1. CASTE AND THE QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS BELONGING

Dr. Tapan Basu

The course will focus upon the examination of some of the debates about religious belonging which have emerged out of engagement with issues related to caste identity and caste difference in twentieth century Indian society. The basis of the study will be a selection of texts by an eclectic collection of authors.

The Ambedkar-Gandhi discord on the subject of the relationship between the so-called untouchable castes and Hinduism, which came to the fore in the context of the award of separate electorates to the untouchable castes after the Round Table Conference of 1931, will be the starting point for our weekly discussions. But a prelude to an analysis of this polemical encounter will be set through highlighting the limits of Hindu modernity’s introspections on the problem of caste as exemplified by some writings of Rabindranath Tagore, a staunch ally of Gandhi in his dispute with Ambedkar on separate electorates. In this context, an examination of some of the stories on caste-discrimination by Premchand, a “progressive” writer with an aboved Gandhian outlook, will also be undertaken.

Ambedkar’s disillusionment with Gandhi and the Gandhian approach to the caste problem led him to, slowly but surely, repudiate his Hindu affiliation and ultimately to covert “outside the fold” of Hinduism. Hinduism’s hegemonic hold upon the untouchable castes was thus dramatically loosened. The challenge posed by Ambedkar to Hinduism via his conversion was matched by the one mounted by E.V. Ramaswami ‘Periyar’ through his 'sacreligious' attacks on Hinduism’s ideologies and iconography, Periyar’s atheism was as much an attempt at the “annihilation of caste” as was Ambedkar’s conversion.

Debates about religious conversion, from the colonial period in Indian history to the contemporary moment, have been, therefore, necessarily informed by concerns about the plight of the so-called untouchable castes. The consideration of these debates will take into account the nuanced negotiation on
the part of members of the untouchable castes of both the missionary enterprise of proselytisation on the one hand and on the other hand the reactive efforts to retain their allegiance by custodians of their creed by birth. Several Dalit personal narratives, notably those by writers such as Hazari and Bama, have, over the years, even problematised the projection of religious conversion as a panacea for Dalit oppression. The persistence of caste in other religions as well has frequently troubled Dalit thinkers.

The followers of Ambedkar, however, had far fewer qualms about the matter of change of faith than their Babasaheb himself. Thus, the manifesto of the Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra, published in 1972, was, in line with the Navayana Buddhism propagated by Ambedkar, blatantly anti-theocratic in its orientation. Panther poets, drawing inspiration from Baburao Bagul, the ‘father’ of Marathi Dalit literature, penned severe indictments of Brahminical precepts and practices.

Likewise, in the 1980s, Kancha Ilaiah, a backward caste scholar from Hyderabad, drafted a parodic rebuttal to Gandhi’s statement “Why I am a Hindu” in his monograph “Why I am not a Hindu.” In “Why I am not a Hindu”, Ilaiah proudly proclaimed that Dalits (and Bahujans) have alternative deities, alternative cultural frameworks and alternative production relations to those of the upper castes. Due attention will be paid to the study of the relics, rites and rituals of some of the localised, ‘indigenous’ cults, not allied to the major religious traditions, which often constitute the core of the many minor religious belief-systems that Dalits have evolved for themselves.

The course will conclude with a study of the Sharankumar Limbale’s novel *Hindu*, whose recently published English translation is now available in the market. *Hindu* foregrounds with terrible starkness the paradoxical condition of being used by the Hindus and of simultaneously being abused by the Hindus which is the lot of the Dalit in India today.

**Schedule of Meetings**

Week 1 : A Profile of the Course
Week 2 : Rabindranath Tagore:

_Gora_ (1909), A Vision of India’s History (1912), _Ghare Baire_ (1916)

Week 3 : Premchand:

“Ghaaswali” (1929), “Sadgati” (1930), “Thakur ka Kuan” (1932),

“Doodh ka Daam” (1933), “Kafan” (1935)

Week 4 : M.K. Gandhi

Selections from

_The Removal of Untouchability_

A compilation of some of his writings (1954)

_All are Equal in the Eyes of God_

A compilation of some his writings (1964)

_What is Hinduism?_

A compilation of some of his writings (1994)

Week 5 : B.R. Ambedkar

Speech delivered on the occasion of the Mahad Satyagraha (1927)

Evidence before the Simon Commission (1928)

Testimony given at the Second Sitting of the Sub-Committee (Minorities) during the

First Round Table Conference (1930)

_Annihilation of Caste_ (1936)

Reply to the Mahatma (1936)

_Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of Untouchables_ (1943)

_What Congress and the Gandhi have Done to the Untouchables_ (1945)
Week 6 : B.R. Ambedkar

“Away from the Hindus” (1936)

The Untouchables: Who were they and why they became Untouchables (1948)

The Buddha and his Dhamma (1957)

Week 7 : E.V. Ramaswami ‘Periyar’

Selections from his Writings (1925-1950)

Week 8 : Debates on religious conversion

(From the colonial period to date)


Week 9 : Hazari

Untouchable: An Autobiography of an Indian Outcaste (1951)

Bama

Karukku (1992)

Week 10 : Manifesto to the Dalit Panther Party (1972), and a selection of poetry by Marathi Dalit poets (1960s to 1980s).

Week 11 : Kancha Ilaiah

Why I am Not a Hindu (1995)


Badri Narayan

Contesting Fables, Contested Memories and Dalit Political Discourse (2001)
Week 12 : Sharan Kumar Limbale

Hindu (2003)

Week 13 : Concluding Discussion
2. POSTCOLONIAL THEORY: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Dr. Ira Raja

The most remarkable legacy of Said’s analysis of empire in Orientalism was to focus on the role played by discursive constructions of the Orient as an object of knowledge rather than descriptions of the material factors underpinning empire. Such was the force and impact of Said’s argument in Orientalism that for about five years after its publication in 1978, it occasioned scarce disagreement. But as the full implications of Said’s treatise hit home, a vigorous debate was initiated in literary studies which had spread by the mid 1980s to encompass virtually every discipline in the humanities and social sciences. This course offers a critical introduction to major theoretical debates which shaped the contours of the field we know as postcolonial studies today. The course will focus on some of the best known and most widely discussed essays in the field, which were generally published, in the first instance, in interdisciplinary journals, defined by broad rather than exclusively postcolonial interests. Part of the aim of this course is to try and understand why these particular essays came to be as influential as they did, paying special attention to the genre (journal article rather than monograph) and the forum of publication (interdisciplinary journals). Over the course of 12 weeks, students will also be introduced to more recent theoretical developments in the field, including ecocriticism, cosmopolitanism, and globalisation. Finally, students will be invited to look critically upon postcolonial theory from the interdisciplinary perspectives of area studies, development studies and sociology, among others. Students will have two to three prescribed essays to read for the weekly seminars. They will be strongly urged to pursue close readings of the essays, chase up inter-textual references where possible, and consult the supplementary reading list comprising mainly of books that developed from the initial essays prescribed in the weekly readings.

