

Global Initiative of Academic Network (GIAN) Programme

Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya (A Central University)
Sagar, Madhya Pradesh

Report

Title of GIAN Course	RACE AND CASTE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: THEORIES AND OUTCOMES FROM USA AND INDIA	
GIAN Course ID	174046N02	
Period of Course	22-28 December, 2017	
Name and Department of Faculty		
Course Coordinator		
Name	Dr. Sarvendra Yadav, Assistant Professor	
Department	Department of Anthropology, Dr. Harisingh Gour University Sagar	
Name and Affiliation of International Faculty		
Name	Dr. Aseem Hasnain	
Affiliation	Department of Sociology, Bridgewater State University (BSU), Massachusetts, USA.	
Structure of the Course		
Duration of course (1 week or 2 weeks)	1 Week	
Number of credits (1 or 2)	1 Credit	
Total number of lectures in the course	10	
Number of lectures by International Faculty	8	
Number of lectures by Host Faculty	2	
Number of hours of laboratory/tutorial sessions	10	
Participants of the Course		
Number of student participants	34	
Number of participants from Industry/ Research Organisations	0	
Number of Faculty participants	2	
Total Number of participants	36	
Number of participants who credited for the course	32	

Brief Summary

Scholarship on Race and racism constitutes an important field in the social sciences in the USA that has led to impressive research and theorization for several decades now. Similarly, caste and caste-based discrimination are important themes in scholarship in the Indian subcontinent. USA and India are the oldest and largest democracies respectively, and both have diverse populations that differ by religion, ethnicity, race/caste, language, and culture. However, the almost parallel concepts of Race and Caste, and related social outcomes such as racism and casteism are usually seen as distinct from each other, and there are only a few recent attempts at building theoretical, conceptual, and empirical bridges between them. Both these scholarships can learn from each other, and there is potential for refining concepts based on such comparisons.

Objectives:

1. Expose participants to the historical literature on Caste in India, and Race in USA as these concepts are understood in the broader social sciences, and how this understanding has changed over time.
2. Introduce participants to contemporary debates on affirmative action policies that have been proposed and implemented in both these contexts, as well as how these debates have contributed to changes in affirmative action policies over time.
3. Review empirical findings on affirmative action outcomes in India and USA and understand the benefits and limitations of such policies.
4. Participants will be able to discuss race, caste and related outcomes with academic as well as general audience outside the classroom.
5. Participants will be able to design lectures and class-activities for their own course syllabi that they can offer in the future.

This interdisciplinary course discussed literatures about both these sets of concepts, focusing on similarities and differences. It included a historically grounded review of theories that have been used to define, study, and understand these concepts, emphasizing the reasons that caused a shift in such understanding. It also reviewed debates on affirmative action in the USA and reservations in India and how they have evolved over time based on policy shifts and popular perceptions. Finally, this course connected these theoretical ideas and policies with data on actual outcomes that have been witnessed on the ground.

This course was proposed for a six-day schedule, with lectures and tutorials spread over the first five days, and the sixth day was reserved for an exam. The course ran in a workshop mode where participants played an active role in contributing to overall learning goals. Each of the five days included a separate learning module where participants read assigned materials, listened to lectures, participated in class activities, and took part in small group discussions, and plenary debriefings. Lectures were delivered in an interactive manner so as to embrace questions and clarifications that participants raised. This interactive method created a high-impact learning atmosphere aimed at better outcomes. Tutorials were utilized to engage participants in active learning exercises, and discussions aimed at complementing lectures. These tutorials focused on problem solving and analysis that was done by participants in small groups.

This course achieved the desired goals and resulted in a long-lasting collaboration between the faculty and students of these two prestigious universities of India and USA.