Course title: Electoral Processes, Institutions and Democracy			
Course code: PPS 174	**No. of credits:** 3	**L-T-P:** 42-03-00	**Learning hours:** 45
Pre-requisite course code and title (if any): None			
Department: Department of Policy & Management Studies			
Course coordinator(s): Dr. Gaurika Chugh		**Course instructor(s):** Dr. Gaurika Chugh	
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Course type: Elective		**Course offered in:** 2nd Semester	

Course description

Elections are sine qua non for engendering democratic ethos and fostering legitimacy and political participation. Yet, the true essence of democracy needs to transcend beyond the mere existence of political democracy to strengthening of laws and institutions for a just, accountable and responsible democratic governance. This course examines the nature and working of the electoral processes and its institutions through a critical lens by exploring how laws, institutions and political actors interact to sustain the democratic ethos. The course is divided into four modules encapsulating the role of political processes, law and institutions in electoral governance. The first module provides a theoretical foundation for understanding electoral democracy through a study of different models of democracy and the role of elections in fostering representation, legitimacy and public participation. It also examines public choice approach to understand voter behaviour and role of politicians as self-maximizing individuals. The second module provides an examination of the legal and institutional framework for electoral governance in India through the study of Election Commission of India, its regulatory expansionism and why there is an urgent need for accountability in the working of electoral institutions to achieve substantive democracy. The third module critically examines the shift in the nature and working of parties and party politics in India. The last module discusses the contemporary challenges in strengthening political processes and electoral governance in India.

Learning objectives:

- To introduce students to key theoretical concepts to the study of democratic theory and electoral processes within the public policy discipline.
- To provide critical understanding of legal and institutional frameworks in electoral governance in India.
- To enable students to analyze contemporary challenges in India's electoral democracy and explore pathways for strengthening democratic institutions.

Course content

Module	Topic	L	T	P
1.	**Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for Electoral Democracy** • Models of Democracy: Classical Democracy; Liberal and Participatory Democracy; Representative Democracy; Substantive Democracy; Democratic Elitism. • Functions of Elections: Political Choice, Political participation, Support-Building and Linkage Patterns • Legitimacy and Political Participation • Public choice approach, Spatial Theory of Voting	10	0	0
2.	**Legal and Institutional Framework for Electoral Processes in India** • Election Commission of India: Structure, functions & Regulatory Expansionism • Representation of People's Act 1951 • Decentralization and Local Democracy: 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment • Need for electoral reforms: Accountability and Transparency	12	0	0

3.	**Parties & Party Politics in India: Role of Ethics, Law & Morality** • One-Party Dominant System, Congress System and its decline, Era of Multi-Party System • Politics of Representation, Post-1989 Mandal Politics • Rise of BJP and Hindu Majoritarianism • Regionalism and Language Politics • Coalition Politics, Interest Articulation: Role of lobbies, interest groups and business cartels • Electoral laws, Model Code of Conduct (MCC), Opinion Polls, Exit Polls and ethical considerations • Political defections: Anti-Defection Law (52nd Constitutional Amendment Act 1985) and its implications on Indian Democracy with some case studies. • Landmark Supreme Court Judgements in Electoral Law & Governance: *Padi Kaushik Reddy & Ors. v. State of Telangana & Ors*., 2025 (4) SCC 481; *Association for Democratic Reform[s] v. Union of India*, 2024 INSC 113; *Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly & Ors.*, 2020 2 SCC 617.	12	3	0
4.	**Contemporary Challenges to Electoral Governance** • Criminalization of Politics: Role of money & muscle power • Gender and Identity Politics • Delimitation, One Nation One Election and its implications on Federalism • Rise of Political Consulting and its impact on democratic processes • Digital transformation & new social media	8		0
	Total	**42**	**3**	**0**

Evaluation criteria:

Course grades will be based on the following criteria:

- **Minor Test-1:** Short-Answer Type Questions/Quizzes/MCQs (20%)
- **Minor Test-2:** Guided Reading and Presentation of Case Studies (30%)
- **Major Test:** Written Test/Term Paper Submission and Presentation (50%)

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, candidates would be able to:

1. Understand the fundamental concepts and political processes that are critical to strengthen the democratic ethos (All evaluations)
2. Critically examine the legal and institutional framework for electoral governance in India (All evaluations)

Pedagogical approach

Classroom lectures; Student Seminars; Invited talks from Legal and Governance Experts in particular domains including Psephologists, Practitioners and Senior/Superannuated Govt. Officers. Visit to the Election Commission of India and interaction with officials. The learning expectation is to enhance critical and informed understanding.

Suggested Readings

Module 1:

- Held, D. (2006). *Models of democracy* (3rd ed.). Stanford University Press.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1942). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. Harper & Brothers.
- Habermas, J. (1996). Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy. MIT Press.
- Palmer, N. D. (Ed.). (1975). *Elections and political development.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Morris-Jones, W. H. (1989). *Government and politics of India.* Cambridge University Press.
- Mackenzie, W. J. M. (1958). *Free elections: An elementary textbook* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003492061
- Rosenau, J. N. (1969). *The drama of politics: Actors, audiences, and agendas.* Free Press.
- Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis.* Cambridge University Press.
- Sartori, G. (1987). *The Theory of Democracy Revisited.* Chatham House.
- Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political Order in Changing Societies.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Duverger, M. (1954). *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State.* London: Methuen.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. Harper & Row.
- Buchanan, J. M., & Tullock, G. (1962). *The calculus of consent: Logical foundations of constitutional democracy*. University of Michigan Press.

