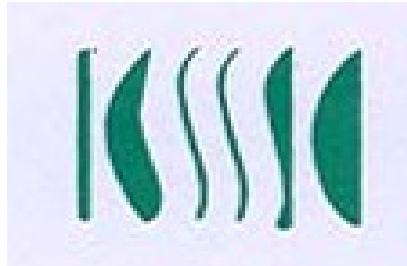


CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, CALCUTTA



M. Phil. in Social Sciences
(Affiliated to Jadavpur University, Kolkata)

PROSPECTUS
2014-2016

R-1, BAISHNABGHATA PATULI TOWNSHIP
KOLKATA : 700 094
Telephone: 2462-7252/5794/5795
FAX: 2462-6183
E-mail: info@cssscal.org
cssscal@vsnl.net
Website: <http://www.cssscal.org>

ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC), was founded in 1973 by the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal to conduct and coordinate research in the social sciences. The Centre's faculty is drawn from a wide range of disciplines: Economics, History, Sociology, Political Science, Cultural Studies [Literature, Film Studies, Philosophy etc.], Development Studies, Gender Studies, Environmental Studies, Geography, Social Anthropology, Education. The emphasis is on multidisciplinary research.

M. Phil. in SOCIAL SCIENCES

(Affiliated to Jadavpur University, Kolkata)

Objectives

M. Phil. in Social Sciences 2014-16 will run from June 2014 to May 2016. This interdisciplinary Programme is affiliated to Jadavpur University, Kolkata. After the completion of the Programme students will obtain Jadavpur University's degree, M. Phil. in Social Sciences.

The programme is meant for research students in India who wish to pursue doctoral research but have not enrolled in any doctoral programme or in any other full-time taught course.

The first year is split in two semesters. Semesters I and II will be devoted to course work. The course work consists of a core of interdisciplinary compulsory-modules in the social sciences and a choice of specialized advanced optional-modules in particular disciplines. The objective is to equip young researchers with a general grasp of the main intellectual concerns of social science research, the most important recent trends in the social sciences and a strong grounding in interdisciplinary methods.

At the end of each semester there will be end-semester examinations as part of **M. Phil. Qualifying Examination**. Only if students pass the Qualifying Examination will they be admitted to the Second year. Semesters I and II will jointly be termed *Research Training Programme*.

The second year is also split in two semesters. Semesters III and IV will be devoted to dissertation work. At the end of Semester III, students will have to make Mid-term presentations and at the end of Semester IV, submit their dissertations.

Eligibility

At least 50% marks or B+ on an eight-point scale at the post-graduate level in any of the social science disciplines (e.g., Economics, History, Sociology, Political Science, Cultural Studies [Literature, Film Studies, Philosophy etc.], Development Studies, Environmental Studies, Geography, Social Anthropology, Education).

Candidates from non-Social Science disciplines may also apply provided their degree is equivalent to the Master's degree.

The maximum number of candidates (including the number of candidates from reserved constituencies, as per West Bengal Govt. rules) may be **25**.

Procedure for application

Applications should be sent to the Registrar in the prescribed application form along with a summary description of not more than 1000 words of the research problem in which the applicant is interested. The last date for receiving applications is **Friday, May 9, 2014**.

Selection Procedure

- a) One-hour Written Test for *all* applicants
- b) Interview of applicants who qualify the Written Test. The final selection of participants will be made on the basis of interviews to be conducted by a duly constituted Selection Committee. Selected participants will be intimated and the first semester of the M. Phil. Programme will commence in **June 2014**.

Attendance

Minimum attendance required: **70%** of classes per Course. (There are **four** Courses in all: Semester I: **two**; Semester II: **two**).

Auditors

Students not registered as regular participants of the M. Phil. Programme may join it as auditors. The procedure for admittance to the Programme as auditors is as stated below:

Before the academic session begins the M.Phil Sub-committee will decide the maximum number of modules that any one may audit.

