

Institute of English, University of Kerala
 MA (CSS) Degree Course in English Language and Literature
 Intra-Departmental Elective Courses – Course Descriptions

ENG 5021 – Introduction to Gender Studies

Credits: Two

Instructor: Dr. G. S. Jayasree

Aim of the course

This course is meant for students with little or no formal background in feminist scholarship. Designed as an introductory course, it explores the theoretical deployment of the category of gender as it has come to occupy contemporary feminist thought, in a variety of national contexts and across various historical periods. In addition to covering the basic histories of feminism as a historical force, the students would be introduced to the general scope of feminist studies as an interdisciplinary intellectual project in the academy. The course questions notions of natural difference in order to explore how such notions are implicated in epistemologies, histories, broader cultural practices and relations of power. Offering an interdisciplinary explanation of how the category of gender has come to defy the human subject, this course would be useful to students of all disciplines.

Course Description

Module I focuses on three important key figures in western feminist thought.

Mary Wollstonecraft was an 18th Century English writer and advocate of women's rights. She is best known for her work *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. This is one of the earliest works of feminist philosophy which argues that women are essential to the nation, and they ought to have education to free themselves from the limitations imposed on them by society.

Simone de Beauvoir is a French Existentialist Feminist whose work, *The Second Sex* is one of the earliest attempts to confront human history from a feminist perspective. This meticulously researched work states that the social construction of women as the 'other' is a flawed process that acts as the cause of her oppression in society. She then moves to history to trace the source of these profoundly imbalanced gender roles, and studies the ways that women can support themselves and achieve autonomy.

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, is widely credited with sparking the beginnings of second wave feminism in the U.S. In this book she criticizes the concept of 'Feminine Mystique' ---- the idea created by society that women are naturally fulfilled by devoting their lives to being house wives and mothers. This book goes deep into the processes that institutionalize such restrictive notions on femininity, its effect on women and children and the need to break such a mystique. Friedan also calls for a rethinking of what it means to be feminine, offering several practical suggestions promoting education and meaningful work as the useful method by which women can avoid being trapped in Feminine Mystique.

Module II looks into Indian feminist thought.

Uma Chakravathy is a feminist historian who writes on gender and caste in India, and her work is a reflection on the reproduction and regulation of patriarchy in different class, caste and gender within colonial period. It analyses the patriarchal discourses of colonial society, the shaping of Hindu Aryan Identity, the parameters of cultural nationalism, and the implications of patriarchy in political economy and culture. It suggests a different history of

‘reform’ movements and of class/gender relations that can reshape the historical consciousness.

Tanika Sarkar focuses on the intersections of religion gender and politics in both Colonial and Postcolonial period, in particular on women and Hindu rights. Her work examines the relationship between imperialism, patriarchy and nationalism in colonial India, and traces the ideological origins of revivalist nationalist tradition in Bengal, that has important implications regarding the status of women in Indian Society. She seeks to uncover the dialectical relation of feminism and patriarchy, both in the policies of the colonial state and the politics of anticolonial movements.

Module III analyses feminist research methodology.

Shulamit Reinharz and **Lynn Davidman’s** *Feminist Methods in Social Research* offers views on conducting scientific investigations and generating theory from an explicitly feminist standpoint and examines the wide range of experiments feminist researchers undertake. It explains the relationship between feminism and methodology and challenges the stereotypes that might exist about feminist research methods. There are a variety of perspectives in feminist research method and this diversity has been of great value to feminist scholarship, seeking to overcome biases in research, bringing about social change, displaying human diversity, and acknowledging the position of the researcher.

Prescribed Books

The course will consist of three units where the following texts would be discussed:-

Unit I: Western feminist thought

1. Selections from Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*.
2. Selections from Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*.
3. Selections from Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

Unit II: Indian feminist thought

4. Uma Chakravathy. “Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi”
5. Tanika Sarkar. “Nationalist Iconography: The Image of Women in Nineteenth Century Bengali Literature.”

Unit III: Feminist research methodology

6. Shulamit Reinharz with Lynn Davidman. *Feminist Methods in Social Research*.

Assessment

Assignment 1 – 10 marks

Students will be asked to make seminar presentations on topics related to their study.

Assignment 2 – 10 marks

Students will be asked to submit term papers on topics related to their study.

Test – 15 marks

A written Mid – semester examination will be conducted.

Attendance in Lectures/Participation – 5 marks

75% attendance mandatory.

