

Professor Rachel Brulé
Politics, NYU Abu Dhabi Social Sciences Division
Email: rachel.brule at nyu.edu

Office: Building A5, Rm 139
Office hours: by appointment
Course room: CC_W008

POLSC-AD 185J: Gender Revolutions & The State in India

This January term course asks two questions: Why do states conduct top-down reforms for gender equality? What are these interventions' impact? We study these questions in the context of India, the world's largest and most influential developing democracy, with some of the most complex, puzzling variation in economic and social rights. Specifically, we examine reforms that equalize women's rights to a core economic and social commodity: land. These represent the hardest and most important reforms for the state to implement. We will travel to India to interview top government officials and leaders responsible for implementing gender-equalizing land inheritance reform across India's diverse cultural, economic, and political landscape.

Requirements

The course meets daily from Monday January 4 – Thursday, January 21. The second week, January 10-14 will be devoted to a field trip to India. This week-long trip will require extensive local field research. When based in Abu Dhabi, course sessions will take place from 1:00 – 4:00 PM in the Campus Center, Room W008. These will be supplemented by two hour long morning peer mentoring sessions, and field trips, for which we will meet at the Welcome Center at times that will be announced by the instructor. Grading is based on class participation and discussion questions (20%), guest interviews (10%), discussion and critical papers (20%), and three assignments related to an original research project that each student will conduct during the second half of the course: a 5-7 page research proposal (20%), a 15 minute presentation to the class (15%) and a 5 page write up of results (15%).

This is a discussion-based seminar. You must come to class prepared to discuss the readings actively. Please feel free to take advantage of my office hours to talk about questions concerning assignments and comments you have about course readings and topics. Specific requirements for the course follow:

I. PARTICIPATION (30%)

Attendance and participation in discussions (10%): Attendance includes coming to every class on time, commenting on readings, and active listening while in class. The course requires the participation of all class members; lateness or absence disrupts the course plan. In addition, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and critique all of the required readings. Please be sure that you understand the reading thoroughly and absorb the main points and arguments the authors make. It is helpful when reading analytically to consider the similarities and differences between the authors' positions as well as the way the pieces inform each other. You will be expected to offer your insights into these arguments during each class.

Discussion questions/comments on NYU Classes (10%): I will create discussion boards on NYU Classes for all of the class sessions beginning with the third class meeting. Post your critical comments or questions about that day's readings. Daily reading questions or responses are due every day two hours before class starts. You do not need to submit your questions on the day that you will be responsible for leading the discussion (instead you will write a short, critical response, see below). Please post approximately three questions OR a 1-paragraph response to the day's readings to the course site. I encourage you to respond to comments made by your classmates. You will not get credit for late submissions.

Guest interviews (10%): Throughout this course, we will have meetings with guest speakers, mainly in person. You will be expected to come prepared to ask several questions of our guests during each session. Asking good questions is a key element of academic inquiry and professional life. Practicing this technique and honing your skills as questioners is a critical aspect of improving your academic work and professional skills.

II. DISCUSSION AND CRITICAL PAPERS (20%)

Lead 2-3 discussions with a partner and submit critical paper each time. In addition to participating actively in discussions, you will be asked to lead/facilitate the discussion with a colleague during the first half of class for 2-3 sessions (sign-up sheet will be distributed in the second day of class). Your goal is to engage your classmates in a lively and critical discussion about the readings. To do so, you may launch the class with a short presentation that includes the following elements: (1) A very brief—NO LONGER THAN 5 MINUTES—overview of the main points you gathered from the reading; (2) a short list of questions designed to critique the readings. You should include references to the questions your colleagues have posted on the discussion board for that week; and (3) You may also use props such as a short video clip, game or group activity that you have designed, or a compelling image to prompt thought-provoking discussion. In the presentation, you will be evaluated for content, creativity, and pedagogy.

