



Module introduction

L6057



School of Global Studies
Department of Anthropology

Understanding Contemporary India

Spring 2020

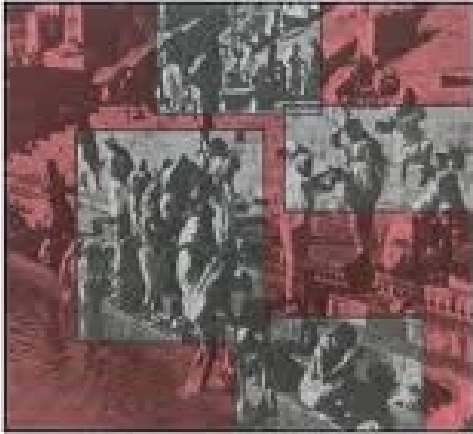
Module Convenor: Prof Filippo Osella (f.osella@sussex.ac.uk)

Louis Dumont

Homo Hierarchicus

The Caste System and Its Implications

Complete Revised English Edition



INDIAN, AMERICAN, CANADIAN,
PAKISTANI - WE DON'T CARE WHO
YOU MARRY - SO LONG AS HE IS
A BRAHMIN!

LOVE मैरिज

या

ARRANGED मैरिज



Module details

Module Convenor: Prof Filippo Osella, Room C240, ext: 3242

Email: f.osella@sussex.ac.uk

My research interests and areas of expertise include:

- changing social, caste, and gender relations in contemporary India
- modalities and expression of everyday religiosity, Hinduism and Islam in particular
- economic and political relations in post-economic liberalization India (South India in particular)
- emerging modalities of charity, philanthropy and giving, and relations between charity and economic relations
- consumption, popular culture, and emerging modalities of self-expression and social exclusion



This module is about ...

US

University of Sussex

This module introduces students to some key anthropological debates on contemporary India.

It will consider ways through which the idea of “India” has been shaped in the colonial and post-colonial period, moving on to explore everyday experiences of caste and its changing meaning and importance in contemporary India. It then focuses on expressions religiosity, and on the progressive ethnicization and politicization of religion. The themes of sexuality and intimacy will allow us to explore processes of gender-making, as well as the reproduction of society/communities via marriage practices. The module then moves on to examines the role of the rising middle classes, new consumption patterns and urban restructuring in the making of contemporary India. Particular attention will be paid here to emergence of “youth” as a social category, and their everyday experiences and aspirations.

The module then turns to explore the ways in which neoliberal values, ideas and policies are rapidly transforming Indian identity, work cultures and society. The module then engages with the nature of politics and democracy in India, especially in relation to practices of patronage and clientelism, and discusses what an anthropology of the modern Indian state consists of.



MGNREGA workers returning home after a day's work



The module might include the following topics

- 1: the making of colonial and post-colonial India
- 2: the caste system and its expressions in contemporary India
- 3: everyday religiosity and the politics of religious assertion
- 4: gender, intimacy, sexuality and love in contemporary India
- 6: the new middle classes, and emerging politics of space, culture and exclusion in India
- 7: consumption, education, friendship, leisure, and the the making of “youth cultures” in India
- 8: economic liberalization, and “neoliberal” ideologies, values and policies reshaping work cultures and working lives in India
- 9: patronage, brokerage and clientelism in the shaping of ‘politics and power’ in India
- 10: Bureaucracy, governance and the modern Indian state



Module format and assessment

The module will be taught as an interactive three-hour workshop. The format of these workshops will vary from week to week, and will include lectures, short films, presentations, debates, case studies, round table discussions and so on. Central will be regular student-led group presentations, which will require more preparation by the group facilitating.

Assessment: a 5,000-word essay. Essay topics should reflect the subject matter of the module and will be chosen in consultation with the tutor. Supervision and advice to individual students will be provided in week 7 and 12 of term, as well as during weekly office hours.