READING SCHEDULE
Week 1:  

* Introduction  


Week 2:  

* Hybridity and its Discontents  


Week 3:  

* Universality and Difference  


Week 4:  

* Postmodernism and Postcolonialism  

Week 5:  
**Subalternity and Representation**


Week 6:  
**Postcolonialism and Feminism**


Week 7:  
**Ecocriticism**


Week 8:  

**Globalisation**


Week 9:  

**Cosmopolitanism**


Week 10:  

**Postcolonial Studies: Challenges from Without**


Week 11:  


Week 12: Concluding Discussion

Dr. Tapan Basu

In his seminal study of class mobility within the African-American social context, *Black Bourgeoisie* (1957), E. Franklin Frazier struck a very different note from that of the euphoria of middle-class arrival which had been sounded in the contributions to *The New Negro* (1925), an anthology of writings by an earlier generation of African-American intelligensia:

When the opportunity has been present, the black bourgeoisie has exploited the Negro masses as ruthlessly as have whites. As the intellectual leaders in the Negro community, they have never dared to think beyond a narrow opportunistic philosophy that provided a rationalisation for their own advantages... The masses regard the black bourgeoisie as simply those who have been “lucky in getting money” which enables them to engage in conspicuous consumption...

Between the publication of *Black Bourgeoisie* and Barack Obama’s historic ascendancy to the United States presidency in 2008, the African-American middle class has not only expanded exponentially, but has also steadily acquired remarkable visibility and influence in the American public domain.

The readings for the weekly seminars of my course have been selected with the aim of enabling discussion, on the one hand, of a perception, among many members of the African-American middle-class, of the “declining significance of race” (William Junius Wilson’s phrase) and, on the other hand, a realisation, willing or unwilling, by perhaps even a larger section among them, that “race matters” (Cornel West’s phrase). Post-Great Depression African-American literary texts are often sites of exploration of the ambiguities and ambivalences of racial affiliation of a increasingly empowered black bourgeoisie as much as they are imaginative negotiations of the life of a racial community which is a community no longer.
Schedule:

Week I: Introduction.

Week II: Alain Locke, ed. *The New Negro* (1925)
Langston Hughes, “The Negro and the Racial Mountain” (1926); *The Big Sea* (1940)

Week III: Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940); *Black Boy* (1945)
Ann Petry, *The Street* (1946)


Week V: Ralph Ellison, “Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke” (1958); “The World and the Jug” (1963, 1964)
Hoyt Fuller, “Towards a Black Aesthetic” (1968)
Addison Gayle Jr., *The Black Aesthetic* (1971)


Week XII: Bill Cosby Speaks at the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Brown vs Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court Verdict (2004)


Concluding discussion
2. IMAGINED STATES

Ira Raja

The state has been the subject of intense analysis in recent years. Yet, conceptual clarity on what we mean by the term remains elusive. Most definitions of the state rely on the separation of state from society. In practice, however, as Timothy Mitchell notes, the line dividing state from society is frequently found to be ‘elusive, porous, and mobile.’ Would one be better off then abandoning the hypothesis of the state altogether?

This course draws upon readings from the fields of political theory, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and literature to understand the ambiguities of the modern state: as both illusory and concrete, distant and localized, intimate and impersonal, destructive and productive.

Theoretical readings will alternate each week with fictional texts, encouraging students to read the two sets of readings in relation to each other.

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

Wk 1       Introductory Session


Wk 3       O.V. Vijayan/ *The Saga of Dharmapuri*


Wk 5       Gabriel Garcia Marquez/ *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975)

Wk 7  Katherine Boo/ *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* (2012)


Wk 9  Aye Kwei Armah/ *The Beautiful Ones are not yet born* (1968)


Wk 12  Concluding Discussion
3. WOOLF AND HER OTHERS

Dr. Brinda Bose

The current of the moths flying strongly this way. A lamp & a flower pot in the centre. The flower can always be changing…I have two different currents—the moths flying along; the flower upright in the centre; a perpetual crumbling and renewing of the plant. In its leaves she might see things happen. (Virginia Woolf, Diary III, 229)

This course will read Virginia Woolf’s novels and the aesthetics of a gendered modernism against the grain of a subterranean body of writing and other arts in the age of Bloomsbury. This will include her own essays, short stories and diary entries along with sometimes less-known, sometimes popular, sometimes avant-garde work that she is un/consciously in dialogue with throughout her life, and that often interrogates both Woolf’s own predilections as well as our understanding of the elite High Moderns whom she represents. The intention of the course is to see Woolf not as a modernist proto-feminist experimental novelist in isolation but to set her as a cat among the pigeons, so to speak, of many powerful conflicted movements within Modernism that argue with each other in diverse ways and that contradict any view one might have of the larger literary movement as a monolith devoid of significant political rumblings.

The course will be structured with Woolf as the central component and other artists working in different genres and media as comparative frames: peripheral modernist/avant garde writing, as well as art, cinema, dance. While some of these ‘texts’ may be by women, it will not be exclusively so, as questions of gendered modernisms are not confined to them, and Woolf reacted continually to the work of male contemporaries that then clearly contributed to the shaping of her gendered/sexual sensibilities. Varied equations with contemporary artists led Woolf to creative inspirations and partnerships (most notably perhaps with sister Vanessa Bell, husband Leonard Woolf and lover Vita Sackville-West) but we will appraise her work and that of some of her contemporaries both in conversation and in combat, in the light of a vibrant and
A heterogeneous artistic milieu that was modernism in the west in the first half of the 20th century. This course will attempt to address instances of modernist crossover – between genres of literature and other media, keeping Woolf as the shifting, reverberating centre – by sniffing out a radical edge to their artistic pursuits, often the more radical because it subsists in the margins, subterranean locations and interstices of the more visible work we know, see, and read. In this, the course hopes to explore a newer politics of praxis in a fresh encounter with gendered modernisms.

