

Institute of English, University of Kerala MA (CSS) Degree Course in English Language and Literature Intra-Departmental Elective Courses – Course Descriptions		
ENG 5018 –Technologies of Self: Writing Lives, Making History		
	Credits: Two	Instructor: Dr. G. S. Jayasree
Aim of the course		
<p>This course is a tribute to Foucault on technologies of the self. Foucault redefined the very concept of the self that we had uncritically internalized for centuries, particularly notions of Selfhood that emerged with Enlightenment Modernity. The blurring distinctions between the Public and the Private makes for a revisionary reading of many Life-Texts included for detailed reading.</p>		
Course Description		
<p>The study of an individual's life as a means to understand the times of which he or she forms an important part or cuts a representative figure has been regarded as a useful tool for historical understanding of a period. The recent interest in individual's life goes beyond this and assumes that there are certain aspects of historical enquiry that are most usefully or even inevitably carried out through a study of the lives of individuals. On a closer inspection we find that several other domains of life at the level of practices, may not have as explicit a relationship to the corporeal as is thought of, or may be at significant variance from the principles articulated in doctrinal texts. In fact the very lives of such texts may be traced by exploring the ways in which individuals and groups devise life practices which actualize these doctrines even as they transform them. Recent theoretical investigations on the technologies of the self, the possibilities of counter-history and practices of everyday life, allow an understanding of the intricate ways in which the social informs the constitution of individual lives. In this paper five examples of life writing are placed alongside five critical articles to allow a contrapuntal reading of the texts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culture, Politics, and Self-Representation 2. Archives of the Self 3. Double-Voiced Autobiographies 4. Fictional Lives 5. Righting the Self 6. Life Writing and the Work of Mediation 7. Gendered Life-Writing 8. Life-Writing in the Postcolonial Context 9. Life-Writing and Censorship 10. The Pleasures of Reading Life-histories 		
Prescribed Books		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wolpert, Stanley. <i>Gandhi's Passion: The Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi</i>. New York: Oxford UP, 2001. 2. Kadar, Marlene. "Coming to Terms: Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice." In <i>Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice</i>. Ed. Marlene Kadar. U of Toronto P, 1992. 3. Namboodirippad, Kanippayyur Sankaran. <i>Ente Smaranakal</i>. Kunnamkulam: Panchangam, 1965. 4. Arnold, David and Stuart H. Blackburn. "Introduction: Life Histories in India." In <i>Telling Lives In India: Biography, Autobiography and Life History</i>. Ed. David Arnold and Stuart H. Blackburn. Indiana UP, 2004. 		

5. Menchu, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. London: Verso, 1984.
6. Arata, Luis O. "The Testimonial of Rigoberta Menchú in a Native Tradition". In *Teaching and Testimony*: Ed. Allen Carey-Webb and Stephen Benz. New York: SUNY P, 1996.
7. Viramma, Josiane, and Jean Luc Racine. *Viramma: Life of an Untouchable*. London: Verso, 1997.
8. Rege, Sharmila. "Debating the Consumption of Dalit Autobiographies: The Significance of Dalit Testimonio." In *Writing Caste Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonios*. by Sharmila Rege. Zubaan, 2006.
9. Levi, Primo. *If this is a Man*. London: Abacus, 1979.
10. Agamben, Giorgio. Section 1 (*Witness*). From *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Zone, 2002.

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 5029 – Writing Lives, Performing Gender

Credits: Two

Instructor: Dr. G. S. Jayasree

Aim of the course

This paper with its focus on dancing bodies in performance shall open up enquiries into the behaviors of gendered, raced and sexed bodies within the cultural space. The extracts from life-writing chosen from three iconoclastic performers open up multiple ways of thinking about bodies in performance, beyond the normalized ways of embodying selves. The critical essays shall guide the students towards a concrete understanding of how the performers have dealt with and re-negotiated their societies through the subversive kinesthetic of their performing bodies and shall sensitize them towards developing more informed ways of understanding lives and bodies in performance.

Course Description

The extract from the life of Isadora Duncan shall acquaint the students with the persistent struggle of an iconoclastic performer, considered the creator of modern dance in the west, to extend the grammar of female dancing body beyond the codified rigidities of classical ballet. Duncan wanted to restore dance to a high art form instead of entertainment and for this she continually sought to redefine the connection between emotions and movement. Her autobiography tries to capture the agonies of a life that was devoted to experimenting with the self, body and the other.