Module 2:

- Singh, U. K., & Roy, A. (2019). Election Commission of India: Institutionalising democratic uncertainties. Oxford University Press.
- Kapur, D., Mehta, P. B., & Vaishnav, M. (Eds.). (2017). Rethinking public institutions in India. Oxford University Press.
- Kumar, S. (2021). Elections in India: An overview (1st ed.). Routledge India.
- Quraishi, S. Y. (2014). *An undocumented wonder: The making of the great Indian election* (First ed.). Rupa Publications India.
- Singh, A. (2022). Revisiting innovations in governance. Indian Journal of Public Administration, 68(3), 394–408. https://doi.org/10.1177/00195561221092879
- Panchu, S. (2009, February 28). Free and fair election commissioners? Economic and Political Weekly, 44(9), 8–9. https://www.epw.in/journal/2009/09/commentary/free-and-fair-election-commissioners.html
- Panda, K. (2017). *Political parties in India: Recent trends and changing working*. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26670138
- Chhibber, P. K., & Nooruddin, I. (2004). *Do party systems count? The number of parties and government performance in the Indian states. Comparative Political Studies, 37*(2), 152–187.
- Mehta, P. B. (2006). *The rise of judicial sovereignty. Journal of Democracy, 18*(2), 70–83.
- Austin, G. (2003). *Working a democratic constitution: The Indian experience.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sharma, R. (2018). The evolution of the Election Commission of India: Political context and institutional design. *Economic and Political Weekly, 53*(3), 59–66. https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/3/special-articles/evolution-election-commission-india.html
- Kumar, A. P. (2025, August 24). *Balancing privacy and accountability. Economic and Political Weekly, 60*(34). https://doi.org/10.71279/epw.v60i34.45807
- Bhaskar, V. (2017, November 4). *Black money in politics: Why the Election Commission should seize the day. Economic & Political Weekly, 52*(44), 31-35.

Module 3:

- Kothari, R. (1970). *Politics in India.* New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Manor, J. (1999). *The political economy of democratic decentralization.* Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Yadav, Y., & Palshikar, S. (2003). From hegemony to convergence: Party system and electoral politics in the Indian states, 1952–2002. *Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, 15*(1–2), 5–44.

- Jaffrelot, C. (2003). *India's silent revolution: The rise of the lower castes in North India.* New Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Hasan, Z. (Ed.). (2002). *Parties and party politics in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sridharan, E. (2012). *Coalition politics and democratic consolidation in Asia.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kothari, R. (1964). *The Congress 'System' in India*. *Asian Survey*, 4(12), 1161–1173. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2642550
- Singh, M. P. (1992). *The dilemma of the new Indian party system*. *Asian Survey*, 32(7), 594-613. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2645148
- Rudolph, S. H., & Rudolph, L. I. (2012). *Caste associations, identity politics, India, democracy*. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/23266850
- Panda, K. (2017). *Political parties in India: Recent trends and changing working*. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26670138
- Kumar, S. (2018). *Anti-defection law in India: A study in constitutional engineering. Indian Journal of Public Administration, 64*(3), 445–460.
- Rai, S. (2014). *Political defections and party system in India: The evolving trends. Economic and Political Weekly, 49*(40), 52–60.
- Bhattacharya, H. (2019). *Party politics and defections in Indian states: A governance perspective. India Review, 18*(4), 333–355.

Module 4:

- Kumar, A. P. (2025). Balancing privacy and accountability. Economic & Political Weekly, 60(34). https://doi.org/10.71279/epw.v60i34.45807
- Roy, A., & Singh, U. K. (2021). Elections in a pandemic: Role of the Election Commission of India. Economic & Political Weekly, 56(21).
- Rai, P. (2011, January 15). *Electoral participation of women in India: Key determinants and barriers*. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(3), 47-55.
- Agney, G. K., & Thomas, V. (2023, November 11). Assessing the feasibility of "one nation, one election" in India. Economic and Political Weekly, 58(45–46). https://www.epw.in/journal/2023/45-46/commentary/assessing-feasibility-one-nation-one-election-india.html.
- Sajjanhar, A. (2021). *Professionalising election campaigns: The emergence of political consulting. Economic & Political Weekly, 56*(44), 33-39.
- Udupa, S. (2019, December 28). Digital disinformation and election integrity: Benchmarks for regulation. Economic & Political Weekly, 54(51). https://www.epw.in/engage/article/digital-disinformation-and-election-integrity
- Kumar, S. (2018, February 24). *Psephological fallacies of public opinion polling. Economic and Political Weekly, 53*(8).

Student responsibilities

- At least 75% attendance will be necessary to be able to appear for the final exam.
- Active classroom participation; Critical reflections and timely submission according to the evaluation criterion.

Course prepared by: Dr. Gaurika Chugh

Course reviewers

1. Prof. Amita Singh, Former Professor, Centre for the study of Law & Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.
2. Prof. Narender Kumar, Professor, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.
3. Dr. Sudhir Kumar Suthar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.