Tentative Frames for Reading and Discussion

Week 1: dissensus

Jacques Ranciere, from Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics

Laura Frost, from The Problem with Pleasure: Modernism and its Discontents

Virginia Woolf, ‘Impassioned Prose’ and ‘The Cinema’ (essays, 1926)

Week 2: excursions, pleasures, art

Woolf, The Voyage Out, i

Michael Levenson, from Modernism


Week 3: fights and fractions

Woolf, The Voyage Out, ii

Suffragette novel: Constance Maud, No Surrender
[Raymond Williams, ‘The Metropolis and the Emergence of Modernism’ and ‘The Bloomsbury Fraction’ (essays)]

**Week 4: waywardness, ruptures**

Woolf, *Jacob’s Room, i*

Modernist Art: Surrealism, Dadaism, Cubism

[Peter Bürger, from *Theory of the Avant-Garde*]

**Week 5: voices and portraits**

Woolf, *Jacob’s Room, ii*

British Art: Vanessa Bell; portraits of Woolf; Walter Sickert

[Woolf, ‘On Being Ill’ (essay)]

**Week 6: O city city**

Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*

Walter Benjamin, from *The Arcades Project*

Charles Baudelaire, from *Flowers of Evil*

[Benjamin on Baudelaire, From *The Writer of Modern Life* (‘Flaneur’ chapter)]

**Week 7: difficult loves**

Woolf, *Orlando*

Vita Sackville-West, from *Isle of Lesbos* (Letters to Virginia Woolf and Violet Trefusis)
[Nigel Nicholson, from *Portrait of a Marriage*]

**Week 8: memory and defacement**

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse, i*

Woolf, A Sketch of the Past, from *Moments of Being*

[Paul de Man, ‘Autobiography as Defacement’]

**Week 9: sharpness, sparseness**

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse, ii*

H.D., Imagism, poems

[H.D., essays on cinema: *The Cinema and the Classics*

(‘Beauty’; ‘Restraint’; ‘The Mask and the Movietone’)]

**Week 10: desire in pirouettes**

Woolf, *The Waves, i*

Anais Nin and Henry Miller: *A Literate Passion* (Letters, 1932-1953)

Modern Dance: Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham

[Terry Eagleton, ‘Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism’]

**Week 11: skin-deep**

Woolf, *The Waves, ii*

Gertrude Stein, From *Tender Buttons*
[Jane Bennett, from *Vibrant Matter: The Political Ecology of Things*

Michel Serres, from *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*

**Week 12: acts, beats**

Woolf, *Between the Acts, i*

The Beat Generation: from Allen Ginsberg, William S Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac

[Shawn Tucker, ‘Contrasting Utopias: Toward a Theoretical Framework for Modernism, the Avant-Garde, and Postmodernism’]

**Week 13: finales, futures**

Woolf, *Between the Acts, ii*

The Futurist Manifestos: FS Marinetti and others

**Week 14: radical retreats/random raptures**

Discussion: Gender, Aesthetics and Radical Modernisms

Jacques Ranciere, From *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*
4. TOTALITARIANISM IN FICTION

Dr. Ira Raja

This course will explore how twentieth-century writers from around the world have responded to tyranny and authoritarianism. The range of issues that will guide the weekly discussion include: How are terms such as tyranny, authoritarianism and dictatorship differentially nuanced? What is lost, for instance, when we conflate authoritarianism with dictatorship? What is the connection between literary expression and oppressive regimes? How has the traditional distinction between poetics and politics sought to be bridged? What formal strategies are deployed by writers to convey the sometimes controversial political content of their works?

Weekly readings comprise of a set of eleven novels that depict authoritarianism and dictatorship in a range of real, historical and imagined settings, including England, Germany, Poland, Romania, Argentina, Peru, Pakistan, and United States.

Weekly Readings


2. SHAKESPEARE ACROSS MEDIA

Shormishtha Panja

“The words of a dead man are modified in the guts of the living.” W.H. Auden

This course will examine not just the plays and poems of Shakespeare but how the man and his works have been appropriated in different cultures and deployed through multiple media. Shakespeare’s birthday is celebrated in Germany, there is a Globe Theatre in Tokyo, the reconstruction of the Globe Theatre on the banks of the Thames was spearheaded by an American actor, there is a Shakespeare library on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, he is the only compulsory author in the National Curriculum and in Advanced Level English Literature in UK schools, he has been on the Indian curriculum longer than he has been on the British curriculum and he has a massively subsidized theatre company named after him in the UK. According to critic Marjorie Garber, Shakespeare is “already not only modern but postmodern: a simulacrum, a replicant, a montage, a bricolage. A collection of found objects, repurposed as art.” In the process of examining stage productions, films, television, Shakespeare in art, illustration and popular culture, Shakespeare for children and Shakespeare in Indian translation, this course will probe the whole process of cultural appropriation and the means by which a cultural artefact of global dimensions is fashioned. Debates about high culture and low culture, the varying demands of different media, the refashioning of the Shakespeare text in new cultural forms, in the context of a particular culture or contemporary tastes, and the economics of the Shakespeare industry will inevitably form part of this enquiry. Participants will be encouraged to focus on one or two Shakespeare plays, closely study the original text and discuss its redeployment on stage/ in cinema/ on TV/ in popular culture/ in visual culture/ in children’s literature/ in translation by way of oral presentations and short and long papers.

Below are the topics that will be covered in the course:
I. Introduction

II. Shakespeare Performance


Courten, H.R. *Contemporary Shakespeare Production.* Peter Lang, 2010 (selections)


III. The Royal Shakespeare Company

Addenbrook, David. *The Royal Shakespeare Company: the Peter Hall Years.* William Kimber, 1974 (selections)

Billington, Michael. *The State of the Nation: British Theatre since 1945.* Faber, 2007 (selections)

Chambers, Colin. *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company: Creativity and Institution.* Routledge, 2004


IV. Shakespeare on the Indian Stage

Parsi theatre

NSD
V. Shakespeare on the Indian Stage (contd.)

Utpal Dutt

Habib Tanvir

Lokendra Arambam

Roysten Abel

Atul Kumar

VI. Shakespeare on Film

Olivier, Welles, Kozintsev, Kurosawa


Skovmand, Michael, ed. *Screen Shakespeare*. Aarhus, 1994 (selections)

VII. Shakespeare on Film (contd.)

Branagh, Luhrman, Almeyreda, Bhardwaj

Cartelli, Thomas and Katherine Rowe. *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen*. Polity 2007 (selections)


Rothwell, Kenneth S. *A History of Shakespeare on Screen*. Cambridge, 2004 (selections)

VIII. Shakespeare on Television

BBC productions of Shakespeare
Shakespeare on American Television


Davies, Anthony and Stanley Wells, eds. Shakespeare and the Moving Image. Cambridge, 1994 (selections)

Holderness, Graham. Visual Shakespeare: Essays in Film and Television. 2002 (selections)

IX. Shakespeare and Painting


X. Shakespeare and Illustration

Sillars, Stuart. The Illustrated Shakespeare 1709-1875. Cambridge, 2008


XI. Shakespeare in Popular Culture

Manga Shakespeare, Punk Shakespeare, Digital Shakespeare, YouTube Shakespeare, Shakespeare and Popular Music, Shakespeare in Popular TV shows eg. Moonlighting, Dr. Who etc.

Garber, Marjorie. Shakespeare and Modern Culture. Pantheon, 2008


Levine, Lawrence W. Highbrow/Lowbrow. Cambridge, 1988 (selections)

**XII. Shakespeare for Children**

Lamb, Charles and Mary Lamb. *Lamb’s Tales from Shakespeare.* Project Gutenberg

Translations of *Lamb’s Tales from Shakespeare* in Bengali and Oriya

**XIII. Shakespeare in Indian Translation**

Rakshit, Haran Chandra trans. *Shakespeare* (in Bengali)

Dutt, Utpal. *Choitali Raater Shopno.* *(A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in Bengali)

Dutta, Bimal Chandra. *Shakespeare* (in Bengali)

Bachchan, Harivansh Rai. *Macbeth* (in Hindi)

Sahay, Raghuvir. *Bagro Basant Hai.* *(A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in Hindi)

Any other Indian language known to students
2. LANGUAGE POLICY AND LINGUISTIC DEBATES IN INDIA

Hany Babu M.T.

Language plays a constitutive role in human cognition and culture. Just as it differentiates human beings from other animals, language also binds human beings with as well divides them amongst each other, a paradigm example of which is the predication of political and cultural identities on it. While the formation of nation states in Europe tells a tale of emergence of national languages that became the flag bearers of the national identity, the newly formed sovereign states of South Asia have a different tale to tell. This course looks at how the issue of language has played itself out in the context of India by probing the following four questions:

1. Language policy in India (2 sessions)
2. Linguistic reorganization (2 sessions)
3. Language identity and language movements (2 sessions)
4. Role of English in India (2 sessions)

The Constituent Assembly debates and the views of national leaders will be examined to look at the formation of language policy in the sovereign state of India. Documents like the report of the States Reorganization Commission, Dr Ambedkar’s “Thoughts on Linguistic States”, and contemporary readings will be looked at in order to understand the linguistic reorganization of India. The sessions on language identity and language movements will concern itself with the question of Hindi/Urdu and also look at language issues in parts of the South and the North East of India. The divergent views on English will be explored in order to rethink the need for reformulating the language policy.
Apart from the eight sessions that are dedicated to the four questions outlined above, there will be five sessions that concern with the following: Introduction to the course and the course readings and planning the seminar presentations (first session); fundamental concepts, namely, language policy, linguistic identity and cultural diversity (second and third sessions); an Interlude, where each participant would present a response paper to the themes that have been discussed and also talk about the potential topic for their long paper (eighth session); and Conclusion (the last session).

The objective of the course is to interrogate the language policy especially for its impact on subjects occupying non-hegemonic locations. The range of questions to be probed by the researchers could include: (i) the fallout of prioritizing Hindi over the other scheduled languages of the Union by elevating it to the status of “official language” of the Union, which not only contravenes the fundamental right of equality guaranteed by the Constitution, but also cements a structural hierarchy among the languages used in the Union; (ii) the debacle of the “three language formula” that was offered as a compromise in the tussle between English and Hindi on the one hand, and Hindi and other languages on the other; (iii) the role of English and other languages in pedagogy; (iv) language movements and conflicts in India and the subcontinent; and (v) other issues that may arise during the discussions. The week-by-week break up of topics and readings will be as follows:

**Week I:** Introduction to the course, the readings, and organizing the schedule.

**Week II & III: Basic Concepts (2 Sessions)**

a. Week II: Language Policy


b. Week III: Linguistic Identity and Diversity


**Weeks IV & V: Language policy in India (2 Sessions)**

a. Week IV: Constituent Assembly Debates


8. Constituent Assembly Debates: 12 – 14, September 1949

9. Gandhi: Thoughts on national language, other languages, and education.

b. Week V: Language policy post 1947


**Weeks VI – VII: The linguistic reorganization of states (2 Sessions)**

a. Week VI: States Reorganization Commission


15. Ambedkar, B R. Thoughts on linguistic reorganization of states.


b. Week VII: The states


Week VIII (Interlude & taking stock)

Week IX – X: Language Identity and Linguistic Movements (2 Sessions)

a. Week IX: The question of Hindi/Urdu


b. Weeks X: Language and Region


Weeks XI - XII: The question of English

a. Week XI: The advent of English


b. Week XII: The return of English


36. Ilaiah, Kancha. 2007. What kind of education do dalit bahujan children need?


**Week XIII: Conclusion and further issues**
Seventeenth-century England presents us with an astonishing and boisterous prospect: the desperate attempt of the Stuart monarchy to establish an absolutist state and culture, the growing resistance of parliamentarians and Puritans, and the first political revolution of modern Europe, which reached its apogee with the execution of King Charles and the establishment of the English republic. At the same time, the enclosed fields of early modern England give birth to capitalism itself, as enclosure and the ideology of “improvement” transforms rural life, provoking celebrations and attacks. The period also witnesses the movement of unprecedented numbers of women into public life, and into print: poets, preachers, prophetesses, and political theorists. It was one of the most important periods of English political thought, producing works of absolutist, republican, democratic, and proto-communist political theory. And it was the time of birth of many contemporary religious sects, including Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, among others.

We will focus on three main sites of imaginative meditation and literary production: notions of courtliness and kingship, an emerging cultural language of republicanism, and the public sphere of pamphlets, newspapers, and unlicensed publications. We shall start with ideas of monarchy and court culture. The middle period of our course will engage us in deciphering writings of John Milton and Andrew Marvell as prototypical literary counterparts to the larger debates centered around classical republicanism. Sections from Niccolo Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy* and select writings from J.G.A. Pocock will give us a handle to plough through the intricacies of such a poetics. We will also pay a good deal of attention to popular culture, reading original pamphlet accounts of monstrous births, prodigies, Ranter orgies, and horrendous murders. And we will read selections from the contentious and stylistically adventurous pamphlet literature
of the English Revolution: manifestos and apocalyptic prophecies by Leveller and Fifth Monarchist prophets and prophetesses, radical egalitarian prophecies by Diggers, pamphlets and poems for and against regicide and the debates with the Puritan New Model Army. These key works are crucial not just to appreciate the burgeoning notions of democracy and franchise in civil war England, but also in reminding us how important it is to establish a subjective, relational link to the issues of labour, credit and land enclosing measures.

**Week I: Scaffolding**


**Week II: Monarchy and Literature**

Anne Bradstreet, “In Honour of That High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth”

Charles I, *Eikon Basilike*

Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*

Thomas Hobbes, from *De Cive*

March Bloch, from *The Royal Touch*

**Week III: Poetics of Courtliness**

James I, from *The True Law of Free Monarchies*

Walter Raleigh, “The Lie”

Ben Jonson, *The Irish Masque at Court*

Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*

**Week IV: Republicanism: Foundations of an Idea**

Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*

Algernon Sidney, from Discourses Concerning Government

JGA Pocock, from *The Machiavellian Moment*

**Week V: Republicanism: Poetics of the Civitas**

Selection from *Mercurius Politicus* (Newsbook: Marchamont Needham)

John Milton: *Areopagitica*

*The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*

Andrew Marvell, *An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland*

**Week VI: Religion: The Mainstream Debates**

Martin Luther, “Secular Authority” “Address to the German Nobility” “The Freedom of a Christian” all are available in Martin Luther, *Selected Writings*.

John Calvin, *On God and Political Duty*

Richard Hooker, from *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*,

Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic.

**Week VII: Levellers, Legal Reforms, Franchise**

William Walwyn *An Agitator Anatomiz’d*

David Wotton, from *Divine Right and Democracy*

John Warr: *Writings on Law*

The Putney Debates

C.B. Macpherson, from *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*
Week VIII: Science, Literature, Politics

Francis Bacon: Selection from *Novum Organum*

Samuel Hartlib Papers (selection)

Charles Webster, from *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626 -1660*


Week IX: Land, Spirit and Labour

Gerrad Winstanley *The Law Freedom on a Platform*

Gerrard Winstanley, *A New-Years Gift*


Week X: Political Poetics in Women’s Writings: A Certain Radicalism

Anna Trapnel: Anna Trapnel, from *Cry of a Stone*

*Report and Plea*

Rachel Speght, from, *A Muzzle for Melastomus (H)*

http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/nto/17thC/paradise/speghtfrm.htm

Contesting Cultural Norms: Crossdressing

http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/nto/17thC/family/mulierfrm.htm

Contesting Cultural Norms: Women's Public Speech

http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/nto/17thC/family/fellfrm.htm

From Anne Clifford's Diary for 1616-19

http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/nto/17thC/family/diaryfrm.htm

Week XI: Political Poetics in Women’s Writings: Varieties of Centrist Poetics

Margaret Cavendish, from *Poems and Fancies*
Mary Wroth, *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania*

Natalie Zeamon Davis, “Women on Top,” reprinted from her *Society and Culture in Early-Modern France*

**Week XII: Political Poetics (Continued)**

Aemilia Lanyer *The Description of Cooke-Ham*

Mary Astell, *Reflections upon Marriage* (1700)

**Week XIII: Excesses and Inner Selves : Poetics of Ranting**

(Anonymous) *Justification of the Mad Crew*

Lawrence Clarkson, *A Single Eye*

Secondary Readings:


Joan Webber, *The Eloquent “I”, Style and Self in Seventeenth Century*


3. OUT-CAST (E)ING CASTE : THE WRITINGS OF B.R. AMBEDKAR

Tapan Basu

The course will focus on a study of the writings of B.R. Ambedkar spanning a period of forty years. The study will necessarily be conducted through the reading of only a selection of Ambedkar’s writings, in this case his writings on caste.

It is well-known that Ambedkar accorded a lot of importance to what he wrote. He carefully planned the outlines of his texts. He invested much authority in them, and conversely, tried his best to challenge the authority of texts which he disagreed with, such as *Manusmriti* or the statements of Gandhi. Either way, to use the words of Valerian Roderigues, he “privileged the written word.” He would, to continue with Roderigues’ observations on the subject,... make written submissions before committees and commissions to negotiate across the authority of a formulated text. In a culture that was largely oral, the written work gave him a distinctiveness which earlier the upper castes in general and Brahmins in particular had tended to usurp. The written word enabled him to reach out to a larger world, conferring some degree of permanence or immortality and allowing him to usurp some of the Brahminical authority.

Ambedkar’s writings, therefore, were intrinsic to his political project and signaled, at each stage of his variegated career as a public intellectual, his resolve to obtain for his people, the Dalits, their due recognition as persons on India’s socio-philosophical terrain.

Week I       Introduction

Week II      Autobiographical Notes;

*In Pursuit of Ambedkar* by Bhagwan Das

Week III    “Castes in India : Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development”
(1916)

**Week IV**  
Speech delivered on the occasion of the Mahad Satyagraha (1927)  
Statement to the Simon Commission on behalf of Bahiskrita Hitakarini Sabha (1928)

**Week V**  
Memorandum to the Round Table Conference (1930)  
Supplementary Memorandum to the Round Table Conference (1931)  
*The Untouchables and Pax Britannica* (1931)

**Week VI**  
*Annihilation of Caste* (1936), Gandhi’s critique of *Annihilation of Caste* and Ambedkar’s response to Gandhi’s critique of *Annihilation of Caste* (1936)

**Week VII**  
“Away from the Hindus” (1936)  
“What Path to Salvation?” (1936)

**Week VIII**  
*What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables.* (1943)  
*Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables* (1945)

**Week IX**  
*Who were the Shudras? How they came to be the Fourth Varna in Hindu Society* (1946)  
*The Untouchables: Who were they and why they became Untouchables* (1948)

**Week X**  
*Untouchables, or the Children of India’s Ghetto* (1953)

**Week XI**  
*The Buddha and his Dhamma* (1956)

**Week XII**  
The Legacy of Ambedkar: Screening and Discussion of Anand Patwardhan’s film  
*Jai Bhim Comrade*

**Week XIII**  
Conclusion
5. EMPIRE, CRIME, AND FICTION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Baidik Bhattacharya

This course surveys a particular conjunction in the history of British empire—that of crime, fiction, and colonial governance. Through related readings of literary texts, archival material, and treatises in criminal anthropology and forensic sciences, this course explores the ways notions of crime and delinquency were forged through this conjunction in the nineteenth century, and how this conjunction shaped cultures across the colonial divide. The course begins with some of the theoretical debates on criminality and the figure of the criminal in the nineteenth century and concentrates on available methods of detection and containment. Then the course will concentrate on a few debates in the colonial archive—e.g. Sleeman’s thuggee campaign—and will address a range of responses to such debates. In the course of this critical exploration literary and non-literary sources will be included. And finally, the course will discuss some of the iconic literary texts from the nineteenth century by Philip Meadows Taylor, Wilkie Collins, and Arthur Conan Doyle to interrogate specific literary representation of crime and empire.

Course Outline:

Following is a course outline with tentative reading list.

Week I: Introduction

Week II: Foucault and new conceptions of crime

Selections from


Week III: Clues, traces, and the new criminal


**Week IV:** Fiction of crime and detection

Selections from


**Week V:** Structure and ideology of new crime fiction


**Week VI:** Colonial legal regimes

Selections from


**Week VII:** Thuggee fiction


**Week VIII:** Thuggee in the archive

Selections from
Captain W.H. Sleeman, *The Thugs or Phansigars of India* (1839)


**Week IX:** Biohermeneutic paradigm of crime I

Selections from


**Week X:** Biohermeneutic paradigm of crime II

Selections from

Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal* (London: Walter Scott, 1890)

Francis Galton, *Finger Prints* (London: Macmillan, 1892)


**Week XI:** Crime and empire in popular imagination I

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868)


**Week XII:** Crime and empire in popular imagination II


**Week XIII:** Aftermath

Selections from


Caroline Reitz, *Detecting the Nation: Fictions of Detection and the Imperial Venture* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004)


**Week XIV:**

Wrap-up discussion.
6. SPEAKING SILENCE: WRITINGS BY INDIAN MUSLIM WOMEN

Haris Qadeer

This course contests the assumption that Muslim women in India constitute a silent and homogeneous constituency, with specific allegiances that derive from Islam. It deals with literature written by Indian Muslim women in both pre- and post-Independence, in order to examine how exactly the delineation of identity of Muslim women takes place. Despite a rise in literature written by and for women, the studies that explore the link between gender and religious community or analyse the integration of women into communitarian processes are only a few. Through an analysis of history, society, politics, literature and culture, this course looks at the processes by which identities are constructed, how questions of gender and community identity intersect with state-supported discourse on equality and secularism, and how these processes continue to influence society at large. The course looks at the religious as well educational reforms that have changed the social condition of Muslim women in India. It focuses on the role of Aligarh Movement and attempts to understand the relationship between reforms, changing cultural configuration and its impact on the writings by Muslim women.

The course also attempts to indicate the genealogy of writings by Indian Muslim women, the issues that have affected Muslim Women and studies their representation. It looks at the different genre of writings (short fiction, novels, memoirs, travel writings, personal narrative, play etc.) by Muslim women from diverse cultural and linguistic background.

Reading Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Religion and Reforms (Essays and selection from a Conduct Book)

Sultan Jahan Begum. Al Hijab or the Necessity of Purdah. Calcutta: Thacker Spink and Co., 1922


**Week 3: Educational Reforms (Essays)**


Gail Minault. “Muslim Social History from Urdu Women’s Magazine” Gender, Language and Learning: Essays in Indo-Muslim Cultural History, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009


**Week 4: Radicalism and Resistance**

Selections from Rakhshanda Jalil. Rashid Jahan: A Rebel and Her Cause. New Delhi: Women’s Unlimited, 2014

**Week 5: Progress, Audacity and Determination**


**Week 6: Female Bildungsroman**


**Week 7: Marginalised Existence**


**Week 9: The Private and Public**


**Week 10 The Quest for Identity**

Selections from Nighat Gandhi: *Alternative Realities: Love in the lives of Muslim Women*. New Delhi: Tranquebar, 2013

Week 11: Food, Women and Identity (Novel)


Week 12 Politics, Patriarchy and Prison (Prison Memoir)


Week 13

Conclusion
1. BEYOND ETHICS: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COSMOPOLITANISM NOW

Ira Raja

In the highly interconnected world we inhabit today, discourses of nationalism, with their tendency to link cultures and identities to specific places, can seem parochial if not downright retrograde. A cosmopolitan perspective seeks to counter the insularity of modernist nationalism by focusing on the world as a whole rather than on a smaller entity within it. At the same time though, diversity and interconnectedness of the world are not attributes that are embraced equally by all. Growing global connections can become a source of anxiety for some people, just as globalization can lead to the reinforcement rather than a loosening of national borders. A more optimistic approach to the state of the globalizing world has been embraced by scholars such as Ulrich Beck amongst others, who argue that global risks such as environmental degradation have the potential to turn the whole world into a ‘community of fate’. Cosmopolitanism, in their view, has the potential for offering an ethics for globalization. Yet, as Craig Calhoun reminds us, precisely because so many of the crucial relationships that shape the forces of globalization are indirect, these are not easily reducible to interpersonal norms. The problem with cosmopolitanism, Calhoun argues, lies in its suggestion that it is an attitude that can be assumed without altering the political or economic structures which lie outside of the individual. What kind of purchase then does cosmopolitan theory have on the contemporary world? This course seeks to introduce students to some of the major strands in the debate on cosmopolitanism, how these draw upon a series of other closely related forces that are shaping the world: nationalism, globalization, and multiculturalism. Does cosmopolitan thinking stand necessarily opposed to nationalism? Does it always work in conjunction with globalization? What is the relationship between cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism? Can we look upon cosmopolitanism for an ethic of living in a multicultural world? What understandings of cosmopolitanism might help us negotiate a postcolonial future? Drawing on a selection of readings from a range of disciplines including philosophy, anthropology, politics, history, sociology, and literature, the course
seeks to promote a layered understanding of a conceptual perspective which is being increasingly deployed as a means of understanding, critiquing and negotiating the world in which we live today.

