

Summer Peacebuilding Institute

2025

Eastern Mennonite University

COURSE TITLE: CASTE AND INTERSECTIONALITIES**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. GAURAV J. PATHANIA**

225, ROSELAWN

TIME: 9AM-5PM

ONE-WEEK COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Caste is a social construct that plays a pivotal role in determining and maintaining social order. Despite the world connecting and globalizing, the core expectations of society continue to promote a rigid social infrastructure that not only promotes but also protects gender based discriminatory practices. Caste is an ancient concept of social stratification. It adapts to different concepts and manifests itself in newer forms. The core principles and practices of this system are deeply entrenched in society and dominate popular discourse. In practice, it has found ways and means to justify itself and stay relevant. Its attachment to the politics of identity and domination have been causes for concern over generations. In today's global context, on the one hand caste continues to transform itself to promote and continue its dehumanizing practices; and on the other side, there is a glorification and eulogizing of caste by the dominant ideologies. With the intersectional approach, this course also examines how anti-caste activism influences and broadens our understanding of humanity, faith and religion.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The intersectionality of caste, class, color, religion will present an opportunity to discuss and debate the issues of intersectionality. It will facilitate an in-depth understanding of the micro and macro level concerns that pertain to caste. It will further emphasize the need for looking at alternatives that have been possible in other parts of the world. The objectives of this course include:

1. Identify the role of power and faith associated with caste in society
2. Compare and contrast the concepts of caste and race and class within the current context.
3. Evaluate efforts taken to understand and deal with the negative impacts of caste on inter-faith
4. Learn to reflect and deal with societal processes that can produce systemic change.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- Wilkerson, Isabel (2020) [*Caste The Origins of our Discontents*](#) (First ed.) Random House ISBN: 9780593230268
- Geetha V (2002) [*Gender: Theorizing Feminism*](#), Bhatkal & Sen; UK ed.
- Rao, Anupama (2005). [*Gender and Caste*](#) (Issues in Contemporary Indian Feminism) (Second ed.) Zed Books ISBN: 9781842776001
- Pulikottil, P. (2022). [*Contours of Dalit Theology*](#), Augsburg Fortress Press
- Ambedkar, B. R. (1917). [*Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*](#), *Indian Antiquary*, XLI

- Chakravarti, Uma (2020). [*Gendering Caste through a feminist lens*](#) (First ed., Sage Publications ISBN: 978-93-81345-44-3)
- Kannabiran, Vasant and Kalpana Kannabiran. 1991. Caste and Gender: Understanding Dynamics of Power of Violence, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 26 (37): 2030-33
- Kumar, Vivek. 2021. [*Different Shades of Caste among Indian Diaspora in the US*](#), *Transcience*, 12 (1).
- Berger, M. and Gidroz, K. (2010) [*Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy Through Race, Class and Gender*](#). University of North Carolina Press.
- Rege, Sharmila. (2006). Writing Caste, Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonios: Zubaan: Delhi (you can access some online article of Sharmila)
- Soundararajan, Thenmozhi. (2022). [*The Trauma of Caste: A Dalit Feminist Meditation on Survivorship, Healing and Abolition*](#), North Atlantic Books: Berkeley, California.
- Pan, Anandita (2021). [*Mapping Dalit Feminism: Towards an Intersectional Standpoint*](#), Sage Publication: UK.
- Pathania (2023). [*Caste Should not Be part of the American Dream*](#), *The Emancipator*, Boston Globe. February 17.
- Waughray, Annapurna. 2022. [*Capturing Caste in Law: The Legal Regulation of Caste Discrimination*](#), Routledge Research in Human Rights Law, 1st edition.
- Prasad, Manohar Chandra D. 2009. [*Dalit Theology: Methodological Issues in a Contextual Theology of Liberation*](#), *Asia Journal of Theology*, April 1

Journal articles, multimedia resources, and/or other scanned readings will be assigned for each class period and available on Moodle.