The auditor-candidates will have to send in their applications at least *fifteen* days prior to the start of the semester in which the module(s) they are interested in is/are included.

All candidates will be required to contact the Coordinator(s) of the module(s) they wish to audit – the city-students personally and the out-station students via e-mail – just after they send in their applications to the M.Phil Office.

Once all the applications for auditing are received the final list of auditors will be prepared. It will be released by the module-coordinator one week before the commencement of the semester.

Ultimate discretion as to the number of auditors lies with module-coordinators. It is however expected that the Coordinators would take the decision in consultation with the other module-instructors.

Auditors cannot miss more than *three* classes in any *one* module.

Auditors are required to fulfill all academic obligations, including, writing papers as part of Assignments. However, the papers would not be graded.

Only if auditors comply with all the conditions specified above will they be given official Certificates by the CSSSC.

Fees and deposits

The downloaded form is to be submitted along with a draft of **Rs. 100/-** payable in favor of **Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta**.

Admission Fee: Rs. 500 (non-refundable; to be paid at the time of admission)

Registration Fee: Rs. 25 (non-refundable; to be paid at the time of admission)

Semester Fee: Rs. 2000 per semester (first installment of Rs. 2000 to be paid at the time of admission and the other three installments to be paid at the beginning of Semesters II, III and IV; semester fee once paid is non-refundable)

A library deposit of Rs. 2000 (refundable after 2 years) is to be paid by each student for availing borrowing facilities in the Centre's library for the duration of the course.

In addition Students will have to pay to Jadavpur University, Kolkata:

Examination Fees: Rs. 225/- per semester

Dissertation Submission Fees: Rs. 195/-

Convocation Fees: Rs. 300/-

Semester fees may be waived for deserving students; students desiring to avail of such waiver should apply to the M.Phil Office for consideration.

Library facilities

The library of the Centre will be open to all participants in the M. Phil. Programme on all working days of the Centre from 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Each participant will be subject to the general rules and procedures of readership of the library.

Other information

For the time being the Centre cannot offer any facilities for accommodation to the participants.

Course Work

The first year of M. Phil. in Social Sciences is split in two semesters and Semesters I and II is jointly termed *Research Training Programme* (hereafter, **RTP**). Each semester is divided into **two** Courses each comprising **two** modules. In all, each participant is required to take **two** compulsory-modules and **six** optional-modules.

Compulsory-modules The **two** compulsory-modules will be offered in Semester I.

Optional-modules: Optional Modules are distributed in *three* clusters:

Cluster A: *History / Cultural Studies / Feminism*

Cluster B: *Sociology / Political Theory / Geography*

Cluster C: *Development Studies / Environmental Studies / Economics*

Students are required to choose **six** Optional Modules from *at least two* Clusters.

For the entire syllabus of M. Phil. in Social Sciences 2014-16, please see the course.

NOTE: The optional modules that would be offered from the total number of modules included in the syllabus will depend on (i) availability of faculty and (ii) a minimum number of enrollees to be stipulated later.

TEACHING HOURS
First Year: RTP: June '14 to May '15

Semester I

Course	Number of Hours
Course I	
Module 1: Compulsory	28 28
Module 2: Optional	
Course II	
Module 1: Compulsory	28 28
Module 2: Optional	
	112

Semester II

Course	Number of Hours
Course III	
Module 1: Optional	28
Module 2: Optional	28
Course IV	
Module 1: Optional	28
Module 2: Optional	28
	112

Total number of Teaching hours: $112 + 112 = 224$

Calendar (RTP: 2014 to 15)

The Course-Work (RTP) will be spread over June 2014 to May 2015. There will be periods of Study-Leave to facilitate students to prepare for Examinations.

