

CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, CALCUTTA



Auditing Individual Courses offered under the Research Training Programme (RTP)

The Research Training Programme (RTP) is an intensive, multi-disciplinary programme meant to provide students with a general grasp of the main intellectual concerns of social science research and introduce them to important recent trends in different disciplines. The full programme is for a duration of ten months, but interested students may also take individual courses being offered under it as auditors. The list of courses on offer in the 2025-26 academic year along with the fees and the maximum number of auditors permitted in each course (if applicable) is given in Table 1. The outlines of all courses offered under RTP 2025-26 are given at the end.

Each course will run for seven weeks, with two 2-hour classes each week (that is, a total of 28 teaching hours). Courses will be spread across four slots between August 2025 and April 2026 and students may apply until a week before the start of courses (details for each course given in Table 2). All courses will be taught off-line. The medium of instruction and assignments will be English.

Eligibility criteria for auditors is a Masters degree or equivalent in any discipline with at least 50 percent marks. **Applicants must directly apply to the course coordinator via email (addresses given in Table 2) and should be copied to the Research Cell (research@cssscal.org).** Once the application is approved by the course coordinator, further processing will be done by the Research Cell.

Auditors will be awarded a certificate for the course they take if they complete all course requirements (including attendance and written assignments). Auditors cannot miss more than five classes in the course.

Table 1: Names and details of courses on offer in 2025-26

No	Name of the Course	Course Coordinator and email contact	Fees (in rupees)	Maximum Number of Auditors
1	Vocabulary of the Social Sciences	Priya Sangameswaran priya@cssscal.org	4,000	05
2	Research Methods in Social Sciences	Asha Singh asha@cssscal.org	6,000	05
3	Feminism in the Social Sciences	Trine Nileena Banerjee trina@cssscal.org	4,000	No upper limit
4	Games and Culture(s)*	Souvik Mukerjee souvik@cssscal.org	5000	20
5	Critical Caste Studies	Satish satishchennur@cssscal.org	3,000	No upper limit

6	Situating 'Science': Making of a Discipline	Anirban Das anirban@cssscal.org	3,500	No upper limit
7	Rethinking Political Theory	Maidul Islam maidul@cssscal.org	4,000	No upper limit
8	Rethinking Performance Studies	Trine Nileena Banerjee trina@cssscal.org	4,000	No upper limit
9	South Asia and the Early Modern World	Prachi Deshpande pdeshpande@cssscal.org	4,000	No upper limit
10	Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity	Kumari Vibhuti Nayak vibhuti.nayak@cssscal.org	4,000	No upper limit
11	Introduction to softwares for data mining, data representation and data analysis **	Sattwik Santra sattwik@cssscal.org	7,000	No upper limit
12	Introduction to Modern Social Thought	Rosinka Chaudhuri rosinka@cssscal.org	5,000	No upper limit
13	World History From Late Antiquity to Early Modernity	Rajarshi Ghose rajarshighose@cssscal.org	4,000	No upper limit
14	Perspectives on Development	Priya Sangameswaran priya@cssscal.org	3,000	20

*** For Course No. 4, students need to bring their own laptop to class.**

**** For Course No. 11, knowledge of mathematics and statistics upto secondary level is a prerequisite.**

Table 2: Course slots and deadlines for application

	Slot in which course offered	Class timing	Deadline for application
Course 1	August-September 2025	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11.30 am to 1.30 pm	29 th July, 2025
Course 2	August-September 2025	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm	29 th July, 2025
Courses 3 to 6	October-November 2025	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11.30 am to 1.30 pm	25 th September, 2025
Courses 7 to 10	January-February 2026	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11.30 am to 1.30 pm	24 th December, 2025
Courses 11 to 14	March-April 2026	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11.30 am to 1.30 pm	26 th February, 2026

Course outlines

VOCABULARY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Course Coordinator: Priya Sangameswaran

Instructors: Anirban Das, Priya Sangameswaran, Rajarshi Ghose, Rosinka Chaudhuri, Satish

This course will focus on a number of concepts that are key to the social sciences. Such concepts not only define the social sciences as a distinct field of enquiry, but they have also been durable as well as malleable over time. A familiarity with these concepts will introduce students to the diversity of social science analysis as well as some of the common questions that are key to social scientific frameworks across different disciplines. This year, the course will take up five such concepts for closer scrutiny: space, culture, temporality, theory, and nature.

RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

Course Coordinator: Asha Singh

Instructors: Asha Singh, Maidul Islam, Rajarshi Ghose, Rosinka Chaudhuri, Sattwik Santra, Souvik Mukerjee

This course offers students a foundation in the methods of the social sciences and humanities, with an introduction to basic quantitative techniques, qualitative methods, gender and fieldwork, historical method, reading critically, and digital methods. The principal concern here is to train students to engage critically with methods in different fields and enable them to make an intelligent choice of methods for their own research.

FEMINISM AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Course Coordinator: Trina Nileena Banerjee

Instructors: Anirban Das, Trina Nileena Banerjee, Debdatta Chowdhury, Asha Singh, Vibhuti Nayak

This course will explore the success with which feminist theory has recast or challenged the social sciences. In particular, reference will be made to developments – conceptual, methodological, and empirical – within the realms of history, political science, sociology and sexuality studies. One set of questions within this course will examine how feminist scholarship has changed the dominant models of research on politics and society by forging new theoretical and conceptual apparatuses as well as new methods of enquiry. It will discuss the question of feminism's challenges to theorizing on knowledge and experience, and look at its encounters with questions of nation, state, citizenship and law, as well as its intersections with caste and race. It will briefly explore the influence of feminist criticism on the fields of literature, film studies, visual art and performance studies, as well as feminist historiography and ethnography.

GAMES AND CULTURE(S)

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Souvik Mukerjee

This course will look at play as a crucial yet much neglected aspect of culture; as historian Johan Huizinga describes it, culture as *sub specie ludii*, loosely translated as 'in the guise of a game'. Introducing key themes in the still nascent area of game studies, the lectures will address ideas of agency, perception, temporality, telos, being/becoming, plurality and identity by looking mainly at videogames, board games and artificial intelligence.

Challenging and adding to traditional concepts of narrative and play through the lenses of hypertextuality, critical software studies and platform studies, these lectures will raise key questions that will involve a reappraisal of topics in the Humanities and Social Sciences. It will also help bring the focus back on cultures of play that are now much-neglected in academia.

If you are interested in researching games and digital humanities, then this course is for you. Gamedesigners, practitioners of electronic writing and those with a general curiosity about the field may also apply. The course will require regular participation and interaction with digital and board games.

CRITICAL CASTE STUDIES

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Satish

This inter and multi disciplinary course will study the metamorphosis of caste, engages with categories and practices of caste and how it has fore-grounded over time and across geographies in contemporary times. It critically engages with two sets of literature, focusing on the articulations around privileges and the sources to retain them, and secondly, the resistance towards these privileges. This course attempts to bring them together while engaging at three levels: theoretical, methodological, and substantial. Some of the research themes that are going to be discussed in this course are domination and exploitation, redistribution and recognition, hermeneutics of suspicion, and hermeneutics of faith. Though it appears to be pitched at binary, but an attempt is to transcend antinomies either through combine or alternate between the two opposite perspectives or even think beyond these, probably arriving at synthesis (Hegelian way) or structuration (Giddens way). More particularly, this course would address some pointed questions such as: What are the key institutional sources for caste identities, positions, and sources of power? How are caste identities and positions subjected to social positions based on other institutions based on social identities? How have social movements framed and challenged caste discrimination and identities? How does "caste" in its various representations compare to other hierarchical systems globally?

SITUATING 'SCIENCE': MAKING OF A DISCIPLINE

Course Coordinator: Anirban Das

Instructors: Arunima Chakrabarty, Priya Sangameswaran, Anirban Das

This course will address the history, sociology and philosophy of the sciences and will trace the contours of the changing paradigms in thinking about knowledge and matter. Students will be introduced to a set of debates regarding methodology for the study of science (for example, Popper, Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lakatos on the one hand and Bachelard, Canguillhem, Foucault on the other). Two or more of the following themes will be discussed in each year – (a) perspectival conflicts between realism and relativism (b) tensions between sociological, anthropological, historical and conceptual analyses of the sciences (c) the Marxian and the poststructuralist turns that induced, in opposition or in unison, the multiple forms of questioning the authority of Science (d) Sciences in the context of colonization and decolonization (e) science's relation with technology on the one hand and with the social sciences and

humanities on the other (f) the Feminist interventions in the study of science. The course will lay an especial emphasis on the self-definition of ‘modern science’ and subject it to a critical scrutiny.

