

IIT Madras Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems

COURSE TITLE: INDIAN CLASSICS IN CONTEXT

Focus Area/Subject Area: Sanskrit literature/ Indian literature

Credits: 10

Eligibility: Core course for 1st year M.A students of English Studies

Details of the Instructor:

Dr. Jyotirmaya Tripathy, Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

Course Objectives:

The course offers selections from India's diverse literary traditions, particularly Sanskrit and Tamil (Sakuntala, Mrichhakatika, Mudrarakshasa, Silapathikaram). After introducing students to the fundamentals of Indian poetics, the course draws from classical drama to hold a mirror to the times in which these texts were produced and highlights their resonance in contemporary times.

Learning Outcome:

This broad-based course will help students to get a sense of India's classical literature across languages and help them develop a comparative perspective.

SYLLABUS

Unit 1

Introduction to Indian classical literature

Unit 2

Sanskrit/Tamil drama and poetics

Unit 3

Kalidasa's Abhijnanasakuntalam, kingship, love, nature/culture dichotomy, suffering

Unit 4

Sudraka's Mrichhakatika, politics, class/caste, urbanism, social order

Unit 5

Tamil poetics and Atigal's Cilappatikaram, philosophy of love, justice and war

Unit 6

Vishakhadatta's Mudrarakshasa; politics, governance and public morals

References

Text Books:

1. Atigal, Ilango. The Cilappatikaram. Trans. R. Parthasarathy. Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2004.
2. Sudraka. The Mrichhakatika. Trans. M.R. Kale. Motilal Banarsidas: New Delhi, 2013.
3. Kalidasa. "Abhijnanasakuntalam", in Kalidasa: The Loom of Time. Trans. Chandra Rajan. Penguin: New Delhi, 2013.
4. Visakhadatta. Mudrarakshasa. Trans. M.R. Kale. Motilal Banarsidas: New Delhi, 2017.

Reference Books:

1. Marudanayagam, P. Ancient Tamil Poetry and Poetics. Central Institute of Classical Tamil: Chennai, 2020.
2. Sarkar, Bihani. Classical Sanskrit Tragedy: The Concept of Suffering and Pathos in Medieval India. I.B.Tauris, 2021.
3. Dasgupta, S.N. A History of Sanskrit Literature. University of Calcutta: Calcutta, 1947.
4. Upadhyaya, B.S. India in Kalidasa. Kitabistan: Allahabad, 1947.
5. Barlingay, S.S. A Modern Introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory. DK Printworld: New Delhi, 2016.