M. Phil. Qualifying Examination

- a) All examinations will be conducted under the directive of the Controller of Examinations, Jadavpur University. The Controller will issue all examination notifications, appoint all examiners and release the results. CSSSC and Jadavpur University will maintain regular contacts with each other.

b) **Semesters I and II (Course-work)**

Internal Assessments

- There will be **Two** 'Internal Assessments' per module. Module-Coordinators may adopt different modes—e.g., tutorial / assignment / class-test / practical / and /or participation in group-discussions—for Internal Assessments.
- The First Internal Assessment will take place at the middle and the Second Internal Assessment at the end of Semesters.
- Total number of Internal Assessments:
Semester I (4 modules x 2 =) **8** + Semester II (4 modules x 2 =) **8 = 16**
- The grade-value of each Internal Assessment will be $1/5^{\text{th}}$ of the total grade-value of the Module. Internal Assessments, thus, contribute $2/5^{\text{th}}$ of the total grade-value per module.

- **Plagiarism** CSSC traits a very serious view of plagiarism and the Centre reserves the right to take suitable disciplinary action (including expulsion) in case were students are proved to have used someone else's material without acknowledging its source.

End-Semester Examinations

- **Two** different modes will be followed for the two End-Semester Examinations after the completion of Semester I and Semester II.

End-Semester Examination I

- For 'End-Semester Examination I' students will be required to sit for two papers. Each of the two papers will be divided into two groups and the examination of the four groups will be spread over four days. The time allotted for each group will be two hours. The content-design of the question papers will be:

Paper	Group A	Group B
I	Questions from Compulsory 1	Questions from Optional 1
II	Questions from Compulsory 2	Questions from Optional 2

- The grade-value of each of the groups will be 3/5 of the total grade-value of the Module.

End-Semester Examination II

- 'Term Papers' and their 'Defence' will constitute the 'End-Semester Examination II'.
- Each student will submit **One** Term Paper of approximately 3000 to 4000 words per module and will be required to present a 'Defence' of the same. (Since there are four modules, the total number of Term Papers to be submitted by each student will be **four**).
- The 'Defence' for each module will have to be completed within thirty minutes and will be conducted by module-coordinators in the presence of module-instructors (and other faculty members).
One primary objective for conducting the Defence will be to ensure that students have not adopted unfair means in writing the Term Paper.
Term Papers will be graded only after the Defense.
- The grade-value of the Term Paper will be 3/5 of the total grade-value of the Module.
- The Controller of Examinations, Jadavpur University will appoint module-coordinators to act as Examiners for the four groups contained in the two papers of End-Semester I Examination as well as for the four Term Papers and their Defence which constitute the End-Semester II Examination.

- The Controller of Examinations, Jadavpur University, will officially announce the Schedule for 'End-Semester Examination I' as well as for the 'Defence of Term Papers'.

Grading System

- 'Internal Assessments' as well as 'Term Papers' will be graded. Following the 'Ten Point Lettering Grade Scale', numerical values corresponding to the grades will be:
A+ = 9; A = 8; A— = 7; B+ = 6; B = 5; B— = 4; C+ = 3; C = 2; C— = 1; F = 0 (Fail)
- The Controller of Examinations, Jadavpur University, will compute the final numerical value for each module in accordance with the formula:
Internal Assessment 1: Internal assessment 2: Term Paper:: **1:1:3** (of numerical values). For example, if a student obtains A+ and B+ in the two Assessments and C in Term Paper the final numerical value will be:
(9 + 6 + {2 x 3}) divided by 5 = 4.2
The Numerical Value will not be rounded off.
- The Final grade for each module will be determined in accordance with the following scheme:

Final Numerical Value	Final Grade
8.5 and above	A +
7.5 and above but less than 8.5	A
6.5 and above but less than 7.5	A –
5.5 and above but less than 6.5	B +
4.5 and above but less than 5.5	B
3.5 and above but less than 4.5	B—
2.5 and above but less than 3.5	C+
1.5 and above but less than 2.5	C
0.5 and above but less than 1.5	C—
Less than 0.5	F

- Students will be automatically promoted to Semester II.
- Semester Grade Point Average (**SGPA**) for each of the two Semesters will be determined by adding the Numerical Values obtained in the four

Modules.

