Course : Risk : historical and cultural perspective  (4 Credits)
Code : BFE-GEN-405
Faculty : Dr. Syed Mohammed Faisal

This introductory course will address risk, risk-bearing, risk-taking and risk-aversion techniques that humans have produce and practice in different historical and cultural contexts. The idea is to make students to learn and critically evaluate the context and reasons behind the particular techniques of accounting and finance in modern economic systems. The comparison with other cultures of accountability and their social and political contexts will help the students appreciate the basis of modern accountability systems. The course will broadly introduce cases from India, Papua New Guinea, Morocco and compare them to the historical roots of modern accounting techniques in the double entry bookkeeping cultures of early modern Mediterranean and the Levant area that were formative of the contemporary forms of capitalist accounting systems from ledgers to blockchain. The conceptual emphasis will be on the nature of risk, geographical, political and social, that these systems emanate from and how modern accountability practices are distinct in their approach to risk given their context and what kind of relations do they produce given the kind of practices they are. The course will involve minimal readings, not more than 70 pages a week. However, it will require students to rigorously engage with all the cases constantly and compare them to each other to gain an understanding of how humans deal with risk. There will be support from the instructor in terms of deciphering the readings and understanding of social science methods. However, the emphasis will be to experiment in the comparative methods of anthropology rather than theoretically introducing them to the approaches to risk in sociology and anthropology. The course will be evaluated with a 1500 end of the term paper.

Guiding Bibliography

Accounting and Accountability

Cultures of Risk
Risk and Society