

PhD in English Language & Literature

(syllabus 2020 onwards)

Course code EN857 Poststructuralist Gender Theories

4-0-0-4

Course Description

The course will acquaint the students with many of the critical questions and concepts feminist scholars have developed as tools for thinking about gendered experience. The course explores the complex ways in which gender intersects with class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age within various spheres and institutions of society. The course prepares the students to participate in and contribute effectively to the larger public conversation about the role of gender in society; and to apply the critical tools of gender studies in their academic, personal and occupational lives. The course introduces the inter-disciplinary academic field of Gender Studies and explores the nuanced approaches to gender studies in contemporary literary context. It familiarizes students with the key issues, questions, and debates in Gender Theories and exposes the students to the most significant contemporary gender theorists and their seminal works.

Learning Objectives:

- To inculcate the ability to theorize the reading of gender in varied contexts
- To understand the central arguments and concerns of contemporary gender theories
- To familiarize with the definition of the key concepts of gender studies
- To apply the theoretical understanding of gender to make an in-depth analysis of texts
- Communicate effectively about gender issues in both writing and speech.

Pedagogy

- Discussion of the prescribed texts. The students are expected to read the texts prior to the discussions.
- Three presentations are to be made on the chosen text/theorist/concept
- Project submission
- Each presentation will be followed by a detailed discussion on the same to explore the possibility of writing a research paper based on the topic of the presentation.
- The third presentation narrows down on the topic for a genuine research project which has the potential to be turned into a research paper.

Syllabus

Unit 1

Joan Scott Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis

Naomi Schor Feminist and Gender Studies

Barry Zimmerman What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism.

Unit 2

Luce Irigaray

This Sex Which is Not One

Speculum of the other Woman

Unit 3

Helene Cixous

The Laugh of the Medusa

Coming to Writing and Other Essays

Unit 4

Julia Kristeva

Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection

New Forms of Revolt

Unit 5

Judith Butler

Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics

Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay on Phenomenology and Feminist Theory

Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.

References:

Judith Butler. "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics." AIBR, vol. 4, no. 5, Sept./Dec. 2009, pp. i-xiii.

Judith Butler. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay on Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." Theatre Journal, vol. 40, no.4, Dec. 1988, pp. 519-531

Judith Butler Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. Routledge, 1990.

Helene Cixous. "The Laugh of the Medusa". Translated by Keith Cohan and Paula Cohen. Signs, vol. 1, no.4, 1976, pp. 875-893.

Helene Cixous. *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*, Edited by Deborah Jenson, Harvard University Press, 1991, pp. 1-58.

Luce Irigaray . *This Sex Which is Not One* (1977). Translated by Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. Cornell University Press, 1985.

Luce Irigaray. *Speculum of the other woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Cornell University Press, 1985.

Julia Kristeva. "New Forms of Revolt." *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, vol .XXII, no. 2, 2014, pp. 1-19.

Julia Kristeva. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S Roudiez. Columbia University Press, 1982.

Naomi Schor. "Feminist and Gender Studies." *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, edited by Joseph Gibaldi, MLA, 1992, pp. 262-287

Barry Zimmerman. "What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism." *Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, Theory*. Edited by Elaine Showalter. 1985, pp. 200-219.

Suggested Readings:

Whitford, Margaret. editor. *The Irigaray Reader*. Oxford UP, 1991

Sellers, Susan, editor. *The Helene Cixous Reader*. Routledge, 1994.

Taylor, Dianna. *Michael Foucault: Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2014.

McAfee, Noelle. *Julia Kristeva*. Routledge, 2004

Moi, Toril, editor. *The Kristeva Reader*. Columbia University Press, 1986.

Oliver, K. "Julia Kristeva's Imaginary Father and the Crisis in the Paternal Function." *Diacritics*, vol. 21, no. 2/3, Summer/Autumn 1991, pp. 43-63. ---. "Julia Kristeva's Feminist Revolutions." *Hypatia*, vol. 8, no.3, Summer 1993, pp. 94-114.

Jones, Ann R. "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of "L'Ecriture Feminine." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 7, no.2, Summer 1981, pp. 247-263.

Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. Routledge, 1997.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge, 1993.

Judith Butler. "The Body Politics of Julia Kristeva." *Hypatia*, vol. 3, no. 3, French Feminist Philosophy, Winter 1989, pp. 104-118.

Helene Cixous. *Stigmata*. Routledge, 1998.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." *Limited Inc*. Translated by Samuel Weber, Northwestern University Press, 1988, pp. 1-23.

Disch, Lisa. "Review: Judith Butler and the Politics of the Performative." *Political Theory*, vol. 27, no.4, Aug. 1999, pp. 545-559.

Course Outcomes

- CO1 - Understand and engage with central debates in contemporary Gender Theories.
- CO2 - Define and apply basic terms and concepts central to this field.
- CO3 - Apply a variety of methods of analysing gender in society, drawing upon both primary and secondary sources.
- CO4 - Apply concepts and theories of Gender to life experiences, historical events, reading and research.
- CO5 - To inspire academic research into the multiple possibilities of the genre of Gender Studies

Evaluation Pattern

| Internal (50) | Marks | Weightage |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| I seminar | 15 | 15 |
| II seminar | 15 | 15 |
| Final seminar | 15 | 20 |
| External (50) | Marks | |
| Project (25 pages) | 50 | 50 |
| Total | | 100 |

Activities/Content with direct bearing on Employability/ Entrepreneurship/ Skill development

- Seminars/presentations and further discussion on them can hone the students' skill to explain and justify the relevance of a chosen topic by constructing meaningful arguments

on it. They imbibe new perspectives into their approach to a chosen topic/area of research. They become open to constructive criticisms by participating in meaningful debates and discussions. This activity will help them to become good presenters, communicators and teachers.

- The student can develop the ability to critically approach and analyse texts within proper theoretical frameworks. This will help them to become better students of literature and skilful researchers.