Summative Assessment – 100 marks

Internal Assessment – 40 marks

End Semester Assessment – 60 marks

Institute of English, University of Kerala MA (CSS) Degree Course in English Language and Literature Intra-Departmental Elective Courses – Course Descriptions		
ENG 5011 – Indian Feminist Thought		
	Credits: Two	Instructor: Dr. G. S. Jayasree
Aim of the course		
<p>This course aims at situating and defining Indian Feminist thought in the context of the academy where Feminist Thought is generally believed to be Western. Defining a set of issues, a body of concept, and methodologies of approach specific to India, it hopes to institutionalize the emerging body of Indian thoughts with reference to issues of gender, culture and development.</p>		
Course Description		
<p>A feminist is one who holds that there is gender discrimination in society and takes conscious measures to correct it. Though the awareness of gender based discrimination has been there in India from the earliest times, feminism as a concerted movement to contest this began only in the 1970's. Many came forward to ensure justice for women and end sexism that exists in many forms. Hence, we have different kinds of feminism in India as there are in other parts of the world and this paper attempts to provide an overview of Indian Feminist Thought.</p> <p>This paper is divided into four modules. The first module charts the contributions of feminist thought to intellectual debates in social engagement, cultural criticism, and epistemology since 1970. It will also briefly touch upon the origin and development of Indian Women's Movement (IWM), which runs almost parallel to the awakenings in the intellectual domain. In fact, the paper will examine how both are mutually contributory. The second section will look into theories of gender that tries to grapple with contemporary issues. The third section broadens this perspective in the wider framework of the nation. The fourth section will look into the new challenges that feminists face. Three major issues are identified, viz, women's reservation, sexual violence and visual representation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women's Studies methodology 2. Political movements and representation of women 3. Gendered Identity 4. Question of rights 5. Framing the nation/religion 6. Narrating the self 7. Demographic transition and reproductive health 8. Women's education 9. Global capital/Countering global capital 10. Feminization of labour 11. Violence against women 12. Gender, culture, representation. 		
Prescribed Books		

Module I: Women's Studies, Women's Movements

1. Desai, Neera, and Maithreyi Krishnaraj. "An Overview of the Status of Women in India." *Class, Caste, Gender: Readings in Indian Government and Politics*. Ed. Manoranjan Mohanty. Vol. 5. New Delhi: Sage, 2004: 296-319.
2. Sanghatana, Stree Shakti. "We Were Making History: Women and the Telangana Uprising." *Feminist Review* 37. Spring, 1991: 108-11.
3. Dietrich, Gabriele. "Women, Ecology and Culture." *Gender and Politics in India*. Ed. Nivedita Menon. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999: 72- 95.
4. Rege, Sharmila. "Dalit Women Talk Differently." *Feminism in India*. Ed. Maitreyi Chaudhuri. New Delhi: Kali for Women and Women Unlimited, 2004: 211-225.

Module II: Contemporary Theories of Gender

1. Tharu, Susie, and Tejaswini Niranjana. "Problems for a Contemporary Theory of Gender." Ed. Nivedita Menon. *Gender and Politics in India*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1991: 494-525.
2. Sangari, Kumkum. "The Politics of the Possible." *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*. Ed. Tejaswini Niranjana and Vivek Dhareshwar. Calcutta: Seagull, 1993: 242-272.
3. Viswanathan, Gouri. "The Beginning of English Literary Study." *Masks of Conquest*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989: 23-44.
4. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravarti. "Can The Subaltern Speak: Speculations on the Widow Sacrifice." *Wedge* 7/8. Winter/Spring, 1985: 120-130.

Module III: Women, Society and the Nation

1. Karve, Iravathi. "The Kinship Map of India." *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*. Ed. Patricia Uberoi. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1993: 50-73.
2. Chakravarti, Uma. "Conceptualizing Brahminical Patriarchy in Early India: Gender, Class and State." *Class, Caste, Gender: Readings in Indian Government and Politics*. Ed. Manoranjan Mohanty. Vol. 5. New Delhi: Sage, 2004: 271-295.
3. Velayudhan, Meera. "Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala." *Perspectives on Kerala History, Kerala State Gazetteer*. Ed. P. J. Cheriyan. Vol. 2 Thiruvananthapuram: Government of Kerala, 1999: 486-511.