The Numerical Value of the SGPA will not be rounded off.

- Grade-sheet

Semester I: Grade-sheet will show grades obtained in individual modules and the (First) Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA). It will not state any consolidated grade.

Semester II: Grade-sheet will show grades obtained in individual modules, the (Second) Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA) as well as the Cumulative Grade Point Average (**CGPA**) and the Final Consolidated Grade.

CGPA will be calculated by taking the average of the SGPA for Semester I and SGPA for Semester II.

There will be no rounding off of the CGPA.

The Final Consolidated Grade will be determined in accordance with the following scheme:

CGPA	Grade
8.5 and above	A +
7.5 and above but less than 8.5	A
6.5 and above but less than 7.5	A –
5.5 and above but less than 6.5	B +

- Students obtaining less than **5.5** CGPA will be considered to have failed the M Phil. Qualifying Examination. There will no automatic re-admission.

Semesters III and IV (Dissertation) [2015 to 16]

- Semesters III and IV will be spread over June 2015 to May 2016.
- Each student will be allotted one Supervisor.
- Each student will be required to make three presentations: (a) at the beginning of Semester III; (b) towards the end of Semester III; (c) towards the end of Semester IV.
- Each dissertation will be examined by the Supervisor and an External Examiner.
- The Controller of Examinations, Jadavpur University, will appoint supervisors as well as External Examiners.
- Only after favourable reports reach the office of the Controller of Examinations, Jadavpur University from both Supervisors and External Examiners will the viva-voce be held.
- The Supervisor and the External Examiner will jointly conduct viva-voce.
- Dissertations will not be graded.

COURSE OUTLINES

[The two Compulsory modules will be taught in Semester I. The six Optional Modules will be distributed in Semester I and II. The list below gives the descriptions of the Compulsory modules as well as *all* the Optional Modules that could be offered. The exact placing of the Optional Modules will be announced later.]

COMPULSORY

VOCABULARY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Description

This module will be devoted to studying in detail the theoretical and historical contexts within which a set of key-terms crucial to any kind of Social Sciences analysis emerged. The set may include concepts, such as, *class, gender, caste, culture, market, development* etc. Of these, *five* will be selected for rigorous interrogation.

RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

Description

This module offers an overview of selected quantitative and qualitative field research methods used in the social sciences. Wide in compass, its aim is to introduce students to methods in sociological or anthropological or economic analyses or in historical research and cultural analyses. The course will concentrate on varied topics, for instance, (a) designing research proposals and quantitative surveys, (b) qualitative surveys, participant observation, case studies/life histories and content analysis, (c) quantitative methods such as sampling techniques, generation of random numbers, correlation and ordinary least squares regression, (d) modes of reading documents, ranging from personal papers, autobiographies, memoirs, newspapers or case law, (e) archival research, based primarily on official documents, (f) the realm of unconventional archival material and non-written sources, such as architecture, photography or popular prints.

OPTIONAL

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

Description

The module is an introduction to different theories of development. Along with discussions on mainstream Economics the module will cover alternative perspectives of development, such as, those provided by Marxist, Neo-Marxist and other schools.

PROBLEMS OF HISTORICAL WRITING AND METHOD

Description

This module will not be a standard survey of historiography but will instead explore some of the critical conceptual and methodological issues concerning the nature of the historical discipline and its modes of writing and enquiry. This year, the course will focus particularly on different traditions of historical knowledge and writing about the past, juxtaposing the pre-modern with the modern, the Western with the ancient Indian and Islamic, the academic professional discipline with its popular and public variants.

READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY: TEXTS, CONCEPTS, CONTEXTS

Description

This module will explore such critical concepts and significant themes in different traditions of philosophy as are often useful for the social sciences. This aims to make students conversant with some of the founding categories and narratives of philosophical discourse (for example, *mimesis*, *universal* and *particular*, *being*, *ideology*, *atman*).

CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Description

This module will deal with developments in sociological theory since World War II. It will commence with a discussion of the positivist dispute in sociology and go on to discuss some of the alternatives like structuralism, critical theory, practice theory, post-structuralist theory. It will conclude with a discussion of structuration

theory and neo-functionalism in view of the question, does conditions for grand theory exist anymore?

ENVIRONMENTAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Description

This module would start by presenting an overview of different conceptualizations of 'the environment' and discuss the implications of viewing the environment as a 'natural' entity. The module would then discuss different schools of thought about the environment. Finally, the emergence of environmental concerns in the twentieth century will be discussed, with a focus on important moments in the history of environmentalism as well as on different kinds of environmentalisms.

FEMINISM AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Description

This module will explore the success with which feminist theory has recast or challenged the social sciences, with special emphasis on developments in India over the past three decades. In particular, reference will be to developments – conceptual, methodological, and empirical – within the realms of history, political science, sociology/anthropology, sexuality studies and development studies.

One set of questions within this module will address the question of female absence from the paradigms of the social sciences. How have feminists raised new questions about historical certainties and existing historical archives? How have they unmasked the norming of the subject of politics as male, upper class and upper caste (the last in the Indian case?) The other set of questions will be raised about disciplines such as sociology/anthropology, within which women may have had a foundational presence though in ways that objectify or naturalise gender inequalities. Finally, the module will consider the ambiguous or contradictory consequences of the institutionalization of "women's studies."

The second part of the module will discuss the question of sexuality and how it has been thematised (and at times normalized) in discourses ranging from the Greek and Indian Classical traditions, Marxism, and Freud. The third part of the module will discuss the question of feminism's challenge to political theory, and will address issues of family justice and rights.

ENVISIONING THE CITY

Description

The first part of the module will trace the ways in which the modern city has been conceptualized, in both its physical-material and mental-imaginative senses, by a

variety of social theorists and historians, as well as practitioners such as planners, architects and technologists. The development of ideas about the modern city, and particularly the cities of the global south, will be studied on a number of different registers. In particular, we will look at histories of planning since the late 19th century; the colonial “divided city” and the post colonial city as the site of new norms of citizenship and democracy; and finally the meanings of identities, such as gender, caste or ethnicity, in city space.

FINANCIAL SYSTEMS: HISTORY, THEORY AND POLICY

Description

This module demonstrates the relationship between history, theory and policy in the world of finance. It characterizes the idea of financial history and the monetary interpretation of history. The dynamics of financial capitalism is captured through the tools of inductive argumentation as well as axiomatic theoretical premises, reductionist conjectures and deductive propositions. The theory of the household, the firm and the financial intermediary is developed individually as well as collectively in the form of the theory of financial transactions. The lectures on policy are grounded on different problems of financial systems over cross section as well as time. A review on financial system design and management of International Finance completes the description of policy.

INTRODUCTION TO MODERN SOCIAL THOUGHT

Description

This module will focus on five selected themes that are central to modern social life. This year, the focus will be on the philosophy of modernity, modern forms of power, governmental techniques, nationalism and globalization. The lectures will be built around the texts of Bruno Latour, Michel Foucault, Ian Hacking, Benedict Anderson, Hardt and Negri.

THE FIELD OF VISUAL CULTURE

Description

This module sets out to explore the burgeoning field of study of visual culture in the west and in India, as it has emerged both within and outside the older disciplinary domains of art history and film and media studies. It will examine the interdisciplinary dimensions and theoretical outlay of the visual field in its central engagement with the shifting nature and function of visual imagery in the modern

and contemporary era, the changing technologies of production and reproduction, and the different circuits of reception, dissemination and circulation of images. The first section of the module, called 'Conceptualizing Visual Studies' will span a range of visual genres—from painting, photography and popular prints to archeological relics, religious icons, public architecture and monumental statuary—and sites of display and spectatorship—from museums and exhibitions to temples and urban spaces, from worlds of scholarship to those of devotion or tourism. It will look at the way the field of visual studies pushes at the boundaries between 'art' and 'non-art', the 'high' and the 'popular', the exceptional and the everyday. The second section of the module will concentrate on Media Studies.

