

Certificate Course in Women's Studies

Conducted by:
Department of English
Nowgong Girls' College

Coordinator: Dr. Neetu Kumari Gupta

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Certificate Course in Women's Studies

Contact hours: 30

Duration: 30 days

Frequency: Once a year (February-March)

Student eligibility: Undergraduate students

Contact details of the Coordinator: Dr. Neetu Kumari Gupta,

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INTENDED AUDIENCE: Undergraduate students of English literature

Aim and objective of the course:

In order to induce and inculcate a keen interest in literature and strong motivation to study it at degree level, the department has designed a well framed and documented certificate course on Women's Writing. This is an intensive and intellectually challenging course, which demands a high level of commitment to harvest desired results. These courses cover a range of English language and literature from the early period till the postmodern writings by women. These courses will be made available to reinforce their curricular studies with general discussion of various critical theory and practice and will provide the basis for an enhanced appreciation of the pleasures and problems associated with the serious and alternate reading of literature from a feminist point of view. The students shall spend four to five weeks and will be introduced to the concepts and methodologies of the history and varieties of the English literature by women, on critical and political theories that raise questions about and challenge concepts such as feminism, patriarchy, women community, gender and so on that perpetuates the production of meaning, reading, literature, and literary value.

Course Layout: The course will be divided into four sections as mentioned below

- History of Women's Movement
- Theories of Feminism

- Feminist Methodology
- Women in Literature and Culture

Section: I

History of Women's Movements

Objectives: The central concern of this section is to offer a broad outline with regard to the nature and growth of women's movement in the modern age, covering a range of issues pertinent to women's emancipation, dignity and status. Further, it seeks to familiarize the students with the major historical developments of women's movement in their onward march to freedom and equality. This section will be brief different movements taking place in the West and how it influenced the East after a certain period of time. This is broadly divided into four headings:

- The Early Phase of Women's Movement in the West
- Genesis of Women's movement in India
- Women's movement in the West during 20th century and after.
- Women's Movement in Post-colonial India

Recommended Readings

1. Bolt, C. The Women's Movements in the United States and Britain from the 1790s to the 1920s. New York & London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.
2. Burton, A. Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture. University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
3. Holton, S. Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement. London: Routledge, 1996.
4. Legates, M. In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society. London: Routledge, 2001.
5. Rendall, J. The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1960. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985.
6. Kemp, Sandra and Judith Squires. Feminisms, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
7. Bhasin, Kamala and Nighat Said Khan. Some Questions on Feminism and Its Relevance in South Asia., Kali For Women, New Delhi, 1986.

Section : II

Theories of Feminism :

This section will focus on the various theories of feminism that evolved with the change of time and place. The central concern here is to offer a broad outline with regard to the nature and growth of theory in the modern age, covering a range of issues pertinent to women's emancipation, dignity and status. Further, it seeks to familiarize the students with the major historical developments of women's issues in their onward march to freedom and equality. It is broadly divided as:

- Liberal Feminism
- Socialist Feminism:
- Radical Feminism
- Post-Structural/Post-Modern Feminism

Recommended Readings :

1. Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, eds., *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*. London: Virago Press, 1989.
2. Mirabai : (1498-1565).
3. Binodini Dasi : Amar Katha
4. Woolf, Virginia: *A Room of One's Own*
5. Urvashi Butalia: *The Other Side of Silence*
6. Manjula Padmanabhan: *Lights Out (English)*
7. Mahasweta Devi: *Draupadi*

Section : III

Feminist Methodology

This section is an introduction to women's studies research and is designed to help the student to

think and write about women's historical, socio economic and political experiences. It will explore various methods of researching and interpreting women's issues. The readings and discussions will be supplemented with exercises in applying research and interpretative methods. It will stress on these issues:

- To explore and discuss various definitions of "feminist methods" and "feminist epistemologies".
- To introduce alternative definitions and locations of "knowledge" and "methodology".
- To investigate and question how knowledge and power intersect.
- To critically consider how the researcher impacts and shapes rather than simply "discovers" or "observes".

- To acquaint students with critical thinking, reading, and writing through required written and oral assignments as well as through cooperative work in small groups.

Recommended Readings

1. Sandra Harding (Ed.). "Social Sciences Issues.
2. Helmi Jarviluoma, Pirkko Moisala & Anni Vilkkko. "Gender and Qualitative Methods."
3. Caroline Ramazanoglu & Janet Holland. "Methodology: Challenges and Choices".
4. Seale, Clive. (Ed.) Social Research Methods: A Reader (Routledge Student Readers) 2004
5. Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," American Historical Review 91.5 (1986): 1053-1075.
6. Wallace, Ruth. (Ed.) Feminism and Sociological Theory. Sage, California 1989
7. Scott, Joan W. Gender and the Politics of History. Columbia Univ. Press 1988
8. Reiharz, S. & Lynn Davidman. Feminist Methods in Social Research. OUP, NY, 1992
9. Moore, Henrietta. Feminism and Anthropology. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988
10. Ramazanoglu C. Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices. Sage, London, 2002

Section : IV

Women in Literature and Culture

This section of the course introduces students to literature and to literary expressions by men/women writers. Patriarchy and male control over female sexuality form the core issues of women's studies. Patriarchy is generally understood in terms of gender hierarchy in which men possess superior authority. Control over female sexuality is the most important weapon in the hands of men and the society that maintains the patriarchal order. There have been feminist debates over a whole range of issues including the concepts of 'beauty', marriage, reproduction and motherhood focusing on women's lack of power over decision-making regarding their bodies are represented and dealt with. It is through the process of social reproduction that patriarchy and control over sexuality find new life. In order to understand the role of women in literature and culture, the focus is on the following approaches:

- Focus throughout will be on writings on/by women. There will be internal choice in each

section.

- Defining literature.
- Women and literary history.

- Women, Ecology and Environment
- Women and production, circulation and consumption of literature
- Defining Ecology and Environment
- Human-environment relationship
- Various conceptions of ecology and environment
- Feminine characteristic of Nature
- Subjugation of nature /subjugation of Women

Recommended Readings

1. Bhasin, Kamla. What is Patriarchy? Kali for Women, 1993.
2. Showalter, Elaine, A Literature of their own: from Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing. London: Virago Press, 1977.
3. Spacks, Patricia Meyer, The Female Imagination: A Literary and Psychological Investigation of women's writing. George Allen and Unwin, 1976.
4. John, Mary E. Discrepant Dislocations: Feminism, Theory, and Postcolonial Histories.1996.
5. Kumar, Nita, ed. Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories. Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994.
6. Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, eds., The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory. London: Virago Press, 1989.

Presentation :

At the end of the course, apart from a written test, the students have to prepare a presentation on any topic related to the course. There will be an interactive session after the presentation, where the students share their own experiences of the patriarchal order.

Syllabus Distribution

Section: I

History of Women's Movements - Piklee Buragohain

Section: II

Theories of Feminism - Dr. Mridula Kashyap

Section: III

Feminist Methodology – Recho Terongpi

Section: IV

Women in Literature and Culture - Dr. Neetu Kumari Gupta