

## **An Orientation Programme on Globalization, Crisis and Public Policy**

**Introduction:** Calcutta Research Group in collaboration with Rabindra Bharati University is planning to organize a one-week course on the theme ‘Globalization, Crisis and Public Policy’ during November 23-29, 2015 in Kolkata, India. The proposed course is intended to understand the nitty-gritty of neoliberal globalization including the periodic crises in the market economy all over the world vis-à-vis concerned public policies across the globe including India. It is intended to take up an exploration into socio-economic crisis along the axes of both theoretical nuances and practical implications.

*The course will be open to the doctoral students and teachers of various colleges and universities, and researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. We especially welcome participants from the North-Eastern states of the country. Participants from the various vulnerable communities (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and others) which are most affected by the implications of globalization are especially welcome.*

**Objectives:** This course will start with addressing the issues related to the idea of neoliberal globalization and its effects on designing the edicts of public policy. The basic worldview of neoliberal globalization is centred around the economic space of any society as if all sorts of social distortions or ills afflicting the society in general can be taken care of with the aid of a set of public policies inspired by the principles of neoclassical economics – the entry points of which being individual economic/material preferences, technology and natural endowments. And in that sense, this worldview, almost like the orthodox Marxist thought, upholds the space of ‘economy’ as the only space of political struggle and negotiations. Here one needs to keep in mind that the basic worldview of neoliberal globalization is focused around money-using free (competitive) market economy with the belief that Adam Smith’s idea of *invisible hand* which is presumed to always keep the money-using market in harmony and deliver the goods to all automatically. It also prescribes that the state’s public policy should facilitate free and uninterrupted growth of this money-using competitive market where lies the panacea of all socio-economic ills. There must also be apparently beneficial policies for those who are still outside the purview of this market in order to bring them inside the market (the other name of which is mainstreaming). In this worldview what is targeted is the improvement in the quality of life of an individual as a consumer and once that is accomplished everything of him/her will be taken care of automatically.

The principal objectives of the proposed course are delineated below:

- (i) To make a *theoretical and empirical understanding of globalization* characterizing almost every money-using market economy today across the globe;
- (ii) To make *a critical probe into the socio-economic crises* which from time to time have hit the market-economies of the world since the inception of the present day globalization nearly four decades ago; and,
- (iii) To have *an understanding of public policies in every nook and corner of the globe* in connection with the globalization and also, to make a normative assessment of these policies so as to deal as well as cope with the periodic crises which do afflict the money-using market economies all over the world.

**Themes of the Course:** The proposed course is devised with three major themes in mind:

- (a) ***Interrogating Globalization and Periodic Market-Economy Crises: Economic and Non-Economic Aspects of Globalization:*** A critical appraisal of the idea of neoliberal globalization which upholds *economy* as the *base* of the society. In this framework, an individual is expected to be a rational economic agent. This individual must be capable of taking care of all of her desires including security for herself in all respects. The very idea of neoliberal globalization following the mainstream neoclassical economics forecloses the spaces of gender, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and likes so as to forge a belief that the space of economy is ahistorical and it is only the hegemony of the economy which matters in real life. This course will explore various forms of entanglements between these different sites of socialization and throw light on the exclusivist agenda of the economy-centric approach often adopted to study neoliberal globalization. It is also now well-known that the neoliberal space of capitalism is not without periodic crisis. The question is if the state or any other agency in the current time can truly play any effective role to prevent the crisis or it is something which is inherent in the capitalist economic system world over. The point to note is that capitalism has gone through different phases of crisis and it is still going through some of them. However, capitalism has somehow managed to save itself from these crises (either through Keynesian measures or in terms of different forms of state-capitalism). But in recent time what we are witnessing is a demand for a stronger programme of neoliberal reform at the face of economic crises except some state-aided rescue programmes when these crises erupt. Once again there is a need to understand this aspect of neoliberalism and explore how the classical political economists understood inherent crisis of capitalism and whether some alternative thinking in terms of social transformation can be thought from some non-mainstream social scientists' viewpoints or not.
- (b) ***Classical Political Economy Revisited:*** In this context, one of the objectives of the course is to make an interface with classical political economy starting with Adam Smith where the economy is portrayed as one of the sites of the society – an insight missing today in the very understanding of economy in mainstream neoclassical economics. A major part of this course will cover theories and doctrines of classical political economy and introduce the attendees to a world of thinking which is still relevant to devise resistance to the orthodoxy of neoliberal economics. In this context, it is also important to recognize and study in detail how the later developments in the discipline in the form of neoclassical economics have separated the domains of theory and application in order to give the discipline the status of a proto-science. This status is often invoked while designing public policies and recommendations. A careful review of the classic texts of political economy will reveal this politics of knowledge production and how it affects our everyday life intermixed in the dynamics of economic fundamentalism and social struggle. This course's call for 'Return to the Classics' will not only expose and explicate the global hegemony of economic thinking, but will also interrogate the so-called old doctrines to the effect of exhuming the conflicted narratives of the discipline's formative principles and their devastating implications.
- (c) ***Globalization and Public Policy Concerns:*** In the context of neoliberal globalization our objective is also to study public policy as it is practiced today with the basic aim to expand and facilitate development of competitiveness of money using market economies. We shall also explore its consequences on the practices and institutions of social governance. In

