

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO

Course Objective:

This course is designed to acquaint students with the fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's theory of social development and its continuing significance and relevance. Sociological thinkers across the world seem to agree that the present crisis concerning individuals, communities, states, and nations can be adequately addressed only with an evolution of consciousness in the humanity. Beginning with an exploration of a deeper view of the relation between individual and society, the course examines the inner evolutionary processes behind the external progress of the societies, the various stages they go through as they evolve from a loosely-formed organic collectivity to a more organised and complex collectivity. Finally, the necessity and significance of the deeper subjective and psychological bases of further evolution in the individual and societies are considered.

Course Outline:

Unit 1: Introduction to Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought

Contemporary Relevance of Sri Aurobindo; Importance of Studying Sri Aurobindo's Social Philosophy; Key Concepts and Methods of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Sociology

Essential Readings:

- Mohanty, S. (2008). *Sri Aurobindo: A Contemporary Reader*, pp. 3-39.
- Gandhi, Kishor (1965/1991). *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age*. pp. 3-32.
- Chattopadhyaya, D. P. (1976/1988). *Sri Aurobindo and Karl Marx*. pp. 1-14.
- Umar, M. G. (2001). *Sri Aurobindo: Thinker and Yogi of the Future*. pp. 160-192.

Unit 2: Individual and Society

Relation between Individual and Group/Society; Formation of Smaller Human Aggregates such as Family, Clan, Commune and Tribe; The Cyclical Nature of Society's Progress

Essential Readings:

- Sri Aurobindo (1997), *The Human Cycle*, pp. 1-34.
- Sri Aurobindo (1997), *The Ideal of Human Unity*, pp. 290-295.
- Gandhi, K. (1965/1991). *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age*. pp. 33-69.

Unit 3: Social Evolution

Socio-psychological Evolution and Progress of Human Society; The Ideal Law of Social Development; The Evolution of the Group Soul; The Collective in an Age of Subjectivism; False and True Subjectivism

Essential Readings:

- Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, pp. 35-72.
- Gandhi, K. (1965/1991). *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age*. pp. 70-112.

Unit 4: Contemporary Relevance of Integral Sociology

Sri Aurobindo's Theory of Civilization and Culture; Aesthetic and Ethical Culture; Significance of Sri Aurobindo's Sociology for Understanding Contemporary India; Field Visit to Auroville

Essential Readings:

- Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, pp. 73-101.
- Varma, V. P. (1960/1976). *The Political Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*. pp. 135-165.
- Kapoor, R. (2007). Auroville: A Spiritual-social Experiment in Human Unity and Evolution. *Futures*, 39, pp. 632–643.

Unit 5: Envisioning the Future Society

Infra-rational, Rational and Supra-rational Stages of Individual's and Society's Evolution; Society Beyond the Age of Reason; Deeper Aim of Individual and Collective Life; Necessity for a Spiritual Transformation of Individual and Society; Sociology, Politics and Economics of a Spiritualized Society: Some Reflections and Critique

Essential Readings:

- Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, pp. 102-135, 182-269.
- Varma, V. P. (1960/1976). *The Political Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*. pp. 397-413.

Course Outcomes

This course will help the students identify the deeper psychological basis of sociological evolutionary processes and the relation between individual and society. This will help them

explore the significance of a subjective evolution of consciousness both in the individual and collective as means to address the present crisis of humanity.

Teaching Methods: Lecture-discussions, prior reading assignments, small group projects, journal and reflective writing, field visit.

Further Readings:

- Sri Aurobindo (1997), *The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department.
- Beck, Don & Cowan, Chris (1996). *Spiral Dynamics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Chattopadhyaya, D. P. (1976/1988). *Sri Aurobindo and Karl Marx*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.
- Collins, Randall (1988). *Theoretical Sociology*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Gandhi, Kishor (1965/1991). *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department.
- Horton B. Paul (1984). *Sociology*. New Delhi: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company.
- Kapoor, R. (2007). Auroville: A Spiritual-social Experiment in Human Unity and Evolution. *Futures*, 39, pp. 632–643.
- Mohanty, S. (2008). *Sri Aurobindo: A Contemporary Reader*. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Umar, M. G. (2001). *Sri Aurobindo: Thinker and Yogi of the Future*. Pondicherry: Sri Mira Trust.
- Varma, V. P. (1960/1976). *The Political Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.
- Wilber, Ken (2000). *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications.