

IIT Madras Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems

COURSE TITLE: INDIAN CULTURAL STUDIES

Focus Area/Subject Area: Sanskrit literature/ Indian literature

Credits: 9

Eligibility: B. Tech or M.A student

Details of the Instructor:

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

Course Objectives:

Academic study of cultures in India has remained derivative of Western categories, assumptions and ideologies. If the earlier Indian understanding of its own cultures was conditioned by colonialism, the same practice prevails today in subtle forms, the most important being the continuation of the West as the reference point for any engagement with human cultural expression. Ideas such as modernity, nationalism, development, cosmopolitanism etc. have all been applied readymade to Indian experience thereby making Indian reality as either derivative or deviant examples. Such framing of Indian experience and subject hood as the absence of Western experience remains at the heart of a current academic scholarship in India to a large extent. Unfortunately, responses to the absence of organic Indian thought has been either non-existent or patchy. The proposed course aims at introducing students to distinct Indian ways of cultural expressions and offers pathways to understand self and subjectivity in the context of localism, nationalism and globalism. Conventional cultural studies, predicated on Western intellectual frameworks, cannot adequately capture the complexity and layered nature of Indian history. In a departure from such predictable pursuit, the course engages with Indian experience as articulated by its thinkers who provide a way of thinking about Indianness (in all its diversity) and Indian experiences. However, it is not intended to completely ignore the mediated and cross-pollinated nature of Indian thought. The course will cover key texts from the late 19th century to understand what constitutes Indian subjectivity, its difference, authenticity and life world, its implications for nationhood and claims of particularism vis-à-vis universalism.

Learning Outcome:

The course is intended to equip the students with theoretical idiom to investigate the ways in which Indian thought since early 20th century shaped and transformed individual experiences as well as their place in the cultural world. The students will also learn to articulate their individual and collective experiences through the idea and vocabulary explored in the course.

SYLLABUS

Unit 1

Introduction: (Orientalist, colonial and contemporary representation of India)

Unit 2

Indian difference: (Aurobindo, Ramanujan, Bankimchandra, Malhotra and others)

Unit 3

Self and subjectivity: (Gandhi, Upadhyay, M.N. Roy, Ashis Nandy, Dharmapal and others)

Unit 4

Home, Nation and the World: (Nehru, Tagore, Ambedkar, Savarkar, Mazumdar, Malaviya and others)

Unit 5

Swaraj: (Lajpat Rai, Gandhi, Tilak, Rajaji, Alvares, Balagangadhar and others)

Unit 6

Art and aesthetics: (Coomaraswamy, Hiriyana, Radhakrishnan, Aurobindo, Naipaul, Devy and others)

References:

Text Books:

1. Knut A. Jacobsen. Ed. Modern Indian Culture and Society. Routledge: London, 2009.
2. Nalini Bhushan & Jay L. Garfield. Eds. Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence.
3. Oxford University Press: New York, 2011.
4. Vasudha Dalmia & Rashmi Sadana. Eds. The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2012.

Reference Books:

1. Alvares, Claude. "A Critique of the Eurocentric Social Science and the Question of Alternatives". Economic and Political Weekly. 46. 22, 2011.
2. Ambedkar, B.R. Pakistan or the Partition of India. Columbia University: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambekar_partition
3. Balagangadhara, S.N. Reconceptualizing India Studies. Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2012.
4. Chatterjee, Partha. Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse. Zed Books: London, 1993.
5. Chattopadhyay, Bankimchandra. "Is Nationalism a Good Thing?" and "Critics of Hinduism". In Awakening Bharat Mata, ed. Swapan Dasgupta. Penguin: New Delhi, 2019.
6. Coomaraswamy, A.K. "Indian Nationality". Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence. Oxford University Press: New York, 2011.
7. Coomaraswamy, A.K. "Art and Swadeshi". Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence. Oxford University Press: New York, 2011.
8. Gandhi, M.K. Hind Swaraj. Navjeevan Publishing: Ahmedabad, 1938.
9. Ghosh, Aurobindo. "A Defence of Indian Culture". The Renaissance in India and other Essays on Indian Culture. Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Pondicherry, 2002.
10. Hiriyanna, M. "Art Experience". Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence. Oxford University Press: New York, 2011.
11. Malhotra, Rajiv. Being Different. Harper India: New Delhi, 2013.
12. Nandy, A. The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism. OUP: New

- Delhi, 1983.
13. Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Discovery of India*. OUP: New Delhi, 1985.
 14. Ramanujan, A.K. "Is there an Indian Way of Thinking: An Informal Essay". *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. Vol. 23, No. 41, 1989.
 15. Roy, M.N. *Selected Writings*. Prometheus Books: New Delhi, 2004.
 16. Savarkar, V.D. *The Essentials of Hindutva*.
http://savarkar.org/en/encyc/2017/5/23/2_12_12_04_essentials_of_hindutva.v001.pdf_1.pdf
 17. Sharma, Arvind. *Hinduism and its Sense of History*. OUP: New Delhi, 2003.
 18. Tagore, Rabindranath. "Nationalism in India". *Rabindranath Tagore Omnibus III*. Rupa: New Delhi, 2005.
 19. Upadhyay, Deendayal. *Integral Humanism*. 1965.
<http://www.chitrakoot.org/download/IntegralHumanism.pdf>

Journals:

Modern Asian Studies, Contributions to Indian Sociology, South Asia, Contemporary South Asia