Write two critical papers: For two of the classes in which you lead the discussion, you are responsible for submitting one 4-page critical paper for each class analyzing and reviewing the readings. **These papers are due by 10pm the day before you lead the discussion.**

III. ORIGINAL RESEARCH (40%)

Research Proposal (20%): Each student will be responsible for writing a research proposal for their own original analysis of social media data. The proposal will be 5-7 pages, will survey the relevant literature from both political science and social media, and will outline the types of data analysis the student hopes to conduct for the project. The research proposal is due on Sunday, January 10 before class begins.

Research Presentation (15%): Each student will give a 15 minute presentation of their research to the class on the last day of the course (Thursday, January 24) using Power point slides. Further instruction about the presentation will be made available during class.

Write up of Results (15%): Each student will be required to hand in a 5 page description of the results of their research prior to the beginning of the final class. These results will form the basis

of the research presentation. The write up of results will be due before the start of class on Tuesday, January 22.

Field Trips: This course contains one-to-two field trip(s) to the workplaces of relevant political figures in the UAE to better understand the importance and constraints of social reform in the local context. We will also have a four-to-five day trip to India in the second week of the class so that the students can interview members of relevant political parties, activists, and members of the judiciary. Students are graded on the quality of their engagement (guest interviews count as 10% of the final grade; these interviews should also contribute to the students' original research, which is 40% of the final grade), and attendance is mandatory. Students who fail to attend these field trips will have their overall grade for the course reduced by 1/3 for every trip-day missed.

Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will learn about (a) theories and past research on gender-equalizing social reform and social reform more broadly; (b) historical and contemporary social movements in India and around the world; (c) the historical and contemporary status of women in India and around the world; and (e) how to conduct qualitative field research and analyze survey data. These skills should prove valuable in preparing students for (i) further academic study in political science, history, sociology, or economics; (ii) conducting their own research on a wide range of topics using survey data and qualitative materials; and (iii) internship and job opportunities with social activist groups, politicians and political consultants, and research institutes.

Teaching Methodologies

Students will be exposed to a variety of teaching methodologies, including traditional lectures, seminar-based discussions, field-trips to meet with social activists, politicians and judges, and interactive methodological tutorials to learn how to analyze survey data and conduct qualitative field research. Students will put these skills into use during a weeklong trip to Delhi and Rajasthan, where they will have the opportunity to interview prominent individuals in the field of gender-equalizing social reform. Students will present their observations and perspectives on the future of such reform through oral presentation of original research to the class, and written presentation of original research in short paper formats.

Books

The following books are required for this course and have been ordered for you:

- Kohli, Atul. *The state and poverty in India: The politics of reform*. Cambridge University Press. 1989
- Drèze, Jean & Amartya Sen. *India: Development and Participation*. Oxford University Press. 2002.

- Evans, Peter. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton University Press. 1995.
- Sarkar, Sumit & Tanika Sarkar. *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: A Reader*. Indiana University Press. 2008.
- Ray, Raka. *Fields Of Protest: Women's Movement in India (Social Movements, Protest and Contention)*. University Of Minnesota Press. 1999
- Brulé, Rachel. *States and Gender Revolutions: The Political Economy Gender Equalizing Reform in India*. Book Manuscript.

Academic Integrity

I take academic integrity very seriously. All assignments must adhere to standards of academic ethics. Your work must reflect your own writing and ideas. According to NYU Abu Dhabi's Statement on Academic Integrity, you violate the principle of academic integrity by turning in work that does not reflect your own ideas or includes text that is not your own; when you submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from the instructor; when you receive help on a take-home examination when you are expected to work independently; when you cheat on exams, and when you plagiarize material.

Any student who submits work that constitutes plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions, which range from failure of the course to dismissal from the school.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Day 1: Monday, January 4: Course Introduction

- *What is state-initiated social reform?*
- *What is the relationship between social reform and democracy?*
- *What is particular to social reform that aims to bring about gender equality?*
- *What challenges does reform face in developing and transitioning democracies?*
- *What are alternatives to state-initiated social reform that aims to bring about equality in gender and/or in other domains?*

Readings: Manuscript introduction; Drèze and Sen, 2002: Introduction & Chapter 10.

