

Discipline Specific Course

DSC-8 : ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/ Practice		
Ancient and Medieval Indian Political Thought DSC-8	4	3	1	-	NA	NA

Learning Objectives

The political thought which constitutes the dominant element of political Science is essentially euro genetic and Eurocentric. What we study in our universities are ones which evolved and developed with European and Anglo-American tradition. The conceptual framework and discourses were product of societies and the forces amidst which they took birth and the shape. That does not mean that India had no tradition of political thinking. This paper seeks to critically engage with writers of ancient India who produced wonderful treatise on the statecraft and several elements of government and governance. This includes the concept of monarchy, the forms of government, the role of the state and state individual relationship.

Learning outcomes

After reading the course the students would be able to answer

- What were the major institutions of government in ancient India and how did they function?
- How thinkers like Manu, Shukra, Brihaspati and Kautilya perceived the role of statecraft in society?
- What was the Nitisar tradition? How did it mark a difference from the Arthashastra tradition?
- The students will be able to answer how Kabir epitomised the syncretic traditions of India.
- What was the political and economic ideas of Tiruvallur and what was his take on ethics?

SYLLABUS OF DSC- 8

UNIT – I

Foundations of Indian Political Thought:

- An Overview on Sources of Indian Political Thought
- Cultural and Territorial conception of India
- Distinctive Features of Indian Political Thought

UNIT – II

Manu:

- Authenticity of Manu smriti (Talking Point)
- Social Laws and Conception of Justice

UNIT – III

Brihaspati: Statecraft, Justice, Inter-state Relations

UNIT – IV

Shukra/Usana

- Talking Point: Debate on the authenticity of Shukra-Niti
- The Concept of Kingship and Statecraft in Shukra-Niti

UNIT – V

Kautilya: Theory of State

UNIT – VI

Aggannasutta (DighaNikaya): Theory of kingship

UNIT – VII

Tiruvalluvar: Ethical Life and Politics

UNIT – VIII

Basavanna

UNIT – IX

Adi Shankracharya: Advaita

UNIT – X

Kabir and Guru Nanak: Syncretism

UNIT – XI

Abu'lFazl: Monarchy

Essential/recommended readings

Unit 1: Foundations of Indian Political Thought:

V. R. Mehta (1992) Introduction, in Foundation of Indian Political Thought, Delhi, Manohar, pp. 1-11.

Brown, D. M. (1953). The Premises of Indian Political Thought. The Western Political Quarterly, 6(2), 243–249.

Suda, J. P. (1970). Dharma: Its Nature and Role in Ancient India. The Indian Journal of Political Science, 31(4), 356–366.

Varma, Vishwanath Prasad (1953). Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi.

Flood, Gavin (2003). The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, UK.