Background Note: There are different ways of imagining India. These different imaginations are available to us through political ideas and concepts that emerged in modern India against the backdrop of colonialism. These ideas and frameworks involved among other things, a reassessment of traditional inheritances as well as an encounter with and specific modes of appropriation of modernity. Thinkers belonging to diverse intellectual persuasions opened up refreshingly new ways of envisaging the self, public life and the possibilities of crafting a new world, and these endeavours offer a window to understand the complex tapestry of political life in India. This paper approaches this body of thought by identifying certain key issues and concerns without shelving the contestations they are embroiled in. The perspective framework proposed here is dovetailed to a nonlinear reading of ideas, particularly those belonging to the same kindred class.

1. The Context

   (i) Colonialism
   (ii) Modernity
   (iii) Imagination of Nation

2. Political Ideas

   (a) Invocation of Tradition: (With special reference to Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay, Tilak, Gandhi, M.S. Golwalkar)
      (i) Assessment of Inheritance
      (ii) Designation of Past
      iii) Religion, Caste and Culture

   (b) Engagement with Modernity: (With special reference to Ranade, Tilak, Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, M.N Roy and Iqbal)

      (i) Social Reforms
      (ii) Reconfiguration of space: sacred/polluted, private/public
      (iii) Conceptions of Self
3. Imagination of the Democratic Ideal

(i) Concerns of Equality
(ii) Dignity and Swaraj
(iii) Representation and Diversity
(iv) Caste, Community and Nation

4. Methodological Debates on Studying India

Derivative, ‘Deshi’ and Beyond

The reading list below is indicative of the materials to be covered in the course. It is not exhaustive, and some other relevant readings may be added during the course of the semester. Please note that the course content is intended for a regular one-semester course (four months). If there are changes in the duration of the semester, corresponding modifications will be applied with reference to the topics, class lectures and readings.

PRIMARY TEXTS

Also, selections from the speeches and writings of B R Ambedkar, on the themes of democracy and representation


Iqbal, Muhammad. 1930 Presidential Address accessible at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_iqbal_1930.html


Phule, Jotirao Govindarao, and Govind P. Deshpande. Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule. Leftword books, 2002. Selections from this text


Ranade, Mahadev Govind. The Miscellaneous Writings of the Late Hon'ble Mr. Justice MG Ranade; with an Introd. by DE Wacha. Ramabai Ranade, 1915. Selections from this text


Tagore, Rabindranath. “Swadeshi Samaj.” (text will be circulated)

ARTICLES/BOOK CHAPTERS


Mukherjee, Gangeya 2016 In Argument: Considering of the Political in Gandhi Tagore: Politics, Truth and Conscience, Routledge


