

School of Letters/School of Liberal Studies

Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Course Codes: SOL2CL108 (for MA English Batch of 2016-18 please contact your faculty programme coordinator)

Title: Lyrical Pasts: Poetry in the Indo-Islamic Millennium

Type of Course: Elective (for all disciplines)

Cohort for which it is compulsory: None

No of Credits: 4

Semester and Year Offered: Monsoon 2017

Course Coordinator and Team: Drs Shad Naved and Mrityunjay Tripathi

Email of course coordinator: shad@aud.ac.in

Pre-requisites: None

Aim: The course presents the lyric tradition as practiced in north Indian literatures through poetry from the pre-colonial period. The focus is on those lyrical pasts which have defined the modern Hindi and Urdu poetic traditions in particular and therefore is not a survey course. It introduces students to key points in aesthetics and poetic themes that have shaped poetic sensibility (and critical lexicons) in Hindi and Urdu over the last millennium. This involves revisiting texts in languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, Dakani, Awadhi and Braj which form the prehistory of both modern Hindi and Urdu. However, *no prior knowledge of these languages is required (translations will be provided for the essential texts)*. The course will be conducted in both English and Hindi. Students have the option of submitting assignments in either language of their choice.

Brief description of modules/ Main modules: The course has the following four modules:

Module 1. Aesthetics Lost/सौन्दर्य जो था

In this module the student will be introduced to the overall question of Indic aesthetics as developed by poets themselves. Rather than offering a survey of aesthetic theories, it will focus on some key statements from poets who were themselves exemplary poets of the Indo-Islamic millennium.

Module 2. Poetic Seasons/ऋतु वर्णन

This module studies the lyrical properties of poetry in relation to the aesthetics of season descriptions. What is the relation between the repeated invocations of natural rhythms and the rhythm of poetic language?

Module 3. Eros/काम

This module turns to the overwhelmingly erotic content of lyric poems from our past and studies this theme in relation to the lyrical mode. What is the significance of erotic themes, beyond simple description, in poetic language?

Module 4. Sound/ध्वनि

The final module connects with the larger question of the lyrical aesthetic as broached in Module 1. It does so by focusing on the sonorousness or music of poetry, otherwise dormant in the written form. How does metrical sound connect us with the bygone lyric centuries?

Assessment Details with weights:

Continuous evaluation based on:

- Group presentation in class (on poems not discussed in the main modules): 30 %
- Take-home assignment (mid-term): 30%
- Final exam (in class): 40%

Reading List:

Module 1:

- Keśavdās, and K P. Bahadur. *The Rasikpriyā of Keshavadāsa*: Translated into English Verse by K.p. Bahadur. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, n.d. [Selections]
- Amīr Khusraw Dihlavi, and Waḥīd Mīrzā. *The Nuh Sipīhr of Amir Khusraw*. London: Oxford University Press, 1950. [Selections]
- Mammata, and Hariśaṅkara Śarmā. *Kāvya prakāśa of Āchārya Śrī Mammata*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit series Office, 1967. [Selection]

Background readings:

- Jigar Moradabadi, video on youtube.com [<https://youtu.be/UnKoQ0A9E1Y>]
- E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924) [a short extract]

Module 2:

- Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmāvat* [selections]; *Padmavati*, trans. A.G. Shirreff. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1944. [Adapted performance video, *Bharat Ek Khoj*, Episode 26, dir. Shyam Benegal.]

- Muhammad Afzal 'Afzal', *Bikat kahani: Barah masa* [selections]. Hyderabad, 1970. [Literal English translation available]
- Senapati, 'Ritu varnan' Senapati. 1949. In *Kavitta-ratnākar: bhūmikā, pāthāntar tathā tippanī mahita : sampādak Umāsānkar Sūkla : Chaturtha sanskarana*. Prayāg [Allahabad]: Hindī parisad, viśvavidyālaya.
- Padmakar, selected *savaiyas*; *Padmakar Granthavali*, ed. Vishwanath Mishra. Varanasi: Nagari Prachirini Sabha, 1959.

Module 3:

- Vidyapati, and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. *Vidyāpati: Padāvalī*. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1994. [Selected poems; supplemented by performance videos by Kelucharan Mahapatra et al.]
- Qalandar Bakhsh 'Jurat' [selected poems]; Ruth Vanita. *Gender, Sex, and the City: Urdu Rekhti Poetry in India, 1780-1870*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2012.

Module 4:

- Kabir [selections; various translations: Tagore, Mehrotra and Dharwadker]
- Shabnam Virmani (dir.), *Had Anhad: Journeys with Ram and Kabir* (film).
- Mir Taqi 'Mir' [selections; commentary by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi in Sher-e-shor-angez]
- *Mah-e-Mir* (film), dir. Sarmad Sehbai (2016)

Suggested readings:

- Aditya Behl, 'The Landscape of Paradise and the Embodied City: The Padmavat, Part 1'. In *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-1545*. Oxford: OUP, 2016.
- Bangha, Imre. 'Rekhta, Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India.' In F. Orsini ed., *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*. Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 22-88.
- Busch, Allison. *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Devy, G.N. *Indian Literary Criticism: Theory and Interpretation*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2011.
- Dwivedi, Hazariprasad. *Kabira: Kabira Ke Vyaktitva Aura Darsanika Vicaron Ki Alocana*. Delhi, Rajkamal Prakasana, 1973.
- Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman. *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Habib, Mohammad. *Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2009.
- Mufti, Aamir. 'Towards a Lyric History of India.' *boundary 2*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2004): 245-74.
- Pachauri, Sudhish, *Ritikal: Sexuality ka samaroh*. New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2017.
- Ritter, Valerie. *Kama's Flowers: Nature in Hindi Poetry and Criticism, 1885-1925*. New Delhi: Dev Publishers & Distributors, 2013.

- Shahani, Kumar (dir.), *Bhavantarana* (film), 1991.
- Sreenivasan, Ramya. *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Past in India c. 1500-1900*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2007.