

Mahatma Gandhi University

Ph D Course work - English

Course 2: Developments in Literary Studies

This 4-credit course is one that engages the student in discussions of the theoretical issues that emerge from contemporary debates on literature and culture as they are carried out in a third-world context. Issues concerning colonialism, enlightenment, modernity, nationalism, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, caste, identity and subjectivity are interrogated and debated as part of the course. The passage of literary studies into cultural studies provides the broad theoretical context for the debates. The course is expected to allow the student to develop a clear perspective on the trajectory of contemporary literary theory, even as it will help her to critically engage with some of the significant texts in recent theory. The course is divided into three modules, each focusing on a different aspect of the problem. Each module contains two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A will provide discussions of issues through the suggested general reading and Section B in each module will contain two key essays relevant to the subject, meant to be read in detail.

Evaluation will be on the basis of internal and external assessment. The general topics and the suggested reading in Section A of each module will form the basis for internal assessment. The candidate will have to submit one term paper (15 pages) and give a minimum of one seminar for internal assessment. This is in addition to other assignments. The end-semester examination will be based both on Section A and Section B of all modules. There will be four essay questions of equal marks, to be answered from a choice of eight questions. One of these questions from a choice of two will be a compulsory question on the general topics listed in Section A of all the modules taken together.

[Distribution of marks for internal assessment: 25 marks for Term paper; 15 marks for the Seminar; and 10 marks for other assignments, tests, if any, and papers]

Module 1: The Making of Modernity

Section A

Description

European enlightenment and modernity – debates about modernity – colonialism and the modernity project – modernity critique – alternative modernities – modernity and literary studies – modernist sensibility and the new criticism – focus on the form of writing – birth of modernism in cosmopolitan centres – modernity/modernism in India

Suggested Reading

1. Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002).

2. Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).
3. Max Horkheimer and TW Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1979).
4. Satya P Mohanty, ed. *Colonialism, Modernity and Literature: A View from India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
5. KN Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Section B

1. Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," David Lodge, ed. *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism: A Reader* (London: Longman, 1972).
2. Terry Eagleton, "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism," David Lodge, ed. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (New York: Longman, 1988).

Module 2: Beyond Modernity

Section A: Description

Crisis in literary studies – new developments in literary studies – structuralism – post-structuralism – feminism – Marxism - literature and questions of power – knowledge and power – politics of representation – self and other – question of identity – gender, class, caste and ethnicity – subjectivity – ideology – hegemony – discourse – the postcolonial question – literature and polyphony

Suggested Reading

1. Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London: Verso, 1981)
2. John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).
3. Laura E Donaldson, *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender and Empire-Building* (London: Routledge, 1995).
4. Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movements and the Construction of Indian Identity* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995).
5. Tejaswini Niranjana, et al, ed. *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India* (Calcutta: Seagull, 1993).

Section B

1. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" David Lodge, ed. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (New York: Longman, 1988).
2. Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," *Limited, Inc.*, trans. S. Weber and J. Mehlman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

Module 3: The Cultural Turn

Section A: Description

Post- modernist perspectives on literature – new historicism and cultural materialism – literary discourse and culture – literature and the audience – question of the other – post-colonial studies – narration and nation-building – nationalism and the question of identity – subaltern studies – cultural politics – comparative literature and cultural studies

Suggested Reading

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
2. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).
3. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994).
4. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women* (London: Routledge, 1993).
5. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984).

Section B

1. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," as excerpted in Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh, eds, *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989).
2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Feminism and Cultural Theory," *In Other Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 1988).