

PSC 1102 - Aspects of Sri Lanka's Government and Politics

Introduction

Political and constitutional change in the post-independence Sri Lanka has been studied by political scientists, highlighting the processes of change as well as their turning points. This course is designed to focus on some of the key thematic aspects of Sri Lanka's political change focusing on events, processes, conflicts and their political outcomes. It will also enable students to gain familiarity with the key Political Science literature on Sri Lanka.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to enable students to:

- i. Gain an understanding of the main trends in the process of political and constitutional change in post-independence Sri Lanka,
- ii. Learn about the key turning points in the processes of political change that have impacted on overall political trajectories of the country, and
- iii. Broaden their perspectives on politics of contemporary Sri Lanka.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to

- i Identify the major trends and events of Sri Lanka's political and constitutional changes,
- ii. Relate those changes to their specific socio-economic and ideological contexts, and
- iii. Understand present problems and issues in Sri Lanka's politics in relation to the history of political struggles and conflicts in the previous decades.

Course Outline

Part 1. Transition from Colonial to Post-Colonial Phase

- i. The Soulbury constitution and the basic features of the post-independence political and constitutional order.
- ii. Political and social change in the 1950's and 1960s and their impact on the political process. (The rise of intermediate classes, politics of Tamil grievances, post-colonial Sinhalese nationalism and its consequences for political change).
- iii. Republican Constitution of 1972: Its context, nature and basic features.

Part 2

Politics after 1977

- iv. Shift towards concentration of political power in the 1970s. The Presidential system under the Second Republican Constitution of 1978, its nature, institutional relations and critical responses.
- v. Constitutional reform initiatives. Contexts, proposals and consequences.

Part 3

Political Institutions and Processes

- vi. Sri Lanka's political party system and current trends.
- vii. Changes in the legislature, the Cabinet and the public service.
- viii. Ethnic conflict and civil war.

Recommended Reading

Coomaraswamy, Radika, 1996, *Ideology and the Constitution*, Colombo.

Cooray, L. J. M., 1984, *Constitutional Government of Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Lake House.

Farmer, B. H. 1963, *Ceylon: A Divided Nation*, London: Oxford University Press.

Perera, N. M., 1978, *A Critical Analysis of the Constitution of the Government of Sri Lanka*, Colombo.

Warnapala, W. A. Wishwa, 2004, *Electoral Politics in Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Godage publishers.

Wickramasinghe, Nira, 2006, *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History of Contested Identities*, Colombo: Vijitha Yapa.

Wriggins, Howard, 1960, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation*, Princeton University Press.