Wk. 1: Introductory and Organizational Session


Wk. 5: Hagedorn, Jessica, Dogeaters (1990)


Wk. 11: Leila Aboulela, The Translator (1999)

Wk. 12: OrhanPamuk, Snow (2002)
Wk. 13: Concluding Discussion

SUGGESTED READINGS


Chakrabarti, Dipesh et al Public Culture special issue on ‘Cosmopolitanisms’ Vol 12, issue 3 (2000).


Connected histories, shared cultures, travelling texts and inter civilizational dialogue mark the millennia old interactions between the peoples of Asia. Then came the historical gap: from the eighteenth century onwards through much of the early twentieth century, the Western imperial juggernaut erased these pathways, halted these conversations, and re cast Asia in terms of its own cultural and political referentiality. This project was validated by writers, translators, archaeologists, travellers, scientists, historians, scholars of religions, to name a few. Ideas of Asia took shape and were transmitted from imperial sites and were circulated transnationally. What emerged in the nineteenth century European imaginary was an Asia that was defined by geography yet transcended borders, an Asia that was fundamentally displaced from its core principles of cultural syncretism. Instead, post Empire, the idea of Asia was defined only in terms of its individuated encounters with colonialism.

With the dismantling of the imperial machinery in the twentieth century and the resurgence of robust nationalisms across the Asian continent, Asian nations looked inwards and defined themselves only in terms of their immediate colonial pasts. However, with the works of Kakuzo Okakura in Japan and Tagore in India in the early 1900s began a movement of a slow revival of ancient Asian linkages. It was a movement with an interrupted history as thinkers, writers, ideologues, historians in multiple Asian and non Asian locations struggled to define themselves in terms of both the imperial encounter and the memory of older forms of non Western dominations.

This course will map the cultural cartography of these encounters and seek to interrogate the ideas of Asia by exploring both the Asia of the British imperial imaginary and the multiple Asias of the pre colonial and post colonial construction. It will explore how the cultural and political shifts initiated by recent historical scholarship under the rubric of Monsoon Asia and Indian Ocean Studies has lead to literary reimaginings of
an Asia that looks beyond the historical rupture of the Empire.

**Texts for Discussion**

2. Robert Southey, "The Curse of Kehama" (1810)
3. Lord Byron, "The Giaour" (1813)
5. Kakuzo Okakura, *Ideals of the East* (1903)
6. Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (1917)
7. George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (1934)

**13 Week Schedule**


Week 2: *William Jones and Warren Hastings*: The “Asia Project” and Siting the Imperial imaginary. Translations, research on ancient Sanskrit texts, epigraphy, archaeological explorations and documentation.
Immersion, reflection, reformulation and dissemination. Discussions of Jones’ Presidential Addresses etc. from the *Asiatic Researches*.


**Week 7: The Spirit of the Age: Asian “universalism,” Asian aesthetics, Asian Renaissance.** The anti colonial project, the transnational and Asian philosophical and literary networks. Okakura and Japanese aesthetics, Tagore’s travels across Asia, interrogating narrow nationalisms. Discussions on Tagore’s *Nationalism*.


**Week 9: “Asia Redux”: Circulating histories, Multiple cosmopolitism and the Trans-regional.** Recovering the pre modern, pre-imperial Asia in the Indian Ocean. Travel, trade and the circulation of goods, ideas and
peoples. Connection, contestations and competing regionalisms. Discussions on Monsoon Asia and Indian Ocean history in Bose’s *A Hundred Horizons*.

**Week 10: The Enemy Within**: Japanese militarism, Japanese imperialism and revisionist Asian history. Writing inner-war, occupation, trauma and memory. The Japanese Occupation of Malaysia, the end of the British Empire, the historical rupture and its buried histories. Discussions on Eng’s *The Gift of Rain*.

**Week 11: Speaking in Tongues**: Texts, Ideas, Religions, Commerce, Aesthetics. Inter Asian-interactions, mobilities and migrations. India in Asia and its post-modern representations. Literature as transnational and transregional archive. Discussion on Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*.

**Week 12: “Imagined Communities”**: Oceanic and riverine networks, harbour sites, the imperial trajectory. The long history of British imperialism, the shaping history of cultural contact and competing ideologies. Discussions on Ghosh’s *River of Smoke*.

**Week 13: The Opium Wars**: Tradition, Technology, Trade, Territory. The Global British Empire, the fall of Imperial China and the death of *Tianxiaweijong* (what is under heaven for all). Semi colonialism and China, race and religion and the British Commonwealth in East and South East Asia. Discussions on Ghosh’s *Flood of Fire*
2. THE LYRIC IMPULSE, AND BEYOND

Prasanta Chakravarty

Lyric is a way to describe a poem when it is at its most poetic, at its realized minimal. There are certain normative claims and features of the modern lyric. For instance, hailing the lyric as the oldest form of literary expression. Or claims of personal utterance (the subjective wholeness of the lyric ‘I’ and its dissolution) leading to the verge of being almost a confessional genre. The lyric’s immediacy and its expressive economy within modern claims, define it in opposition to the narrative, even as its strange mystical obscurity leavens a prescriptive *sine qua non*.

But in the Western world the lyric’s timelessness is but a recent discovery. The assumption does not foreclose certain critical questions. When does lyric turn into a literary production to be read and realized, not sung, for instance? When and how does this new approach replace how poems used to be read and performed in antiquity? In other words how did the lyric become a genre? Is the lyrical impulse a desiderata of romanticism, or does it indeed create a mind in solitary expression to be overheard, as claimed by commentators ranging from G.W.F. Hegel and John Stuart Mill through Reuben Brower, Cecil Day Lewis and Helen Vendler?

The first half of the course will trace a critical genealogy of the lyric form. On one hand, the lyric is an internal mimesis of sound and imagery, a mode of enunciation and on the other hand, as Rene Wellek had claimed, it seems much more profitable to study it as a variety of lyric utterances and their histories, in order to grasp it within concrete conventions and traditions. There are indeed various ‘models of lyrics’ which have developed contingently. Lyric theory is therefore retrospective (looking back on the classical markers) and prospective (looking ahead to contemporary and prophesying future lyric assumptions). In the early
modern world, for instance, the lyric can be glimpsed in various reflexive generic classifications including epithalamium, complaint, elegy, hymn, love song, sonnet, and pastoral.

