

BA (Hons) Programme in English

Semester – VI

Core Course: INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

Credits: 6

Course Description

The course will attempt to explore and study the role of ‘literary theory’ and ‘literary criticism’ in literary studies. If ‘literary criticism’ refers to the act of *interpreting, studying and judging* (evaluating) literary works, ‘literary theory’ pertains to conceptions and formulations on the nature and function of literature; the principles, processes, and problems involved in the creation, constitution, reception and understanding of literary works; the relation of text to author, reader, language, society, culture and history. As John Lye perceptively points out, “it is not judgment but understanding of the frames of judgment” that distinguishes the theoretical from the critical enterprise.

The course will attempt to familiarise students with certain key aspects and concepts associated with the major thinkers and theorists in the Western and Eastern literary traditions.

Essential Reading

Neerja A. Gupta. *A Student’s Handbook of Indian Aesthetics*.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*.

Groden, Michael, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman, eds. *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*.

Habib, M. A. R., *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to the Present*.

Harmon, William and C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*.

Selden, et al. *A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Theory*.

Evaluation Scheme

Internal (40%): continuous assessment; one test (20 marks) is administered every month, and the final score is based on best two performances.

External (60%): semester-end examination

Core Course: TEXTS, SUBTEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Credits: 6

Course Description

Every object is a text because we describe the features of the object in our heads. No object exists in a vacuum. Culture and society give it a sense of reality which it would otherwise not possess on its own. The sense of reality emerges from the words we use to speak about objects. Every description is a step forward in illuminating something about the world around us. To what extent is the world impinging upon our ability to use language to articulate profound truths about life? Are words themselves not objects in their own right because we need to describe how each word has to be used? What is the context to those words? What are the subtexts or secondary level meanings of the words we use? The purpose of this course is to elucidate how words are not merely instruments to our thoughts but contain descriptions of the world around us. Every attempt to learn a language or use words involves giving a shape to the world around us.

The course is divided into five parts:

- i) How to read a text
- ii) Appreciation of Contexts
- iii) Texts and Contexts
- iv) Words, Words, Words
- v) Select Readings

Prescribed Reading

McKee, Alan, 2003. *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. Sage Publications.

A. H. Lawrence: "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" (Short Story)

W. H. Auden: *The Sea and the Mirror* (Long Poem)

Joseph Conrad: *The Secret Agent* (Novel)

Evaluation Scheme

Two assignments: 20+20 marks

One Final Exam: 60 marks

Discipline Specific Elective: INTRODUCTION TO GENDER STUDIES

Credits: 6

Course Description

The Course will introduce students to the question: what is gender? “Gender,” in a popular sense, is understood to refer to socially constructed activities, behavior and roles that a society considers and encourages as appropriate for women and men. The course will examine this idea in terms of everyday life. Such an approach, it follows, cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-political context, both local and global. Hence, the course will be interdisciplinary in nature and will have readings pertaining to feminist theory, community, women’s movements, films, history, literature, etc. it will draw on a range of texts from a List of primary texts (literary and filmic) as well theoretical texts from India and abroad.

Evaluation will be based on attendance of classes, participation in class discussions, internal assessments (pen-and-paper tests, seminars presentations, take-home assignments, projects, etc.) and an end-of-semester examination.

Students are also encouraged to give their suggestions, if any, so that they may be incorporated, if possible.

The course is divided in three parts:

I. Basic Concepts and Theories

- 1) What is Gender Studies?
- 2) Why do we need to study gender?
- 3) Why has gender been a primary organizing principle of society?
- 4) What is sexual division of labour?

II. Gender and Social Histories

- 1) How do we think of masculinity and femininity in the context of gender education?
- 2) In what ways does gender intersect with caste, class, ethnicity and sexuality?
- 3) What factors contribute to the formation and success of movements for and against gender equality and fluidity?
- 4) How to look for connections between local and global feminisms, while also keeping in mind that differences matter?

III. Gender and Culture

- 1) In what ways has the question of body/body image emerged in gender studies?
- 2) What have been issues of representation in media?
- 3) How has violence been re-visioned?
- 4) What are some of the ways in which gender studies both interacts with and helps to bring about social change?

Reading List*

Gandhi, Nandita and Nandita Shah. "Labouring for Love and Wages." *In Issues at Stake: Theory and Practice in Contemporary Women's Movement in India*. Delhi: Kali for Women, 1992. Pp. 160-193. (Extract)

Geetha, V. "God made You Different, Nature made us Different." *Gender*. Kolkata: Stree, 2002. Pp.11-23

Monorama, Ruth "Dalit Women: The Downtrodden among the Downtrodden." In *Women's Studies in India: A Reader*, Ed. Mary E. John. Delhi: Penguin, 2008. Pp.445-452

Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *From The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vicent B. Leitch. New York and London. W.W Norton & Co, 2001.Pp.1759-1780. (1980)

Wollstonecraft, Mary. From *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In *Women Imagine Change: A Global Anthology of Women's Resistance from 600 B.C.E to Present*. Eds. Eugenia C. DeLamotte et al. New York and London: Routledge, 1997. Pp. 474-477.

