V.J. Jayasekera. Eds. New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1995:42-68.
7	Gender factor in Sri Lankan politics	Liyanage, Kamala. "Women in Political Parties: Sri Lankan Experiences." <i>Women and Politics in Sri Lanka – A Comparative Perspective</i> . Ed. Sirima Kiribamune. Kandy: ICES, 1999: 101-42.
8	Crisis in governance and rise of Tamil militancy	Baxter, Malik, et al. <i>Government and Politics in South Asia</i> (Chapter 22. Conflict Mediation: Ethnic Conflict and War)
9	'No More Tears Sister' - Short Documentary Film on Rajini	Director; Helene Klodawsky Producer: Yves Bisaillon Discussant – Prof. Sumathy Sivamohan
10	Human Rights and Civil Liberties: mechanisms and evolving discourse	Manoharan, N. <i>Democratic Dilemma: Ethnic Violence and Human Rights in Sri Lanka</i> , New Delhi: Samskriti. 2008 (Chapters III and IV)
11	Buddhist Sanga in contemporary Sri Lankan politics	Seneviratne, H.L. <i>The Work of Kings: The New Buddhism in Sri Lanka</i> . Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1999. (Chapter 7. Conclusion: Regeneration to Degeneration)
12	Defeat of the LTTE and search for peace and reconciliation	Uyangoda, Uyangoda. "Travails of State Reform In the Context of Protracted Civil War in Sri Lanka". <i>Liberal Peace in Question – politics of State and Market Reform in Sri Lanka</i> . Eds. Kristian Stokke and Jayadeva Uyangoda. London: Anthem Press, 2011: 35-61.

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13	Sri Lanka in global and regional contexts: challenges and responses	Kodikara, S.U. "Defence and Security Perceptions of Sri Lankan Foreign Policy." <i>Security Dilemma of a Small State. Pt. I Sri Lanka in the South Asian Context</i> , Ed. P.V.J. Jayasekera. New Delhi: South Asia Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1992: 206-233.
14	Panel discussion on the theme 'Sri Lanka after the War' with the participation of political party representatives/ civil society activists	

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.

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