Centre for Russian & Central Asian Studies  
School of International Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi  

Course Content for M. A (Optional)  

Title: Globalisation, Democracy and Civil Society in Contemporary Central Asia  

Course Teacher: Dr. Nalin Kumar Mohapatra  

Credit: Four  
Contact Hours: 4  
Evaluation: Term Paper/ Mid Sem/ End Sem  
Semester: Monsoon  
Course No: IS 528 N  

Introduction  

The present course is an attempt to portray the close correlation that exists between democracy and civil society and how both these forces are being shaped by elements of globalization and existing ideologies. This is most evident in post-Soviet societies where an ideological vacuum developed after the Soviet break-up. Since, democratic governance in a macro-framework operates in a broader social system, the forces of globalization and both state and non-state neo-liberal institutions are playing an important role in shaping the contours of democratization. Central Asia is a classic case of post-Soviet transition where democracy, neo-liberal institutions and global/local forces operate some times in collusion and at other times independently in shaping the trajectories of democratization. The basic rationale of the present course is to examine how the five states of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan – are coping up with institutional, socio-cultural and economic challenges
emanating from the Soviet past. The course will also outline to what extent the existing models of democracy fit into the transitional character of post-Soviet societies of Central Asia.

1) Conceptualizing Globalisation, Democracy and Civil Society

This section will critically examine the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of globalization, democracy and civil society. It has been observed that concepts like democracy and civil society cannot be studied in isolation. Globalization as a force plays a role both directly and indirectly in shaping the contours of democracy and civil society. In this context these aspects will be studied from a theoretical perspective.

- Theoretical Approaches to Democratisation process.
- Globalisation, Democratic Process and Civil Society
- Democratic Transition in post-Soviet space

Suggested Readings

- Sakwa, Richard, (2005, reprint), Post-Communism, ( New Delhi: Viva Books), ( Essential Reading)
2) **Institutional Dimensions of Democracy**

The second section will highlight the theory and empirics relating to the institutional aspects of democracy in Central Asia. Of special interest here will be questions that have a bearing on constitutional mechanisms, forms of government as well as the nature of political parties. These dimensions of democracy assume a special significance in the Central Asian context as these states are making a transition from an old Soviet structured polity to a new one based on Western liberal model. This section seeks to assess the possibilities of consolidating emerging democracies.

- Constitution and Constitutionalism
  - Parliamentary vs. Presidential forms of government
  - Emerging trends in political parties
  - “Consolidating” emerging regimes.

**Suggested Readings**


• Cummings, Sally N.ed, (2002), Power and Change in Central Asia,(London/New York: Routledge.) (Essential Reading)


• __________ (1970), *Central Asia since Modern Times*, (Moscow: Progress.) (Essential Reading)

• Olcott, Martha Brill (2005), *Central Asia’s Second Chance*,( Washington: Carnegie Foundation). (Ch 2,3,4,5)
3) Socio-Cultural Variables of Democracy

Institutions sustain democratic politics. It is equally important to recognize that socio-cultural milieus have also to be nurtured. This is especially true of a region like Central Asia, where, historical and socio-cultural processes have played an important role through centuries in strengthening the structure of governance. The multi-cultural structure of society, nature of communitarian governance process, and formation of political culture shall be discussed.

- Identity politics and Multiculturalism
- Political culture and Nature of state and societal relationship

Suggested Readings

● Frye, Timothy, (2010) Building States and Markets After Communism; The Perils of Polarized Democracy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), (Chapter 1,2,10)

● Parekh, Bhiku, (2006), Rethinking Multiculturalism. ( New York: Palgrave) (chapters, 5 and 7)
● Skocpal, Theda, Peter B.Evans and Dietrich Rueschemeyers eds.(1999 reprint) Bringing the State Back In( Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), (Introduction, Chapter-5 and 11)

4) Political- Economy of Democratization Processes
It has been observed that levels of economic development of a country have a direct bearing on democratic stability. The transitional nature of economy has an immediate effect on political processes of development and modernization in Central Asia. This is necessary for ensuring an optimal equilibrium between market and polity. Another aspect of political economy of Central Asian democratization is the rentier character of Central Asian states (except Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan). In fact studies reveal that this notion is closely related to authoritarianism and strengthen ‘neo-patrimonialism’. This segment assesses to
what extent sustainable human development augurs well for ensuring political stability.

●Rentier economy and nature of political processes
●Sustainable Human Development and political stability

Suggested Readings


5) Globalisation and Political Processes

If globalization is an “irreversible” phenomenon and no state is untouched by it then Central Asia is no exception. The transitional character of socio-political system with the
onslaught of globalization process put the Central Asian state system in a quandary. It is in this background one has to take into account the interface between global and local factors in shaping the political processes.

- Interpreting globalization
- Interface between globalization and transitional socio-political structure.
- External Actors and Democratic Consolidation

Suggested Readings


7) Civil Society, Social Capital and Political Processes

If democratic governance is a part of overall social processes than one has to examine the role of civil society. Civil society not only acts as a nodal point in connecting state and society. It also plays an important role in political processes by acting as a constructive opposition and sometimes nurturing social movements. The present section will also take into account the role of social capital in strengthening political processes. In this context one has to look into how the traditional notion of civil society as is prevalent in Central Asia can perform the prescribed role and adjust itself to the changing realities.
Emerging trends in civil society formation
Civil Society and Democratic Process
Social capital and nature of political processes.

Suggested Readings

- Burnell, Peter and Peter Calvert eds., (2004), Civil Society in Democratization, (London: Routledge) (Ch.1)
8) Globalization, Civil Society and Democratization Process: An Assessment in the context of Central Asia