RETHINKING POLITICAL THEORY

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Maidul Islam

This course aims to examine the linkages between political theory and political philosophy, political theory and political ideology, and political theory and political economy. More specifically, it will examine why political theory is important, the lessons of political theory, how political theory responds to demands of justice, demands of capitalist development, demands of democracy, the concepts of liberty and equality, and conceptual issues to the study of political ideologies.

RETHINKING PERFORMANCE STUDIES: PERSPECTIVES, THEORIES AND METHODS

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Trina Nileena Banerjee

This course will introduce students to the broad disciplinary field of Performance Studies, with a focus on forms of embodiment and presence, on spaces of practice, production and reception, as well as on modes of reproduction, circulation, communication and perception. We shall concentrate on different modes of analysing and theorizing diverse performance practices, the skills of ‘thick description’, semiotic analysis as well as contextual framing but also engage with the historical debates around the phenomenological experience of performing and witnessing a performance, and everything that lies in between. The course will look at the historical development of Performance Studies as a disciplinary field in the US, its roots in social and cultural anthropology, and its links and divergences with Theatre Studies as it was known in Europe. It will also examine the new modes of pedagogy and writing that developed within the field and its interactions with performance practitioners. We will also look at the theoretical and political challenges that some of the early formulations of Performance Studies faced from the global south and its relationship to the disciplines of History and the traditional social sciences. Most importantly, we will try to examine the specific relevance of these histories to the Indian context, the possible interfaces and conflicts with theories of performance that belong to this subcontinent and the particular challenges of Performance Studies pedagogy in South Asia. The course will also examine the most long-standing debates in the field about what constitutes the ‘ontology’ of performance, and what makes for its specificity as a phenomenon, an event or a form of art. We will study the implications of issues of ‘liveness’ and ‘presence’ in performance; the roots of visual/linguistic interpretation and ethnography in the realm of ritual performance; the possibility of having a textual or visual archive of performance genres; the problems with a discursive translation of embodied performance; the semiotics of the performing body as well as the embodied transmission of history; as well as the problems of understanding spectatorship within the limits of the alleged transience of performance as an experience. In short, we will attempt to ask, what is performance? How to understand it? How does performance make history? What remains when a performance is over? What is the relationship between an archive of performance and a repertoire of living practices? What are many divergent methods and approaches that make the field of Performance Studies historically? What is their specific relevance in South Asia? How does the theoretical field of Performance Studies interact with performance practitioners? How might theory and practice transform each other in their encounter with the diverse modes of thinking about and experiencing performance? The course will take students through the basics of Performance Studies theory, and organise screenings, discussions and workshops/seminars on these questions.

SOUTH ASIA AND THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Prachi Deshpande

This course focuses on the Indian subcontinent during the 'Early Modern Period', roughly the period from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. This was a period of great expansion in global scale, with the emergence of large empires such as the Mughals, Safavids and Ottomans, the discovery of new sea by European explorers and the establishment of new trading relations and networks across different regions of the globe. People, plants, animals, manufactured goods, raw materials, as well as ideas, manuscripts, words, and skills moved along these routes and networks, and set off many changes and ferment in agriculture, language, community, social relations, and political and cultural practices. India and South Asia, comprising played a critical role in the making of this expanded, 'connected' world. The Mughal empire was established, along with many regional states. There was much ferment in political and bureaucratic systems, in linguistic and cultural expression as well as in community formation at different local, regional, and transregional levels. We will read the recent research on this period, which has drawn on multiple historiographical approaches, such as microhistory, art history, global history, and focused on many different players, from scribes, mercenaries, merchants, and explorers, to Sufis, painters, legal scholars, and weavers. The course aims to introduce students to the richness of this research, with a view to understanding the complexity of South Asia's connections to the wider early modern world, on the eve of colonialism.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND INDIGENEITY:

THEORIES, INTERSECTIONS, AND POWER

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Kumari Vibhuti Nayak

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the concepts of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity. It examines foundational theoretical frameworks, the social construction of these categories, their complex intersections with other social identities, and their profound relationship with power structures across diverse global contexts. This course engages with foundational thinkers (Fanon, 1952; Said, 1978) to deconstruct race, ethnicity and Indigeneity as fluid yet materially consequential social formations.

