

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

M.Phil. Programme Structure

The M.Phil. programme of one year duration consists of two parts of six months each. Part I comprises course work where students have to complete one compulsory research methods course, and any two of the optional courses offered in the year of their admission. A selection of the optional courses listed below will be offered each year depending on research interests and availability of admitted students and faculty. The specific topics and readings that will be covered each year in any paper will be finalized based on student and faculty interests and requirements at the beginning of the academic session. Students are expected to select two courses from the basket of courses offered after attending an introductory class offered for each course during the first week of classes.

RESEARCH METHODS COURSE (COMPULSORY)

The Research Methods course is designed as a rigorous introduction to sociological/social anthropological methodology in aspects crucial to conducting both field and literary research. The course begins with an overview of the history of method in the discipline and the various debates associated with epistemological questions as well as ethical issues. This is followed by a detailed introduction to many of the techniques and methods used in sociological research like ethnography, oral history, questionnaires and surveys, legal work, visual studies etc. This includes a module on quantitative method as well. Students proceed to read various themed empirical works in order to understand the above mentioned methodology in various applications, locations and topics. The course ends with a rigorous exercise in writing for dissertation and academic publication.

OPTIONAL COURSES

1. REFLECTIONS ON ETHNOGRAPHY

This advanced course allows students to examine the theory and practice of ethnography in detail. Students will read a wide variety of ethnographies, as well as debates and controversies on ethnography. They will contrast classical and post modern ethnographies bringing a critical perspective on methods of research and the politics of location, including topics such as:

1. History, Space and Subjectivity
2. The Constitution of the Site: Ethnographic Authority and the Crisis of Postmodernity
3. The Ethnographic Present, Modality and the Politics of Representation
4. Ethnographic Texts: Orality, Writing and the Visual

2. CONTEMPORARY CLASS ANALYSIS

The emphasis of the course is on intensive engagement with the *practice* of class analysis – rather than its history or theory – and the challenges that it faces today. It tries to grasp the “collegial” modalities of “class” when it is working along with other concepts like gender, race, or caste. The major part of class time will be spent in reading and discussing significant

examples of contemporary class analysis, especially those of class in intersectional contexts. It will include topics such as:

1. Class as a social science concept
2. Problems and constraints
3. Class in interaction
4. The future of class analysis

3. PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Taking a small set of concepts that are significant in the subject such as 'rationality', 'culture' or 'society' this course attempts to explore their philosophical roots through topics such as:

1. The Plurality of Cultures
 - (i) Western Ethnocentrism & Universality
 - (ii) Rationalism, Romanticism, Nihilism and the Europeanization of the globe
 - (iii) Mathesis Universalis & culture-specific cognitive systems
 - (iv) Self, Society, Culture in the Indic, European and Semitic traditions
2. Strategies of Universalization
 - (i) The Project of a Philosophical Anthropology in the West
 - (ii) Indic & Indian Standpoints
 - (iii) Reflexivity & Translation

4. STRUCTURALISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM

This course is designed to follow the MA course on Symbolism and Society and examines the developments that have taken place in semiotics/ semiology after the early formulations by scholars such as de Saussure, Pierce, Levi-Strauss, etc. A working knowledge of the important concepts used in semiological analysis is an essential prerequisite for this course. Topics covered will include:

1. Symbolic Order of the Social: History, Language, Event
2. Power, Biopolitics and Institutional Practice: Violence, Archive, Testimony
3. The Problem of Desire: Agency, Time and the Subject

5. THEORISING DEMOCRACY, EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The main thrust of the course is to discuss and debate the inbuilt issues which democratic politics encounters during its journey and the way it negotiates with the ideal of liberty, equality and social justice. The way democratic state chalks out various policies and programmes and how and in what way this leads to enhancement of capabilities and entitlements of the people makes the course a cutting edge topic for research. Topics for engagement include the following:

1. Social Exclusion: Contexts, forms and practices
2. Freedom and Democracy: Formal and substantive
3. Equality and Justice: Formal and substantive
4. Capabilities and Entitlements
5. Inclusive Policies and Practices

6. ARCHAEOLOGY OF CASTE

This course is intended to provide a site for the intensive interrogation of texts that deal with the theory, history or experience of caste relations. It aims to understand how caste became the central category through which Indian society was understood. The course adopts the

archeological method to locate how the idea of caste was shaped under the colonial episteme. This discursive formation is examined as it emerges through the employment and deployment of different disciplines—philology, ethnology, ethnography, anthropology—and concurrent practices such as census and ethnographic surveys. Each instance of the course will select its own problematic and set of texts, depending on the interests of the instructor and the students. The effort is to subject the chosen texts to critical examination from different standpoints in order to overcome the inertia produced by the “routinization” of caste in the sociological canon. Major topics covered include:

1. Genealogies
2. Discourses
3. Epistemes
4. Fields

7. CRISIS - EVENT

Anchored around the notion that ‘events’ can initiate, provoke, invent or discover forms of knowing the social, this seminar will visit both conceptual and empirical texts on events with a focused intent of exploring the network of ideas embedded in each. The seminar discussions are expected to lead towards understanding how events come to be (or not), how they assume significance in embedding and generating forms of anthropological/sociological knowledge. ‘Knowing’ an event is also about deciphering how it can be apprehended – on one hand, what nuances of, for instance, history, geography, politics, culture, economics or ecology it is shaped by and what aspects of those it shapes; and on the other, what methodological and theoretical parameters are shaped by, or, are used to shape these nuances. There will be two interrelated parts Concept and Context – the first of these will explore the theoretical and conceptual basis on which we set our explorations of crises/event. The empirical discussions will draw from historical, recent or ongoing phenomena or interplays therein (open to suggestion - including texts, film and fiction). Our intent will be to understand each of the above contexts as epistemic moments or frames, which lead us to a concatenation of ideas and perspectives that have had a profound impact on how knowledge production is shaped through social theory and method.

1. Theoretical Parameters: Event, Crisis, Disaster, Catastrophe
2. Method and Epistemology
 - (i) Temporalities, Spatialities
 - (ii) Perspectives: Legal, Cultural, Literary, Visual, Material, Disciplinary
3. Themes (number and emphasis to be decided in class)
 - (i) Governmentalities and World Orders
 - (ii) Wars and Violence
 - (iii) Ecology and Environment
 - (iv) Social Affect
 - (v) Development and Relief
 - (vi) Humanitarianisms
4. Events: Specific Events will be chosen each year, depending on class interests.

8. EVERYDAY LIFE AND ITS HORIZONS

This course examines the diverse theories that are anchored in the study of everyday life from the phenomenological perspectives of Agnes Heller and Alfred Schutz to more structural and post structural approaches of the Chicago School and French situationists such as Henri Lefebvre. Works by the scholars of the Frankfurt School will also be discussed. The course will cover topics such as”

1. Intellectual Genealogies

- (i) Social Practices vis-à-vis Structures/ Systems
 - (ii) Speech and Language
 - (iii) Gender and Lived Experience
 - (iv) Critical Reflection and Transformation
2. Accessing the Everyday
- (i) Everyday Objects
 - (ii) Everyday Religiosities and Signs/ Symbols
 - (iii) Everyday Heteronormativities
 - (iv) Urban Margins – Streets, Sidewalks, Shop-Signs
3. The Horizons of Life
- (i) Ordinary in relation to Extraordinary/ Spectacular Life
 - (ii) Non-Life and Absence
 - (iii) Everyday Life and Utopia

9. SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

This course complements the M.A. course on Medical Sociology. It moves beyond conceptual issues in the sub discipline to examine perceptions of health and well being. The philosopher and medical practitioner Georges Canguillhem famously said that the categories of normality and pathology are both vital norms and must be looked at as forms of the bodily experimentation with life. The course uses his ideas to select case studies that explore such 'experimentation' and focuses on topics such as:

- 1. Body, Health and Illness: Theoretical Perspectives
- 2. Illness Narratives and Limits of Representation
- 3. Medical Pluralism and Healing: Issues, Trends and Practices
- 4. Sociology, Public Health and Medicine

10. THEORISING MASCULINITIES

This course seeks to problematise the issue of men and masculinities, to understand social, cultural and political locations on the making of men. Hegemonic and subaltern formations are explored through an analysis of body regimes, gendered spheres, sexualities and identities.