RETHINKING POLITICAL THEORY

Description

Contemporary political theory has been preoccupied with new forms of political and cultural transformations advocated by representatives of the new social movements. Consequently, political theory has reoriented itself, forging new links between the state and society. In this module, we make an attempt, albeit in a limited manner, to grasp the forms political theory has taken in recent times, by selecting a few themes for discussion. These include liberalism and communitarianism; social justice, justice and gender, and environmental justice; identity, diversity and citizenship rights; and democracy and globalization: a perspective from the South.

THE LAND QUESTION IN DEVELOPMENT

Description

From the enclosure of the 'commons' in western Europe in the eighteenth century to the various land reform initiatives (including land redistribution) in many parts of the world in the twentieth century as well as more recent attempts to 'acquire' land for a variety of developmental purposes (industrial growth, urban renewal, and so on), land has been a central issue in debates about growth and development. This module would start with an overview of the different ways in which the land question has come into play, followed by a discussion of some of the theoretical perspectives that deal with the land question (e.g., the classical concerns about diminishing marginal productivity of land, recent fears about 'accumulation by dispossession'). The bulk of the module would, however, use the land question as an entry point to deal with some important questions underlying discourses of development today: the kind of industrial growth that is 'necessary' for development, the tribal relationship with land, and the importance of rights-based approaches, among others.

CULTURES OF POSTCOLONIALITY

Description

This is an advanced module in Postcolonial theory and practice. It commences by investigating whether postcolonialism is a useful concept. It proceeds by mapping out a possible genealogy. It aims to interrogate some of the positions on race, reason and history in Enlightenment thinking and goes on to consider critiques of colonialism, which have emanated from Africa, Latin America, India and Australia. The final section of the course introduces the students to a range of contemporary critical insights into the aims of the most important postcolonial theorists. The course will address issues such as colonisation, decolonisation and neo-colonisation.

GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY

Description

The course intends to provide a geographical interpretation of the social phenomena, such as tribe, caste, religion and language in India. A systematic, or even a chronological study of the parts does not encompass the whole, which expresses itself in elements not as individual entities but in their integration in space and time. Elements such as tribe, caste, dialect or language, or even religion-based communal identity, have always manifested themselves in a regional/spatial frame. The focus of the course will be on the mapped statistical surfaces of measurable social phenomena that record the variation in society over space.

THE SUBJECT AND THE BODY: A FEMINIST APPROACH

Description

Responding to the growing interest in ethics, subjectivity and biopolitics, the module introduces some philosophical and conceptual issues on thinking the embodied subject. In the first section the idea of subject is traced in liberal philosophy following the works of Isaiah Berlin and Charles Taylor, and in recent anti-liberal thought following Foucault and Agamben looking at the historical process of modern identity formations. Finally, the module takes up the idea of self-fashioning in various forms of political practice, with special reference to Indian cases. Select readings are pursued that question how specific regimens of

the body are implicated in both the Gandhian practices and shades of radical politics. The second section questions the category of experience based on a body-mind distinction. It interrogates the body constructed with markers of identity like sex, caste or class through reading key-texts on empiricist, phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspectives. Writings of theorists like Freud, Foucault, Butler, Derrida and Irigaray are brought into productive conjunctions with select literary texts.