Module IV: Contemporary Issues and New Challenges

1. Karat, Brinda. "On Political Participation." *Survival and Emancipation: Notes from Indian Women's Struggle*. New Delhi: Three Essays Collectives, 2005: 117-151.
2. Kishwar, Madhu. "Women and Politics: Beyond Quotas." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 26, Oct 1996: 2867-2874.
3. Menon, Nivedita. "Embodying Self: Feminism, Sexual Violence and the Law." *Subaltern Studies*. Ed. Partha Chatterji and Pradeep Jaganathan. Vol.11. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003: 67-105.
4. Vindhya, U. "Battered Conjuality: The Psychology of Domestic Violence." *The Violence of Normal Times*. Ed. Kalpana Kannabiran. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2005: 196-223.

Assessment

Assignment 1 – 10 marks

Students will be asked to make seminar presentations on topics related to their study.

Assignment 2 – 10 marks

Students will be asked to submit term papers on topics related to their study.

Test – 15 marks

A written Mid – semester examination will be conducted.

Attendance in Lectures/Participation – 5 marks

75% attendance mandatory.

Summative Assessment – 100 marks

Internal Assessment – 40 marks

End Semester Assessment – 60 marks

Institute of English, University of Kerala
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 Intra-Departmental Elective Courses – Course Descriptions

ENG 5017 – Women’s Writing

Credits: Two

Instructor Dr. G. S. Jayasree

Aim of the course

Women write to express their selves. However, this body of writing had never found its place in the Canon, nor been used for pedagogical purposes. This course aims to grant the much needed recognition to the creative works of women and examines the aesthetic specificities of Women’s Writing and relates them to the socio-cultural milieu.

Course Description

This paper is a testament to the creativity of women who have always borne witness to life, but were hardly ever permitted to speak. The poems, stories, plays and essays in this paper will look at historical understandings that frame relationships in different social contexts. It will go on to examine the possibilities and limitations that the body imposes on women and the way to freedom that is the dream of every woman. Writing offers a medium to record the nature of this journey to selfhood, at times joyous and at times painful.

1. Women’s Writing as a genre.
2. The richness and variety of women’s writing and to make them discern its wide range.
3. Key concepts and debates in women's writing
4. Major women writers and the salient features of the works of major women writers.
5. Analyze texts written by women.
6. Strategies employed by women in their writing practices.
7. Tracing the female literary tradition.
8. Understanding of women, their work and family through their own representation.
9. Women’s Writing from different communities, classes, countries etc.
10. Strategies used by women writers for the contestation of gender representation.

Prescribed Books

a.Poetry:

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|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Kamala Das: | “Too Late For Making Up” |
| 2. Shanta Acharya: | “Delayed Reaction” |
| 3. Vijila: | “A Place for me” |
| 4. Imtiaz Dharker: | “Minority” |
| 5. Sylvia Plath: | “Balloons” |
| 6. Alice Walker: | “Before I Leave the Stage” |
| 7. Judith Wright: | “Naked Girl and Mirror” |
| 8. Carol Ann Duffy: | “Eurydice” |
| 9. Vijayalekshmi: | “ThachanteMakal” |
| 10. Pratibha Nandakumar: | “Poem” |
| 11. Sugatha Kumari: | “Devadasi” |
| 12. Temsula Ao: | “Heritage” |

b. Drama

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| 1. Susan Glaspell: | <i>Trifles</i> |
| 2. Vinodini: | <i>Thirst</i> |

3. Alice Dunbar Nelson: *Mine Eyes Have Seen*

c. Prose

1. Virginia Woolf: "Professions for Women"
2. Nabaneeta Dev Sen: "Women Writing in India at the Turn of the Bengali)"
3. P. Sivakami: "Land: Woman's Breath and Speech"
4. Jasbir Jain: "From Experience to Aesthetics: The Dialectics of Language and Representation". *Growing up as a Woman Writer*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2006. Pp. 361-369.)
5. Tanika Sarkar: "Nationalist Iconography"
6. Anna Julia Cooper: "Loss of Speech through Isolation"
7. Romila Thapar: "Translations: Orientalism, German Romanticism and the Image of "Sakuntala"
8. Susan B. Antony: "On Women's Right to Vote"
9. Dorothy Parker: "Good Souls"

d. Fiction

1. Lalithambika Antaranjanam: *Goddess of Revenge*
2. Mahaswetha Devi: *The Divorce*
3. P. Vatsala: *The Nectar of Panguru Flower*
4. Shashi Deshpande: *Independence Day*
5. Doris Lessing: *No Witchcraft for Sale*
6. Katherine Mansfield: *A Doll's House*
7. M. Saraswati Bai: *Brainless Women*
8. Kumudini: *Letters from the Palace*
9. Penelope Fitzgerald: *The Axe*
10. Mrinal Pande: *A Woman's Farewell Song*
11. Sarah Orne Jewett: *A White Heron*

Reference:

- Leo Braudy & Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Jeffrey Geiger & R. L. Rutsky, eds. *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader*. New York: Norton, 2005.