Day 2: Tuesday, January 5: Origins of Social Reform

- *Introduction to two different origins of reform*
- *In-depth discussion of reactive reform, with focus on varied gender-equalizing reforms*
- *Review: gender equalizing reforms in the UAE*

Readings & Book Chapter 2

Day 3: Wednesday, January 6: Nature of Social Reform in the UAE

- *How closely is our understanding of social reform tied to our understanding of local civil society?*
- Field trip related to social reform in the UAE/ interview with relevant official (e.g. Zaki)

Day 4: Thursday, January 7: Origins of Social Reform

- *In-depth discussion of proactive reform*
- *Discussion of implementation procedures: what would we need to know? How to study?*
- *Review: gender equalizing reforms in India, with focus on the HSAA*

Readings & Book Manuscript Chapter 3

Day 5: Sunday, January 10: Impact of Social Reform

- *Introduction to two different determinants of impact*
- *In-depth discussion of political gatekeepers*

Readings & Book Manuscript Chapter 4

Day 6: Monday, January 11:

- *Tutorial on qualitative research methods, ethics, & multi-method research (linking qualitative and quantitative research methods)*
- *India Orientation*

Readings: TBA

Day 7: Tuesday, January 12: Impact of Social Reform

- *In-depth discussion of beneficiaries' embeddedness*

Readings & Book Manuscript Chapters 5 & 6

INDIA TRIP: Wednesday, January 13 - Sunday, January 17

Day 8: Wednesday, January 13: DELHI, Part I.

- Interviews with relevant political strategists/politicians, activists and commentators
 - Jean Drèze
 - Sonia Gandhi?
 - [other relevant policy makers]
 - Justice R. M. Lodha
 - Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar
 - NC Saxena
 - Arvind Jain (Lawyer & women's rights advocate)
 - Organisations:
 - Landesa- Ashok Sircar, Diana Fletschner
 - Partners of Law in Development
 - United Nations Women India

Day 9: Thursday, January 14: DELHI, Part II.

Day 10: Friday, January 15: RAJASTHAN - Jaipur

- Interviews with relevant political strategists/politicians, activists and lawyers
 - Rajasthan State Human Rights Commission
 - Member of Rajasthan's Panchayati Raj Commission
 - Member of NGO working to mobilize women in local governance

Day 11: Saturday, January 16: ANDHRA PRADESH – Hyderabad

- *Interview with Jamuna Paruchuri, National Rural Livelihoods Mission, who developed Social Action Committees for Andhra Pradesh's Society for the Elimination of Rural Poverty and is currently scaling up this model across Indian states*
- *Interviews with relevant State politicians (ex. K. Raju, Scheduled Caste Chairperson for the Congress Party (AICC); Dr. Daggubati Purandeswari, Daughter of NTR, MP for Congress from Visakhapatnam, AP; Minister of State in Ministry of Human Resource Development)*
- *Interview with member of the Deccan Development Society (one of earliest NGOs focused on organizing women)*

Day 12: Sunday, January 17: ANDHRA PRADESH – Villages in Krishna district

- *Interviews with female heads of local government (pradhans or sarpanches), members of Social Action Committees, and local activists*
- *Student-facilitated focus group discussions*

[Monday, January 18: Rest & Write up field notes]

Day 13: Tuesday, January 19: Research methods – getting to results

- *Discussion of field research challenges*
- *Methodological tutorial: linking quantitative & qualitative analysis*
- *Cases drawn from Book Manuscript Chapters 3-5*
- *Student-led workshops: theory testing via field notes' analysis*

Readings: TBA

Day 14: Wednesday, January 20: Peer critique of field research findings; practice presentations

No Readings.

Day 15: Thursday, January 21: Final research presentations

No Readings.