Additional Reading:

- Fuchs, Sandhya (2024) *Fragile Hope: Seeking Justice for Hate Crime in India*, Stanford University Press: California.

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS:

Date	Topic	Readings
Unit 1 – Introduction		
Session 1	GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND THE COURSE	What is Caste? How is it different from Class and Race?
Session 2	CASTE AS A CONCEPT	The Etymology of Caste The Characteristics of Caste Genesis of Caste [Ambedkar]
Unit – 3: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Color and Race and Gender		

Session 3	POLITICS GLOBAL SOCIAL STRATIFICATION INSTITUTIONALIZING INTERSECTIONALITY CULTURAL POLITICS OF CASTE	Jaffrelot (2010). Caste and Politics Caste in the Everyday life of Independent India The Intersectional Approach: Bridging Theory and Praxis Cultural Politics of Historically Marginalized Students in Indian Universities
Session 4	CASTE AND LAW	Capturing Caste in Law: The Legal Regulation of Caste Discrimination , Routledge Research in Human Rights Law, 1st edition.
Session 5	CASTE & GENDER VIOLENCE	Gender: Theorizing Feminism Caste and Gender Understanding Dynamics of Power and Violence
Unit – 3: Caste in a Globalized World		
Session 5	CASTE, CLASS & RACE	Isabel Wilkerson, <i>Caste: The Origin of Our Discontent</i>
Session 6	CASTE AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON	Racial Paradigm and Caste Caste Should not Be part of the American Dream
Session 7	INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CASTE	Global Anti-Caste Movement Different Shades of Caste among the Indian Diaspora
Unit 4: Dalit Theology		
Session 8	METHODOLOGY & THEMES	Beyond Dalit Theology: Searching for New Frontiers
	CONTOURS OF DALIT THEOLOGY	

		Black and Dalit Liberation Theology
Unit – 5 Reflection on the Learning		
Sessions 9	DISCUSSION & SOLUTIONS	Class presentations
Session 10	REFLECTIVE CLOSING	Evaluation and closing circle

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS FOR 3 GRADUATE CREDITS: (TOTAL COURSE POINTS = 100)

1) Reading Reviews – Presentations (20%)

During our synchronous sessions, students will present to the class a series of synopses of the key themes and questions that emerge from designated course readings and texts. These short presentations should be accompanied by one powerpoint slide that summarizes the main concepts to be covered.

2) Book Review (20%)

The purpose of this exercise is for students to survey the broader landscape and to discover other advocates throughout history who have used leading practices to activate change. To accomplish this, students will read a book that explores change strategies and write a short book review that summarizes their findings and observations. Write a book review on a book related to transformational leadership for social justice that was published within the last ten years.

3) Class Participation – Engagement Activities (10%)

Up to 10 points will be assigned for in-class activities and participation; this includes discussions, simulations, and exercises.

4) Two Interviews of Social Activists (20%)

Students will conduct two interviews with activists of two (2) different organizations who are responding to critical theory/social justice issues in productive ways. This assignment involves recording of the content of these 2 interviews and primary themes. Additional guidelines for these interviews will be posted on Moodle.

5) FINAL: Interview Findings- Summary & Presentation (30%)

Based on an analysis of content from the 2 interviews, students will write up a 10-12 page Summary. The Summary will report on key metrics used to indicate the operationalization of each organization's transformative justice change agenda. Students will then provide a class presentation based on their summary for classmates and instructor. Additional instructions for these two assignment segments (report and presentation) will be provided on Moodle.

These are brief descriptions of required graded assignments for the course. More details for each assignment can be found on the "Guidance Notes" that will be provided during class.

Writing Guidelines: EMU has adopted a set of writing guidelines for graduate programs that include six sets of criteria: content, structure, rhetoric & style, information literacy, source integrity, and conventions. It is expected that graduates will be able to write at least a "good" level with 60% writing at an "excellent" level. For the course papers, please follow the APA style described in [CJP's GUIDELINES for GRADUATE PAPERS](#) (see CJP Student Resources Moodle)