Woolf, Virginia. From *A Room of One's Own*. In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed Vincent B. Leitch. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2001. Pp. 1021-1029. (1929)

Abu-Lughod, Leila. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? :Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104.3 (September 2002): 783-790.

Baxi, Pratiksha. "Rape Cultures in India." *Kafila* 23 December 2012
<http://kafila.org/2012/12/23/rape-cultures=in-india-pratiksha-baxi/>

Dyer, Richard. "Stereotyping." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Blackwell: Oxford, 2006. Pp. 353-365.

Kishwar, Madhu and Ruth Vanita. "Initiatives against Dowry Deaths." In *Women's Studies in India: A Reader*. Ed Mary E. John. Delhi: Penguin, 2008. Pp. 42-46.

Sen, Ilina. "A Space Within the Struggle." In *Writing the Women's Movement: A Reader*. Ed. Mala Khullar. Delhi: Zubaan, 2005. Pp. 80-97.

Truth, Sojourner. "Aint I a Woman?" <<http://www.firdham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.as>> (1851)

Literary Texts

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English*, New York: Norton, 1985, 2nd edition, 1996. (Selected Poems)

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper*, New York: Feminist Press, 1973. (1892)
Namjoshi, Suniti. *Feminist Fables*. London: Feminist Press, 1981. (Selected pieces)
Naylor, Gloria. *The Women of Brewster Place*. New York: Penguin, 1983. (1982 (Selected stories)

Tharu, Susie and K. Lalita, eds. *Women Writing in India: 600 BC to the Present. Volume I: 600 BC to the Early Twentieth Century*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991. [Selected pieces]

Tharu, Susie and K. Lalita, eds. *Women Writing in India 600 BC to the Present. Volume II: The Twentieth Century*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993. [Selected pieces]

*A selection can be made from this list.

Filmic Texts

Documentaries

Skin Deep. Director: Reena Mohan, 83 minutes; 1998

Something like a War. Director: Deepa Dhanraj. 52 minutes; 1991

Tales from the Margins. Director: Kavita Joshi. 23 minutes; 2006

Unlimited Girls. Director: Paromita Vohra. 94 minutes; 2002

Mainstream Cinema

Ek Hasina Thee. Director: Sriram Raghavan. 120 minutes; 2004

Mirch Masala. Director: Ketan Mehta. 128 minutes; 1987

Monsoon Wedding. Director: Mira Nair. 116 minutes; 2001.

Evaluation Scheme

Internal (40%): one presentation, one mid-term test and one project

External (60%): semester-end examination

Discipline Specific Elective: TRAGEDY: VISION AND FORM

Credits: 6

Course Description

Aims: The course aims to give the student an idea of tragedy as a dramatic genre by linking the form to the worldview in which it arises in the western literary tradition, and by extension, through cultural exchange with the non-western world. Though the influence of the European classical tradition in European language tragedy, especially English, is the focus of this course, it culminates in the negotiations made between the “western” tradition and the local dramatic arts as exemplified by Anglophone literature across the globe.

Delivery: The core literary and theoretical texts from classical literature and from the English Renaissance, are read together in class, while the European language texts and theories are accessed through student presentations. Given the strength in foreign languages on this campus, students opting for this course who are also acquiring competence in European languages, like French, German and Italian, are encouraged to access tragic drama in these languages to share with the class.

Recommended Texts

Aristotle: *Poetics* (sections relevant only)

Sophocles: *Oedipus the King*; *Antigone*

Discussion based on Class presentations: Aeschylus and Euripedes; Seneca and Stoicism; Aristotelean and Senecan tragedy

Christopher Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus*

Shakespeare: *Hamlet*/ *Macbeth*/ *King Lear* / *Othello* (any two; discussion on other two based on class presentation)

Discussion based on class presentations: Humours theory; Elizabethan and Renaissance worldview; Jacobean tragedy

Cloak and dagger tragedies: Lope de Vega and Calderon

Racine and Neo classical tragedy

Lessing: *Hamburg Dramaturgie* (selections)

Brecht: *Messingkauf Dialogues*(selections)

Edward Bond: *Lear*

Wole Soyinka: *Bacchae of Euripedes*

Evaluation Scheme

Class presentations: 20 marks

Textual reading and interpretation: 20 marks

End-semester examinations: open book exam, in two sections, focusing on link between “vision” and “form” of tragedy based on specific texts read in class (30 x 2=60 marks)

Discipline Specific Elective: Introduction to Linguistics

Credits: 6

Course Description

This course is an Introduction to different areas of Linguistics, with an emphasis on the core areas (Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics). Topics covered include: Design Features of Language; Diachronic vs synchronic approaches to Language Studies; Structuralism, Generative Grammar.

Basics of Phonetics and Phonology

Syntax: Grammatical Categories, Constituency Tests, Phrase Structure Rules, Transformational Rules, Cross-Linguistic Variation

Semantics: Semantic Relationships: entailment, implicature, presupposition. Reference and Truth. Different approaches to the study of meaning.

Textbook: None, but readings on different topics are chosen by the instructor (books, as well as online material); content varies from year to year