Modern critical approaches to the lyric essentially start with the idea of slow reading of oneself and one’s interlocutors. There is no escaping John Stuart Mill’s eloquent definition that the lyric “…has always seemed to us like the lament of a prisoner in a solitary cell, ourselves listening, unseen in the next.” After many twists and turns we shall encounter Jacques Derrida’s reformulation of Schelgel in his comparison of lyric to a hedgehog, "the animal thrown into the road, absolute, solitary, rolled up in a ball, next to itself." This recurrent turn towards the absolute poem, complete as the abject hedgehog is only countered by the more historicist appeals, as issues of the gendered lyric persona, the avant-garde anti-lyric and more culturally comparative frameworks of lyric beset us. We shall also deal with elements of composition, musicality, tonality and patterns of rhyming.

Throughout the course, we shall read the lyric from all literary ages as a thing in itself primarily as an ongoing process of realization, and in order to hone our interpretive skills of reading poetry slowly.

**Week I (The Problematique)**


Mutlu Konuk Blasing, sections from Lyric Poetry: The Pain and Pleasure of Words.

Susan Stewart, sections from Poetry and the Fate of the Senses.

**Week II (Archetexts)**

G.W. F. Hegel, from Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art.

James Stuart Mill, Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties.

Edgar Allan Poe, Philosophy of Composition.
Charles Bernstein, from *A Poetics*.

Poem: Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, The Wanderer’s Last Song.

**Week III (Lyric Becomes a Genre)**

Northrop Frye, Theory of Genres.

Rene Wellek, Genre Theory, the Lyric and *Erlebnis*.

Jonathan Culler, Lyric, History and Genre.


**Week IV (Departures in History)**


Seth Lehrer, The Genre of the Grave and the Origins of the Middle English Lyric.

Heather Dubrow, Lyric Forms.

Poems: The Owl and the Nightingale, John Donne, "A Hymne to Christ, at the Authors Last Going into Germany," "Hymne to God my God, in my Sickness."

**Week V (The Drama of Lyrics)**

M.H. Abrams, The Lyric as a Poetic Norm.

Herbert F. Tucker, Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of the Lyric.


**Week VI (New Criticism)**


**Week VII (Structuralist Reading)**

Roman Jakobson, Closing Statement, Linguistics and Poetics.
Michael Riffatarre, The Poem’s Significance.

Hans Robert Jauss, from Aesthetic Experience and Social Norms.

Poem: Theophile Gautier, The Dessert.

**Week VIII (Post-Structuralism)**

Harold Bloom, The Breaking of Form.

Jacques Derrida, Che Cos’e la Poesia?

Barbara Johnson, Anthropomorphism in Lyric and Law.


**Week IX (The Frankfurt School)**

Walter Benjamin, On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.


Drew Milne, In Memory of the Pterodactyl: The Limits of Lyric Humanism.


**Week X (Phenomenologies of Reading)**

Martin Heidegger, Poetically, Man Dwells.


Georgio Agamben, The End of the Poem.

Rei Terada, from *Looking Away: Phenomenality and Dissatisfaction, Kant to Adorno*.


**Week XI (Rhyme and Musicality)**

Simon Jarvis, Why Rhyme Pleases?


Craig Dworkin, Lyric and the Hazard of Music.
Poems: Wallace Stevens, Notes towards a Supreme Fiction.

**Week XII (Avant-Garde and Anti-Lyricism)**

Marjorie Perloff, Can(n)on to the Right of Us, Can(n)on to the Left of Us: A Plea for Difference.

Christopher Nealon, The Matter of Capital, or Catastrophe and Textuality.


**Week XIII (Sexuality and Lyric)**

Nancy J. Vickers, Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme.

Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert, Gender, Creativity, and the Woman Poet

Barbara Johnson, Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion.

Thomas E. Yingling, The Homosexual Lyric.

Dalits are ‘the other’ in Indian society. Popularly known as untouchables in the caste Hindu society, they are the helpless victims of caste oppression over millennia. It is true that Dalits have suffered caste humiliations all throughout these years; but at no point of time they have completely surrendered their courageous selves to their upper caste oppressors. Their everyday engagement with the caste-battles is reflected in their creative arts - be it song, dance, music, painting or story-telling. Since literacy was earlier not available to them due to stringent caste laws, they vent their repressive anger mostly through oral narratives. It is only after India’s independence that Dalits got opportunities to get formal education. Today a number of Dalits are educated. These educated Dalits are now using literacy as weapons to mobilize resistance against various forms of caste oppression. Their protests against caste have come out in various literary forms collectively known as ‘Dalit literature’ today.

Poems and autobiographies are the popular genres Dalit writers have experimented over the years. Fiction writing seems to have arrived quite late. There are not too many Dalit fictional works even to these days. And those few which are available are mostly written in Indian languages. Of late, few of them are now available in English translation.

The primary focus of this course is to familiarize with the world of Dalit fiction. How do we historically situate them? What could be their language and philosophy? How are they different from the innumerable non-Dalit fiction available in Indian languages? What are the major issues Dalit writers write in their fiction? What are the pedagogical approaches to study those issues? These and several other related questions will be dealt with throughout the course. Finally, an attempt will be made to address the question of Dalit aesthetics in Dalit fiction.
Primary Texts:

Week I: Introduction

Week II: Joseph Macwan’s *The Stepchild*

Week III: P. Sivakami’s *The Grip of Change*

Week IV: Bama’s *Vendetta*

Week V: Sharankumar Limbale’s *Hindu: a Novel*

Week VI: Omprakash Valmiki’s *Amma and Other Stories*

Week VII: G. Kalyan Rao’s *Untouchable Spring*

Week VIII: Sankar Prasad Singha and Indranil Acharya’s *Survival and Other Stories: Bangla Dalit Fiction in Translation* (Edited)

Week IX: Gogu Shyamala’s *Father may be an Elephant and Mother only a Small Basket, but ...*

Week X: Urmila Pawar’s *Motherwit*

Week XI: Ajay Navaria’s *Unclaimed Terrain*

Week XII: Meena Kandasamy’s *The Gypsy Goddess*

Week XIII: Concluding Discussion