- 1. Formations of Masculinity
 - (i) ritual, socialization and body regimes
 - (ii) performance, image, representation
- 2. The production and reproduction of masculinities
 - (i) production of gendered spheres
 - (ii) work, labour, employment
- 3. Hegemonic and subaltern formations
 - (i) gender, race and sexuality
 - (ii) discourses of androgyny, effeminacy and homosexuality
- 4. Embodiments of masculinity
 - (i) bodies and identities
 - (ii) health, well-being and disability

11. RETHINKING THE FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

The objective of this paper is to introduce students to a wide range of thinking about family as a set of relationships as well as an institution enmeshed in complex social, economic and political relationships. Apart from appreciating the variety and diversity in familial forms and functions, the emphasis of the course is upon some of the major debates around

transformations that have occurred in familial relationships and their institutional connections in more or less recent times. Students are exposed to some of key debates and concepts and, given the vast scope and coverage of the field, allowed to take up specific themes for detailed exploration depending upon their interest. They are encouraged to assimilate these ideas and to apply them to real life situations as well as be guided upon how to turn them into research questions. The students are particularly encouraged to engage with familial changes in Indian context through topics such as:

1. Relevance of a sociology of family in contemporary society: Classical theories and contemporary concerns
2. Shifting patterns of marriage, non-marriage and family
3. Genetic science, new reproductive technologies and the contemporary family
4. Family in transnational contexts
5. Representations of family
6. Issues of method

12. NATURE, SOCIETY, ENVIRONMENT

This seminar course will discuss sociological perspectives on the relation between society and nature, key theoretical developments, and theoretical and methodological scope of sociological study of environmental issues. The specific themes we will focus on each year will depend on the composition of the class, and will include sociological readings on issues such as nature conservation, climate change, gender/ race/ caste/ indigenicity and environment, ecological romanticism, community and commons, social movements, agrarian ecology, urban political ecology, ecological disasters, consumption, waste and multi-species ethnography. Topics that animate the course include:

1. Social constructions of nature
2. Human, cultural and political ecology
3. Environmental knowledges and modalities of power
4. Natural resource management institutions
5. Development paradigms and the environment
6. Livelihoods, environmentalisms and social movements

13. SOCIOLOGY OF CIVIL WAR

This course examines the philosophical basis of violence/non-violence; the mutual relationship between violence and the law, the ruptures introduced by wars in the legal monopoly over force claimed by the state, and the role of law in that breach. Students will also study ethnographies of wars and civil wars to ground their understanding of violence. The course may be structured around topics such as:

1. Defining civil war: Historical and contemporary perspectives
2. The logic of violence in civil war
3. The culture of civil war: A repertory of practices
4. Political economy of war
5. Democracy, sovereignty, and citizenship
6. Reparations, truth and reconciliation

14. STUDYING THE STATE

This course takes off from themes in classical anthropology and sociology as well as contemporary theorisations of power and the state. A sociological/social anthropological sensibility rather than a political science discourse on statecraft, which runs through much contemporary writing on state practice and governance, frames the choice of readings and

seminars. Students obtain grounding in two conceptual and methodological frames: (1) the debate on the relations between state and society - that the state is not a unified, homogeneous institution outside the social and cultural realms. (2) As sociologists/ anthropologists, how can we undertake ethnography of the state - how can we see and represent it? They discuss this through a (non-exclusive) series of terms that change from year to year and the interests of the students and that are examined through both theoretical and ethnographic texts: State and stateless societies; the public and private spheres; state and citizen; state and subject; state and civil society; state and class/gender/race formations; the nation-state and boundaries/ marginalities; the state and community; the liberal state and the welfare state; the state and everyday life; the instrumental and the symbolic of rule; social order and resistance; social policy, law, and governance; development and state imperatives; patronage and corruption; state as repressive apparatus or an expression of social will and as productive power. Students are expected to apply the conceptual and ethnographic learnings in their presentations and term papers, which focus on empirical problematics in the context of India or another region. Topics covered include:

1. Classical themes
2. Institutions, practices, processes
3. Hegemonies, consensus, boundaries
4. Power, resistance, revolution

15. AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

This is an advanced course on agrarian structure that deals with theoretical debates on social formation. It includes extensive readings on feudalism, capitalism and commercialisation. Recent debates on agrarian reforms in India and in countries like China, Japan are an integral part of the course. Two other topics in the course are: (I) agrarian crises and farmers' suicides, (II) different forms of peasant resistance. The course includes:

1. Agrarian Structure and the Political Order:
 - (i) Feudalism
 - (ii) Colonialism
 - (iii) Capitalism
2. Commercialization of Agriculture: Social Aspects
3. Agrarian Unrest

16. TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION, GENDER AND IDENTITIES

Transnational population flows, national boundaries, notions of cultural belonging and ethical questions concerning right to life are some of the critical issues taken up in this course under the following topics:

1. Crossing Borders: Belonging, Home, Exile, Exclusion
2. Gender and the Politics of Identity
3. States, Citizenship, Control and Flexibility
4. Cultural Flows and Identities.

17. SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SUBALTERNEITY: HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

While recognizing that social discrimination can be multi-faceted, this course traces (and compares) trajectories of some specific socially excluded groups in varied social contexts. Historical and contemporary writings which contribute to marginalization of such groups will be studied, as well as those which document attempts at redressal. Through a study of political movements by subaltern groups, the dialectical relationship between such

movements and social policy is delineated. The course would help students to understand surrounding debates and concepts on social realities and practices. The selected readings would help them (re) look at subaltern studies and address social, economic and political dynamics in society.

1. Conceptualising Discrimination
 - (i) Dimensions
 - (ii) Categories and contrasts
2. Constructions of hierarchies:
 - (i) Colonial lineages
 - (ii) Anthropology and ethnography
 - (iii) Popular representations
3. Debating genres of marginality and identity
 - (i) Caste and Race
 - (ii) Nomads and Gypsies
 - (iii) Tribes, indigenous people and aborigines
4. Redressals, rebellions and negotiations
 - (i) Affirmative Action policies in different social contexts
 - (ii) Social and political movements

18. GENDER AND POPULATION: PERSPECTIVES ON REPRODUCTION, SEXUALITY, AND POWER

This course will allow students to explore the intersections between demographic and sociological approaches to gender and population, encouraging them to develop comparative, interdisciplinary and critical perspectives in their research. Major topics covered include:

1. Population and society
2. Sexuality and the cultural politics of reproduction
3. Birth control: policy, power and rights

19. WOMEN IN INDIAN SOCIETY

One of the early courses on gender, designed in consultation with Prof Aparna Basu of the Department of History, this course looks at the development of the feminist movement in India, its cultural roots and social contexts. The course looks at the nature of work, labour and reproduction, and the issues of reform, policy and political voice. They are discussed under topics such as:

1. The significance of women's studies
2. Women and social structure
3. Cultural perceptions of women
4. Movements and organization

20. ART, MODERNISM, AND THE PUBLIC

This course engages with the radical art movements in the 20th century onward that are for the first time able to conceptualize art history from a global perspective. Given that art history is notoriously Occidentalist the course attempts to rectify this balance by bringing in anthropological works on art from other societies and by scholars other than art historians to provide a critical perspective on the theories of art. The course is divided under the following headings:

1. Art and its Publics
 - (i) Refinement and the question of taste.
 - (ii) Art and philosophy in European culture

- (iii) Art worlds and the Culture Industry
- 2. Aesthetic Experience and the Power of the Negative
 - (i) The decadence debate
 - (ii) The re-definition of beauty
 - (iii) Primitivism and Post-modernism
- 3. Modernism and Indian Art

21. ETHNOGRAPHIES OF VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM EUROPE AND ASIA

Collective Violence has come into focus worldwide in the last two decades. South Asia has been the site of significant works on this subject which are also included in our curriculum at both M.A. and M.Phil levels. In this course an attempt has been made to shift the focus to Europe, not only for a much needed comparative perspective but also to be able to reflect critically on Europe from a South Asian perspective. Topics discussed include:

- 1. The Case for a Sociology of Violence
- 2. Borders and Boundaries
- 3. Narratives and Memory
- 4. Gender and Subjectivity
- 5. Forms of Life, Forms of Death

22. GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

This course is an introduction to the critical questions and concepts in the study of women and gender in India. It seeks to build an understanding of the intersections of gender, class, caste, ethnicity and sexuality, while looking at gender and patriarchy in everyday life. It does this through an exploration of areas that have been critical to both feminist scholarship and women's movements in India such as sexuality, marriage, property, work, and gendered violence. Further, the attempt is to try to understand the nature of engagement with these issues in the women's movement in India. The thematic division of the course is as follows:

- 1. Tracing the category 'Gender'
- 2. The production of gendered bodies
 - (i) Science and the gendering of bodies
 - (ii) Power and the disciplining of bodies
 - (iii) Multiple sexualities
 - (iv) Temporarily-able and differently-able bodies
- 3. Marriage, family and the intimate
 - (i) Romance, conjugality and choice marriages
 - (ii) Gender, social reform, and colonial law
 - (iii) Religion and personal laws
 - (iv) Violence in the family
- 4. Gendering class, caste and work
 - (i) Gender, households, labour and resources
 - (ii) Gender, globalisation and work
 - (iii) Caste and gender
- 5. Gender, politics and movements
 - (i) Gender and political power
 - (ii) Gender and social/religious movements
 - (iii) Women's movements

23. SOCIOLOGY OF PUNJAB

This course seeks to problematise the understanding of a region, sociologically, politically, culturally, and geographically. The study of three Punjabs' – East, West and Diasporic - draw on a range of disciplinary perspectives, including history, diaspora and migration studies, art and aesthetics, and agricultural economics. The primary focus is on the contemporary and topics covered include:

1. Mapping Punjab: East, West, Transnational
2. Defining histories, contemporary politics
 - (i) Partitions
 - (ii) Language and territoriality
 - (iii) Radical politics
3. Agrarian Punjab
 - (i) Transformations
 - (ii) Cultures of agriculture
 - (iii) Migrations and agrarian social formations
4. Producing Punjabiyaat
 - (i) Cinematic representations
 - (ii) Body styles and symbols
 - (iii) Cities and urbanities
 - (iv) The vulgar realm

24. SOCIOLOGY OF SCHOOLING: PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICE

This course provides a comprehensive exploration into the different sociological constructs of schooling as well as in its practice, from the point of view of different stakeholders: students, teachers, policy makers, community. In other words, it aims to develop an understanding of schooling both in terms of what schooling aims to do as well as of the processes and activities that make up life at school. Through a range of readings in a comparative context, students can understand the relationship between childhood and schooling. Using autobiography and ethnography, our understanding of the processes of schooling as they are experienced by children from different communities and socio-cultural backgrounds is further expanded. Schools embody power as much as they do virtue and this is both conceptually examined as well as unraveled through innovative educational perspectives as well as from different ethnographies in multiple contexts. Aspects of pedagogy and the textbook culture that prevails in Indian society are explored and contribute to an understanding of both curriculum and method in educational processes. Topics covered include:

1. The School as an Entity
 - (i) Defining schools
 - (ii) Locating schools
2. The School: Practice and Process
 - (i) Schooling and childhood
 - (ii) Cultivating virtue
 - (iii) Embodying power
 - (iv) Socio-cultural life
3. Pedagogy and Transmission
 - (i) What is pedagogy?
 - (ii) The culture of the text-book
 - (iii) The politics of transmission
4. Schooling alternatives
 - (i) Deschooling society
 - (ii) Critical pedagogy
 - (iii) Rural Initiatives

25. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIETY

This is an advanced seminar course that introduces students to the range of sociological perspectives on climate change and society. Students will read and discuss a range of debates surrounding climate change such as denialism, risk, vulnerability, resilience, ethics, justice, etc. They will examine how societies understand and respond to climate change, and learn to analyze the values, assumptions, and perceptions that contribute to our understanding of climate change. The course will engage with discourses of climate change, policies, institutions and practices at individual, intermediate and international levels. Each year the course may also take up one focus area for in-depth analysis, workshops and research. Specific topics covered will vary each year based on student interests.

26. CULTURE, REPRODUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY

This objective of this course is to examine the intersection of culture, reproduction and technology, drawing from a variety of perspectives. It will examine developments in demography, feminist theory and science and technology studies. Apart from familiarizing students to the history of debates at this intersection, the course will also engage in contemporary debates on issues such as IVF and surrogacy

27. SOCIOLOGY OF LAW

This course places legal processes - including the making of laws, interpretation and implementation - within a particular social/political/ economic context. Students will study legal institutions as social institutions; understand the legal system as a cultural phenomenon and critically examine judgments and legal issues relating to contested issues in contemporary India.

28. TEXTS OF OUR TIMES

Students taking this course will examine one or more seminal texts (which will change every semester). They will also study readings around this text, those that contextualize them historically and intellectually, as well as critiques of these texts. Students will look at the following: 1.) The central argument of the text and how it is constructed through different chapters, 2.) What is the literature - theoretical and empirical – the author is responding to? 3.) What are the sources/evidence on which the author draws? How has he/she read the sources?

29. BIOPOLITICS AND SOCIAL LIFE

Bio-politics is an influential theoretical framing as well as an empirical perspective that builds from a base where the “knowledge” of “human species-life” becomes the access point from which to understand how strategies of power, government, ethics and the economy influence the conduct of social life. Associated with Michel Foucault and his oeuvre, bio-politics is classically approached as assemblies of multiple, heterogeneous forces of power and its effects, especially when they underline the conditions of life which are subject to modern government and which, in turn, offer spaces of political potential. *Bio-politics* then considers the relationship between the political with life and the potential of that relationship in understanding the social. Over the last 3-4 decades, the biopolitical approach has been applied and interpreted in widely diverse contexts, and has been found crucial in informing issues such as contemporary local or global governance, health and medical practices, social

inclusion and exclusion, war and violence, citizenship and sovereignty, gendered living, surveillance and control, digital technologies of life management, economic or legal practices and much more.

This course begins with a thorough understanding of the foundations of bio-politics and will proceed to understand how they inform the formulation and imagination of the social. It will privilege the various ways in which sociological and social anthropological research and writing have used the biopolitical analytic as an intervention. Moreover, the intent of the course is to understand the critical implications of bio-politics from a non-western perspective, in this case, India. Illustratively, contexts of big data, digitized citizenship, strategies of social inclusion - exclusion, financial re-modulations etc. in India are amenable to a biopolitical analysis and can be employed in a critical exploration of the bio-power framework.

30. Texts in Modern Indian Social Thought

This course is designed to facilitate a text-based critical appreciation of modern Indian social thought. The term “social thought” is broadly construed and not limited by any consideration other than the availability of primary texts. In a given semester, three to four such texts and their authors would be studied, with the framework for discussion determined by the interests of the instructor and the students opting for the course. The overall objective is to promote first-hand knowledge of what was written and said by socially influential thinkers and leaders who are not usually included in the sociological canon.