Course title: Indian Polity: Constitutional Foundations and Institutions			
Course code: UPS- 103	**No. of credits:** 3	**L-T-P:** 39-06-00	**Learning hours:** 45
Pre-requisite course code and title (if any): None			
Department: Department of Policy Studies			
Course coordinator(s): Dr Gaurika Chugh		**Course instructor(s): Dr Gaurika Chugh**	
Contact details: gaurika.chugh@terisas.ac.in			
Course type: Core		**Course offered in:** Ist Semester	

Course description

This course aims to acquaint students with the philosophy, foundations and institutions which are the bedrock for Constitutionalism and Rule of Law in India. The course is divided into four modules: the first module provides the foundation for understanding the philosophy of the Constitution which is defined in the Preamble and provides an understanding of the salient features of the Indian Constitution. The second module delves deeper into the functioning and powers of the different organs of the government and examines how institutions play a crucial role in defining the policy architecture of India's Constitutional Democracy. This module also delves into the relationship between constitutionalism, governance and development through landmark PILs on environment related issues. The third module provides an understanding of the principles of federalism, devolution of powers and decentralization as enshrined in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment. The last module provides an understanding of democratic governance and accountability through the role of party system and by examining the working of Constitutional bodies like ECI and CAG.

Learning objectives:

- To provide an understanding of the philosophy, features of Indian Constitution and role of Constitutional bodies
- To elucidate the working of the different organs of the government and understand it in tandem with Separation of Powers
- To analyze the division and devolution of powers between Union and States and local self-government
- To examine the challenges of fiscal federalism and devolution of powers

Course content

Module	Topic	L	T	P
1.	**The Philosophy of the Constitution** • Constituent Assembly and Making of Constitution • Objectives Resolution, Preamble, Representative Democracy, Social and Economic Justice • Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of States Policy, Fundamental Duties • Features of Constitution – Universal Adult Franchise, Parliamentary form of Government, Emergency Provisions	14	0	0
2.	**Organs of Government** • **The Legislature:** Parliament and its Composition, Bicameral Legislature, Sessions, Legislative Procedure – Types of Bills, Parliamentary Standing Committees • **The Executive:** President and Vice-President, Powers and Duties, Prime Minister, Council of Ministers, Individual and	8	06	0

	Collective Responsibility • **The Judiciary:** Supreme Court, High Court Powers and its Jurisdiction, Judicial Review and the Basic Structure Doctrine, Public Interest Litigation (PILs), Role of Tribunals • Case analysis–based dscussions on landmark PILs promoting Sustainable Development			
3.	**Federalism, Planning and Decentralization** • Division of Powers between Union and States (Seventh Schedule) • 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment, Democratic Decentralization and its Challenges • Shift from Planning Commission to NITI Aayog • Finance Commission and Fiscal Federalism, GST Council • Fifth and Sixth Schedule, Role of PESA	10	00	0
4.	**Electoral System and Constitutional Bodies** • Political Parties and Party System • Election Commission of India – Power and Functions • Role and functions of Comptroller and Auditor General of India	7	0	0
	Total	**39**	**06**	**0**

Evaluation criteria:
Course grades will be based on the following criteria:

- **Minor 1:** Short-Answer Type Questions/Quizzes/MCQs (20%)
- **Minor 2:** Group Discussion/Mock Parliament (30%)
- **Major Test:** Written Test (40%)
- **Class Participation** (10%)

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

1. Understand the features of Indian Constitution and role of institutions (All evaluations)
2. Examine the working of different organs of the government and role of Constitutional bodies (All evaluations)

Pedagogical approach
Classroom lectures; Student Seminars; Invited talks from Legal and Governance Experts in particular domains including Practitioners and Senior/Superannuated Govt. Officers. The learning expectation is to enhance critical and informed understanding.

Suggested Readings

Module 1:

Core Readings:

- Austin, G. (2010). The constituent assembly: Microcosm in action. In *The Indian constitution: Cornerstone of a nation* (pp.1-25). Oxford University Press.
- Austin, G. (2000). The social revolution and the first amendment. In Working a democratic constitution: The Indian experience (pp. 69–98). Oxford University Press.
- Bhargava, R. (2008). Introduction: Outline of a political theory of the Indian Constitution. In R. Bhargava (Ed.), *Politics and ethics of the Indian Constitution* (pp. 1–40). Oxford University Press.
- Basu, D. D. (2026). *Introduction to the Constitution of India* (28th ed.). LexisNexis.
- Baxi, U. (1991). Accumulation and legitimacy: The Indian Constitution and

state formation. *Delhi Law Review, 13*(1), 1–13.

Additional Reading:

- Chaube, S. K. (2009). *The making and working of the Indian constitution*. National Book Trust.
- Sibal, A. (2010). From niti to nyaya. Seminar, 615, 28–34.
- *The Constitution of India* (Bare Act). Ministry of Law and Justice, Legislative Department.

Module 2:

Core Readings:

- Austin, G. (1972). The Indian constitution: Cornerstone of a nation. Oxford University Press.
- Basu, D. D. (2026). Introduction to the Constitution of India (28th ed.). LexisNexis.
- Shankar, B., & Rodrigues, V. (2011). The changing conception of representation: Issues, concerns and institutions. In The Indian parliament: A democracy at work (pp. 105–173). Oxford University Press.
- Manor, J. (2005). The presidency. In D. Kapur & P. B. Mehta (Eds.), Public institutions in India: Performance and design (pp. 105–127). Oxford University Press.
- Manor, J. (1994). The prime minister and the president. In B. Dua & J. Manor (Eds.), Nehru to the nineties: The changing office of the prime minister in India (pp. 20–47). University of British Columbia.
- Baxi, U. (2010). The judiciary as a resource for Indian democracy. Seminar, 615, 61–67.
- Baxi, U. (1985). Social action litigation in India: The operation and the promise. In M. Galanter (Ed.), Law and society in modern India (pp. 323–460). Oxford University Press.
- Sathe, S. P. (2002). Judicial activism in India: Transgressing borders and enforcing limits. Oxford University Press.

Additional Readings:

- Hewitt, V., & Rai, S. M. (2010). Parliament. In P. B. Mehta & N. G. Jayal (Eds.), The Oxford companion to politics in India (pp. 28–42). Oxford University Press.
- Sahu, G., & Dutta, R. (2021). *The green tribunal in India after 10 years: From ascendancy to crisis*. *Economic and Political Weekly, 56*(52).
- Ramachandran, R. (2006). The Supreme Court and the basic structure doctrine. In B. N. Kirpal, A. H. Desai, G. Subramanium, R. Dhavan, & R. Ramachandran (Eds.), Supreme but not infallible: Essays in honour of the Supreme Court of India (pp. 107–133). Oxford University Press.

Module 3:

Core Readings:

- Singh, M. P., & Saxena, R. (2011). Towards greater federalization. In *Indian politics: Constitutional foundations and institutional functioning* (2nd ed., pp. 166–195). PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Arora, B., & Kailash, K. K. (2018). Beyond quasi federalism: Change and continuity in Indian federalism. *Studies in Indian Politics, 6*(2), 297–302.
- Manor, J. (1999). *The political economy of democratic decentralization*. World

Bank.

- Roberts, A. (2021). Abolishing India's Planning Commission: The results after five years [Review of the books *Planning in the 20th century and beyond: India's Planning Commission and the NITI Aayog*, edited by S. Mehrotra & S. Guichard; *NITI Aayog and Planning Commission: Some reflections*, by K. D. Saksena; and *Backstage*, by M. S. Ahluwalia]. *Public Administration Review, 81*(4), 799–805. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13404
- Jayal, N. G., Prakash, A., & Sharma, P. K. (Eds.). (2006). *Local governance in India: Decentralization and beyond*. Oxford University Press.

Additional Readings:

- Mitra, S. K., & Pehl, M. (2010). Federalism. In N. G. Jayal & P. B. Mehta (Eds.), *The Oxford companion to politics in India* (pp. 79–97). Oxford University Press.
- Roy, A., Singh, S., & Dey, N. (2006). Making Truth Powerful. India International Centre Quarterly, 33(2), 97–107. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23005874

Module 4:

- Kapur, D., & Mehta, P. B. (Eds.). (2005). Public institutions in India: Performance and design. Oxford University Press.
- Thimmaiah, G. (2002). Finance Commission: Decline of a Constitutional Institution. Economic and Political Weekly, 37(47), 4664–4668. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4412863
- K. P. Joseph. (1986). Accountability of Government Audit in India. Economic and Political Weekly, 21(22), M59–M65. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4375736

Additional Readings:

- Aiyar, Y. (2024). The Bureaucracy. In Š. Ganguly, D. Mistree, & L. Diamond (Eds.), The Troubling State of India's Democracy (pp. 163–185). University of Michigan Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.12750150.14
- Tyagi, A. R. (1959). Role of Public Service Commissions in India. The Indian Journal of Political Science, 20(4), 343–357. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42743529
- Comptroller and Auditor General of India. (2023). Compendium on audit of the education sector in India. Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

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

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2. Dr. Shrawan Kumar Pandey, Assistant Professor, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. Email: shrawankumarpandey@lsr.du.ac.in