Chandralekha is in many ways an epochal eastern counterpart of Isadora Duncan and hence elaborates the enquiries of the students begun in the first extract to a more familiar cultural scenario. Her incessant experiments to widen the idiom of bharatanatyam to encompass the powerfully fluid movements of limbs in kalaripayattu and yoga, to tap multiple ways of erotic expression, her quests to bring out the feminine within the male, and her own postulations of the seamless body shall incite further critical thinking in these directions.

A dancer-choreographer who shocked the classical ballet audience used to stipulated kinesthetics of the moving male body, Vaslav Nijinsky's modes of expression were futuristic in many ways. From dancing *en pointe* which was not expected of men to extreme sparseness employed in rendering and his two dimensional movement vocabulary set against lush music and open expression of physicality on stage, Nijinsky's life both on and off the stage was riveting. This extract brings in myriad questions into norms of masculinity that popular art and literature promote.

The extract from Sarah Caldwell's study of *mudiyettu* in many ways consolidates the explorations incited by the other selections in this paper. The remarkable power of this book's analyses of sexualities in performances in a ritual space in Kerala comes from the position of an involved participant that she takes, as against any supposed objective scholarship on the same. The mix of insight in the form of entries in her journal and letters that generously peppers her academic analysis enables her to pour forth the frustrations within her person as she encounters conventions of female behaviour and gender performance in Kerala. The vividly examined psychological dynamics working behind ritual structures, the conflicts between genders it reflects and the way the same are negotiated through ritual, all narrated with empathy shall encourage students further in their own experiential

assessments.

Prescribed Books

Module 1:

Required Reading:

- **Duncan, Isadora. *My Life*. New York: Liveright, 1995.**

Recommended Reading:

1. Franko, Mark. "The Invention of Modern Dance." *Dancing Modernism: Performing Politics*. New York: IUP, 1995.
2. Foster, Susan Leigh. "The Ballerina's Phallic Pointe." *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
3. Phelan, Peggy. "Dance and the History of Hysteria." *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Module 2:

Required Reading:

- **Barucha, Rustom. *Chandralekha: Woman, Dance, Resistance*. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1999.**

Recommended Reading:

1. Chatterjee, Ananya. "Chandralekha: Negotiating the Female Body and Movement in Cultural/Political Signification." *Moving History, Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Dils Ann and Ann Cooper Albright. New York: WUP, 2001.
2. Coorlawala, Uttara. "Ananya and Chandralekha – A Response to Chandralekha: Negotiating the Female Body and Movement in Cultural/Political Signification." *Moving History, Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Dils Ann and Ann Cooper Albright. New York: WUP, 2001.
3. Hanna, Lynne Judith. "The Sense and Symbol of Sexuality and Gender in Dance Images." *Dance, Sex and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance and Desire*. Chicago: UCP, 1998.

Module 3:

Required Reading:

- **Nijinsky, Vaslav. *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*. Ed. Romola Nijinsky. London: UCP, 1971.**

Recommended Reading:

1. Kopelson, Kevin. "Nijinsky's Golden Slave." *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on and off the Stage*. Ed. Jane Desmond. Wisconsin: UWP, 2001.

2. Hodson, Millicent. "Searching for Nijinsky's Sacre" *Moving History, Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Dils Ann and Ann Cooper Albright. New York: WUP, 2001.
3. Burt, Ramsay. "Dissolving in Pleasure: The Threat of the Queer Male Dancing Body." *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on and off the Stage*. Ed. Jane Desmond. Wisconsin: UWP, 2001.

Module 4:

Required Reading:

- **Caldwell, Sarah.** *Oh Terrifying Mother: Sexuality, Violence and Worship of the Goddess Kali*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999.

Recommended Reading:

1. Joyce, Rosemary. "Goddesses, Matriarchs and Manly-Hearted Women: Troubling Categorical Approaches to Gender." *Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives: Sex, Gender and Archaeology*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2008.
2. Perry, E. M., and Rosemary Joyce. "Providing a Past for Bodies that Matter: Judith Butler's *Impact on the Archaeology of Gender*." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*. 6: 63-76.
3. Brewer, Carolyn. "'Good' and 'Bad' Women: The Virgin and the Whore." *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines, 1521-1685*. London: Ashgate, 2004.
4. Bahrani, Zainab. "Metaphorics of the Body: Nudity, the Goddess and the Gaze." *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*. London: Routledge, 2001.

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