LABOUR ECONOMICS

Description

This module draws strongly from graduate level microeconomics. Basic knowledge of econometrics is necessary among other things. It is expected that, in developing a perspective on labour economics, students will establish acquaintance with journals like *American Economic Review*, *Economic Journal*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Industrial Labor Relations Review* and *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

SITUATING 'SCIENCE': TRANSACTIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Description

This module will address the history, sociology and philosophy of the sciences and will trace the contours of the changing paradigms—both in the western tradition and the Indic space—in thinking about 'nature'. Students will be introduced to a set of debates regarding methodology for the study of science (for example, Popper, Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lakatos on the one hand and Bachelard, Canguillhem, Foucault on the other). Discussions will centre around (a) perspectival conflicts between realism and relativism (b) tensions between sociological and anthropological analyses of the sciences (c) the Marxian and the poststructuralist turns that induced, in opposition or in unison, the multiple forms of questioning the authority of Science (d) the political implications of terms like 'scientific spirit' or 'scientific temperament' in the context of colonization and decolonisation (e) science's relation with technology on the one hand and with the social sciences on the other (f) the Feminist interventions in the study of science, and other related issues. The module will lay an especial emphasis on the self-definition of 'modern science' and subject it to a critical scrutiny.

INSTITUTIONS AND IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Description

This module adopts the 'culture and power' perspective to enquire into the intersection of institutions and identities. Democratic development has led to the institutionalization of identities within the rubric of the state in contemporary India. Which identities have been visibilized and how they have been institutionalized is the question. The module will take up particular identities like caste, religion, region and language and examine them in three phases. First, how these identities have been articulated in post-colonial India; second how they have been institutionalized either through legislation or the setting up of monitoring or channelizing institutions; and third what kind of effect they have had on people and the debates they may have generated. In emphasizing the identity question in the context of post-colonial India's development of democratic institutions, the module will expand the idea into some related debates on development, both in India and in the global context, in connection with the politics of welfare, entitlement, discrimination, and industrialization.

INTERROGATING POLITICAL ECONOMY: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Description

Is economics any more 'real' than its neighbouring disciplines? Has the recent theoretical turn in history, anthropology, literary criticism, postcolonial studies and philosophy completely escaped economics? Can there be a creative conversation between these fields and the economic discipline? This module will try to address these and related questions through a broad, interdisciplinary and non-technical introduction to the central concerns of political economy. While the students with non-economics background are frequently scared and put off by the economists' increasing use of models, data-sets and mathematical equations, the students of economics often find the theories and jargons of 'soft' social sciences vague and difficult to make sense of. The primary objective of this module is to gently allay this mutual distrust and introduce each group to the secret pleasures of the other.

Biopolitics, Ethics, and Subjectivation

Description

"For millennia," observes Foucault "man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a unique political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question." Shifting the focus from ratiocination and justice, Foucault argues that modern politics is targeted on human kind's existence as living being, engendering the subjection of bodies and the control of population through

practices of public health, regulation of heredity, and risk management. Known as biopolitics, it is a preeminent mode of liberal governmental power. Foucault's analytics of liberalism shows that liberalism's famed agenda of limited government is actually a call for pervasive governance, promoting at once a self-monitoring, ethical citizenry and a mode of permanent governmental intervention to produce, multiply and guarantee the security of the social body. The collectivity thus becomes the corner stone of the protective ability of the new state. In the post-9/11 world, the emphasis on governable bio-populace has increased. The social body too is increasingly portrayed as a juncture of all kinds of risk – from 'illegal immigrants' to drug peddlers to terrorists to viruses known or unknown. Both developments may be taken as signs of crisis of the traditional understanding of deliberative, liberal democracy. This is also the time when the discourse of biopolitics as a tool of critical analysis has witnessed a massive boom. The course seeks to understand the dynamics of governmental logic mentioned above: the organization of a game between liberty and security, and an ethical and moral technology that builds upon the notion of danger. It is this technology that sets the standards of normalcy and governs the behaviour of individuals and populations. Situated at the interface of contemporary political and cultural theory, the course deals centrally with the writings and lectures of Foucault but also tries to venture outside a strictly Foucauldian matrix and engage with the ideas of Agamben, with issues of law and with the caring, terminating nature of contemporary state.