Assessment

Assignment 1 – 10 marks

Students will be asked to make seminar presentations on topics related to their study.

Assignment 2 – 10 marks

Students will be asked to submit term papers on topics related to their study.

Test – 15 marks

A written Mid – semester examination will be conducted.

Attendance in Lectures/Participation – 5 marks

75% attendance mandatory.

Summative Assessment – 100 marks

Internal Assessment – 40 marks

End Semester Assessment – 60 marks

Institute of English, University of Kerala MA (CSS) Degree Course in English Language and Literature Intra-Departmental Elective Courses – Course Descriptions		
ENG 502 – Caste, Gender and Sexuality		
	Credits: Two	Instructor: Dr. G. S. Jayasree
Aim of the course		
<p>In India, identity is defined in terms of caste, gender and sexuality. However, the complex issues related to these categories have not been subjected to close critical enquiry. This course examines the nature of caste, gender and sexuality and their intersections in the context of Indian society.</p>		
Course Description		
<p>Questions of power, agency and resistance have become central to any course offered at the post-graduate level. If we wish to challenge and transform structures of power in society, it will be necessary to equip the students to question and decode the meanings of signs that describe and perpetuate such structures. This course helps us to understand the reasons for the subordinate status of women in terms of caste, gender and sexuality. Uma Chakravarti analyses the concepts of Brahminical patriarchy in Vedic India, where as Kumkum Roy examines a key text in the context of sexual economies of post vedic India. Paola Bacchetta looks at the intersections of sexuality and religious belief systems, where as Sharmila Rege narrows down the enquiry into the life texts of dalit women. Kalpana Kannabiran and Vasanth Kannabiran flag another important issue in gender and sexuality by examining the dynamics of power and violence. Jaya Sharma and Dipika Nath open up discussions on same sex relations in India, while Bisakha Dutta talks about the representational realities of sex workers in India. The last essay in this section by Shohini Ghosh focuses on the queer vision in Bombay cinema. Together, this series of eight essays would help the students to get a better understanding of the issues related to caste, gender, and sexuality in contemporary cultural studies.</p>		
Prescribed Books		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chakravarti, Uma. “Conceptualizing Braminical Patriarchy in Early India: Gender, Caste, Class and State.” <i>Caste, Class, Gender: Readings in Indian Government and Politics</i>. ed. Manoranjan Mohanty. New Delhi: Sage, 2004: 271-295. 2. Roy, Kumkum. “Unravelling the <i>Kamasutra</i>.” <i>A Question of Silence? The Sexual Economies of Modern India</i>. Eds. Mary E. John and Janaki Nair. New Delhi: Kali for Women, (1998) 2000: 52-76. 3. Bacchetta, Paola. “Communal Property/ Sexual Property: On Representations of Muslim Women in a Hindu Nationalist Discourse.” <i>Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologues</i>. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004: 93-144. 4. Rege, Sharmila. “Debating the Consumption of Dalit ‘Autobiographies’: The Significance of Dalit ‘Testimonios.’” <i>Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit</i> 		

Women's Testimonios. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2006: 9-92.

5. Kannabiran, Kalpana and Vasanth Kannabiran. "Caste and Gender: Understanding Dynamics of Power and Violence." *De-Eroticizing Assault: Essays on Modesty, Honour and Power*. Calcutta: Stree, 2002: 55-67.
6. Sharma, Jaya and Dipika Nath. "Through the Prism of Intersectionality: Same Sex Sexualities in India." *Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and Southeast Asia*. Eds. Geetanjali Misra and Radhika Chandiramani. New Delhi: Sage, 2005: 82-97.
7. Dutta, Bisakha. "Not a Sob Story: Representing the Realities of Sex Work in India." *Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and Southeast Asia*. Eds. Geetanjali Misra and Radhika Chandiramani. New Delhi: Sage, 2005: 260-276.
8. Ghosh, Shohini. "False Appearances and Mistaken Identities: The Phobic and the Erotic in Bombay Cinema's Queer Vision." *The Phobic and the Erotic: The Politics of Sexualities in Contemporary India*. Calcutta: Seagull, 2007: 417-436.

Assessment

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