different geopolitical contexts, the congealment of globalization and neoliberal orientation of social governance can produce very different consequences, including unrest and conflicts in different part of the world. India is no exception in this case. Right from the years of agrarian insurgency in the newly independent India through the severe civil rebellion in the 1960s and 1970s to the rebellions and conflicts today in North-east, Bihar, and elsewhere, the Indian experience of governance, neoliberal reforms, and social governance is particularly relevant to elucidate on the effects of centrality of market in public policy today. The turn to the market leaves the state authorities in control of fewer ideological and political resources for co-optation, with newly constituted social subjects confronting neoliberalism, formulating a discourse of rights by simultaneously claiming indigenous and other collective rights that markets deny and the citizenship rights that the neoliberal state pretends to offer equally to all. In this theme of the course, we shall dwell on these issues and try to envisage a critical appraisal of public policy adopted in the last twenty years in India since the reforms in the early nineteen nineties.

During the week-long course, stress will be on the above *three themes* pertaining to Globalization, Crisis and Public Policy which will be discussed by economists, historians, political scientists, geographers, and social scientists from other disciplines from various national and foreign universities and research institutes.

**Structure:**

- The course will have six days of lectures, discussions, presentations by the participants, book review sessions and field visits. Each day will have six hours of academic activities (36 hours in total). There will be 4 hours of evaluation/interactive/valedictory sessions on the 7th day (November 29). With 40 hours of activities in total, this will be equivalent to a semester course.
- The course will cover both general epistemic frameworks and politics of knowledge formation as well as policy issues specific to the Indian context.
- A special session is also planned to initiate a comparative discussion of the Chinese economy and its model of growth vis-à-vis the Indian economy.
- On the whole, this course promises to contribute a fresh and critical perspective to the ongoing debates on the interfaces among the ideals of neoliberalism, processes of globalization, and mechanisms of crisis management in a postcolonial economy such as ours.
- Each day of the orientation programme will begin with a key note, and will be followed by discussions on assignments by participants, classes, and interactive sessions.
- Lectures will constitute about 55-60 percent of the total time, and the rest of the time will be devoted to interactive sessions, reading sessions, participants' seminars.
- Apart from the regular presentation of their own works, participants will also be asked to read, review and discuss few specific texts relevant to the theme.
- The course will also extend the possibility of offering extensive field visits to the tannery hub at Bantala near Kolkata and/or the Calcutta Port to gauge in detail the connections between policy implications infused in economic rationalism and logistical implementations governed by practical conditions and impediments in this era of globalization.

- The reading materials for the course will be circulated among the selected participants beforehand and they will be required to submit writing assignments before the actual course starts in November.

**Organization:** There will be registration fee for the participants. Outstation participants will have to cover their own travel and accommodation. Last day of application will be **23 August 2015**. Application will have to be accompanied with bio details, a letter of intent, and details of research interest, and one reference letter. Inquiries may be addressed to Dr. Iman Mitra ([iman@mcrgr.ac.in](mailto:iman@mcrgr.ac.in)), Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group. Professor Byasdeb Dasgupta, Professor of Economics of University of Kalyani and also, a member of the Governing Body, Calcutta Research Group, and Dr. Iman Mitra are the joint coordinators of the course. *The course will be jointly organized with Rabindra Bharati University which will provide the necessary resources to run the course successfully.*

**Certification:** This course will be a six credit course. Those who will successfully participate in the course will get certificates and grades according to their performance as per present norms. The said certificate will be jointly issued by Calcutta Research Group and Rabindra Bharati University.

**Output:** Selected papers from the course will be published in the respective journals of University of Kalyani, Rabindra Bharati University and Calcutta Research Group. And also, a plan is there to publish the course materials in book form – the major initiative of which will be undertaken by the Calcutta Research Group.