



Department of English
VISVA-BHARATI
Santiniketan

Coursework-Syllabus for M.Phil
2019-20

Kindly note that the following syllabus comprises a large pool of approaches and concepts from which a selection will be offered each semester at the discretion of the department

First Semester: Courses 1.0 & 2.1/2.2 (2 courses: 1 compulsory, 1 elective)

Second Semester: Courses 3.1/3.2/3.3 & 4.1/4.2/4.3 (2 courses: 2 electives)

First Semester: Two courses – 1.0 compulsory & one from 2.1/2.2 (Literary Theory)

Course No. 1.0: (8 credits/100 marks): Compulsory
Research Methodology and Techniques

Course objective: The students should have a wide awareness of the various methods and techniques of conducting research. They would also be introduced to the ethical aspect of research in an age of information explosion.

Learning outcome: After doing this course, the students will have gained an understanding of the domain of independent research. They would have acquired the skill of conceptualising a hypothesis, following which they would move on to apply various research techniques to confidently pursue their interrogation.

- a) Ideas of method, methodology, research tools, textual method, survey, qualitative research vs quantitative research; hypothesis, thesis statement; data collection; different styles of documentation, e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago Manual.
- b) Theories and strategies of writing a proposal/synopsis; writing literature reviews; writing an academic paper.

Course No. 2.1: (8 credits/100 marks): Elective course (selections from the following)

Literary Theory I: Language & the Mind

Course objectives: The researchers would be taught to study the programmed employment of language by writers far more incisively. The course aims at foregrounding the centrality of language and semantics in a substantial body modern literary theory as crucial to representation, and selfhood. The interrelationships between the world outside, the human subject and the work of art, the course would seek to establish, are mediated through language in the inner sanctum of human psyche.

Learning outcome: The researchers will have benefitted from the rich treasure of theories produced by thinkers hailing from different corners of the world. They would learn to question any easy and simplistic assumption about the nature of artistic creativity and of the meaning-making exercise. The result should be a vigorous questioning on their part of the students of the matrix of signifiers that we continuously negotiate to exist in our societies.

1. Russian Formalism
2. New Criticism
3. Phenomenology/Hermeneutics
4. Structuralism
5. Reader-response
6. Poststructuralism
7. Deconstruction
8. Psychoanalysis
9. Narratology
10. Modernisms

Course No. 2.2: (8 credits/100 marks): Elective course (selections from the following)

Literary Theory II: Histories & Politics

Course objectives: The definitions of history and politics have undergone sea-change over the years. The objective of the present course is to further sensitize the students to the unavoidable reality of the human subject and her knowledge being shaped by an intricate network of power-plays. A critical awareness of the discursive functioning of innumerable centers of power and various kinds of identity politics leaving their marks upon the fields of art and literature is what the course would aim at developing.

Learning outcome: As members of the society, it is expected, the students would be able to grapple with and question the functioning of social registers and various political forces not only in the world of art and aesthetics, but also in actual lived life. Not only would they emerge as critically aware readers, but also they would develop the skill of living life more meaningfully.

1. New Historicism
2. Cultural Materialism
3. Marxism
4. Feminism
5. Gender Studies
6. Race Theories
7. Postcolonialism
8. Culture Studies
9. Ecocriticism
10. Postmodernisms

Second Semester: Two courses – One each from clusters 3.1/3.2/3.3 and clusters 4.1/4.2/4.3 based on genres

Course No. III: Elective Course (8 credits/100 marks)

Course No.3.1 Theories of Fiction/Novel – Historical Perspectives

Course objectives: The students should receive comprehensive information about the history and evolution of the genre of fiction, from the time of its emergence in the Enlightenment Europe to its multifaceted development all over the world till date. An examination of the local cultural experiences that impacted the novel form would help them locate the heterogeneous histories of the novel in their plural contexts.

Learning outcome: The students will have received a thorough grounding in the chronological development of the novel form and its diverse spatial and cultural formations. This will, in turn, help them understand the nature of aesthetic, historical and cultural transactions between different cultures all over the globe—European, North and South American, Indian and African and so on.

1. The Rise of the Novel
2. Development of the Genre – picaresque, epistolary
3. European Perspectives
4. British Trends in the Long Nineteenth Century
5. Twentieth Century Developments
6. Developments in America
7. South American Experiments
8. Novel & the Postcolonial Turn

Course No.3.2 Theories of Poetry – Historical Perspectives

Course objectives: The phases of development undergone by the genre of poetry from the beginnings to the present day constitute the history of the creative uses of language aimed at communication of emotion. The present course would introduce the students to a detailed outline of the history of evolution of English poetry, tracing its history back to the European classical context and its various incarnations right up to the twentieth century.

Learning outcome: Having gone through this course, the students will have acquired a clear picture of the developments of British poetry. This would include a thorough understanding of the interrelation between the world of poetry and the socio-political-cultural discourses at work at various places and times in this long tradition.

1. The Classical Context
2. The Heroic & the Elegiac
3. The Pastoral Tradition
4. Augustan Experiments
5. Romanticisms: Continental & British
6. Victorian Tendencies
7. Continental Influences
8. Modernism and After

Course No.3.3 Theories of Drama – Historical Perspectives

Course objectives: A detailed discussion of the birth, genesis and evolution of the genre of drama taking place in several cultural contexts would be undertaken in this paper. A special emphasis will be given on the European and Indian theatrical developments in particular.

Learning outcome: After doing the course, it is expected, the students should acquire a vision of the historical developments of theatre in many parts of the world. They would thus be able to locate their own projects within the large schema of things accordingly.

1. Classical Drama – European Context
2. Classical Drama – Indian Context
3. Early Modern British Drama & Stage
4. Modern & Postmodern British/European/American Theatre
5. Modern & Postmodern Indian Theatre – Rural/Urban/Folk
6. Colonial & Postcolonial Theatre
7. Origin and Developments of Bangla Theatre

Course No. IV: Elective Course (to be chosen/opted for from among several courses) (8 credits/100 marks)

Course No.4.1 Theories of Fiction/Novel – Theoretical Perspectives

Course objectives: The students of this course would be introduced to a range of theories of fiction produced primarily, but not exclusively, by Euro-American literary and philosophical thinkers in the twentieth century. A course on the theoretical perspectives would enable them to explore the various themes, forms, styles and techniques adopted by authors from rigorously critical perspectives.

Learning outcome: The researchers will have become more sensitive to the relationship between aesthetics and politics present in the world of texts. They would develop an understanding of the ways in which social, political, economic, philosophical and other cultural experiences leave their imprints in the world of fiction.

1. Narratology
2. Discourse Theory
3. Realism, Naturalism, Surrealism, Expressionism
4. Magical Realism
5. Modernist Perspectives
6. Metafiction & Postmodernism
7. Novels & its New Horizons
8. Indigenous Inflections

Course No.4.2 Theories of Poetry – Theoretical Perspectives

Course objectives: The students would be encouraged to look at poetry not merely as ‘spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,’ but as more rationally conducted mediations of experiences. Through a rigorous exploration of the relationship between generic conventions,

linguistic practices, formal maneuvers and their relationship with the larger field of cultural signification, the course would try and develop in them a critical poetry-reading acumen.

Learning outcome: The course, it is hoped and believed, will have helped students to approach poetry from a more rational and objective perspective. This would also enable them to explore the evolving position of the subject in society as well as the world of poetic representation.

1. Poetical Genres
2. Language & Diction of Poetry
3. Poetry, Self & Society
4. Poetry & the Other Arts
5. Poetry & Environment

Course No.4.3 Theories of Drama – Theoretical Perspectives

Course objectives: In this course students will receive training in the understanding, appreciation, and criticism of drama. The course would introduce students to the various theoretical perspectives available on drama and theatre as literary and performative genres in Europe, India and elsewhere.

Learning outcome: This course will have enabled students to develop a theoretical understanding of various aspects of drama as literary and performance text, namely action, character, stage, representation and so on. They will gain a grounding on the experimental achievements of several theatre practitioners and thinkers and would be in a better position to understand the transaction between the aesthetics and politics of theatre.

1. Mimetic theory and Catharsis
2. Realisms and challenges to Realisms
3. Epic Theatre/Theatre of the Absurd/Theatre of Cruelty
4. Performance Theories
5. Theatre Semiotics – Theatrical Adaptations

Third Semester: Literature Review & Synopsis (100 marks)

Fourth Semester: MPhil Dissertation & viva-voce (150 + 50 marks)

Total marks: (100 + 100; Semester I); (100 + 100; Semester II); (100; Semester III); (150 + 50; Semester IV) = **700**