Building on Crenshaw's (1989) intersectional framework and Delgado & Stefancic's (2001) critical race theory, we interrogate how these categories function as what Foucault termed "technologies of power" in global and Indian contexts. The course apply Memmi's (1965) theory of colonization and Tuck & Yang's (2012) critique of decolonization to analyze: - to the biopolitics of structural racism (Mbembe, 2019), the racial formations (Guru, 2009), to Indigenous cosmologies versus settler coloniality (Simpson, 2017). Through case studies from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to India's Adivasi movements, this course challenges liberal multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 1995) and expose what Mohanty (2003) calls the "racialized boundaries of citizenship." Finally, the course explores Santos' (2014) epistemologies of the South, centering subaltern resistance as praxis.

INTRODUCTION TO SOFTWARES FOR DATA MINING, DATA REPRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Sattwik Santra

This course is a well balanced course tailored for those aspiring to harness the power of softwares for data-driven decision making. This course serves as a gateway to understanding and applying the essential techniques of data mining, data representation, and data analysis, using softwares.

Course Overview

In today's data-centric world, the ability to analyze and interpret vast amounts of data is crucial and this course is structured to provide a grounding from basic syntax to advanced data manipulation and visualization techniques.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the fundamentals of computers and programming.
2. Develop skills in data mining techniques to uncover patterns and relationships within large datasets.
3. Learn methods of data representation to effectively communicate findings.
4. Gain proficiency in data analysis and the ability to apply statistical models and predictive analytics.

INTRODUCTION TO MODERN SOCIAL THOUGHT

Course Coordinator: Rosinka Chaudhuri

[Instructors to be announced]

This course will focus on selected themes and issues that are central to an understanding of recent academic approaches to the philosophy of modernity, modern forms of power, governmental techniques, nationalism, Orientalism, postcoloniality, cultural studies, and social practice. The module will also address issues such as colonisation, decolonisation, neo-colonisation, postcolonial theory and critical traditions, empire, the nation, and the subaltern. The lectures will be built around individual texts, among others, of Immanuel Kant, Michel Foucault, Karl Marx, Edward Said, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Giorgio Agamben, mainly using a variety of articles and chapters read over three or four classes by individual instructors.

WORLD HISTORY FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO EARLY MODERNITY

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Rajarshi Ghose

This course explores the third to the eighteenth century as a period in world history. Besides several other epochal events, this millennia and half witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire, the rise and expansion of the Islamic Empire, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in Europe, the rule of the Song and the Ming dynasties in China, the establishment of the Mongol empire, the rise of the Ottoman, the Mughal, and the Safavid dynasties, and the beginnings of European seaborne empires.

The main focus of this course will be to understand how political authority was constituted and social power was forged across heterogeneous cultures over a millennium and half. We will study transformations in religious imaginaries during the period, changes in the notions of sovereignty and legal cultures, the impact that bureaucratic and juristic innovations had on the social production of knowledge, and the articulation of political thought at the intersection of religious and legal discourses.

The course will examine the discursive and material processes of legitimation that pre-modern regimes evolved and the various literary and aesthetic registers that they established for the purpose. It will probe why political ideas and legal conventions developed by some dispensations endured over millennia, and why at times new regimes preferred to work with institutional practices, legal conventions, and political languages innovated by older ones.

Thus, through a survey of some historiographical debates on a period spanning a millennium and half, the course will seek to grapple with the problem of how the “new” enters the world, how continuities and/or ruptures are fashioned in human history, and how such claims are superseded in social and political


domains. Even though the course is not designed to be presentist in its orientation, we will be reflecting in class on why and how traces of the “pre-modern” continue to powerfully mold politics and sociality around us.

PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT

Course Coordinator and Instructor: Priya Sangameswaran

This course aims to give an overview of different approaches to think about ‘development’. It starts with a history of the term and its changing meanings (with respect to economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions). Different critical approaches to mainstream discourses of development are then discussed such as Marxist and the post-development critiques. Moving away from metanarratives, the course then turns to the question of what anthropological approaches, with their focus on ‘process’ and ‘meaning,’ have to offer to the understanding of how development works. Finally, the course will introduce students to different ways of thinking about the set of policies and ideologies that are broadly referred to as ‘neoliberalism’. While it would not be possible for a single course to deal with all the concepts and themes that have been central to development, a limited number of them (such as planning and expertise, nature, and the interaction between agriculture and industry) will be explored while discussing different approaches.

Dated: 06.05.2025



Registrar
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