

Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Winter Semester (January -May 2018)

School: School of Human Studies

Programme with title: MA Gender Studies

Semester to which offered: IV semester

Course Title: Gendered World: Politics and Memory in Northeast India (GWNEI)

Credits: 4

Course Code (new):

Course Code (old): SHS202842

Type of Course: ELECTIVE

For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory)
4. Discipline (Elective)
5. Elective

Course Coordinator and Team: Lovitoli Jimo

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

Pre-requisites: Any Post Graduate students/ Predoctoral

Aim:

The course will introduce students to India's Northeast region through a gendered lens; the making of Northeast India during colonial period and, the making of Indian nation state in post-colonial context where India's Northeast region became one of the binary 'other'. The course intends to deconstruct the idea of one homogeneous Northeast in the popular imagination within Indian nation state. This will be done by foregrounding the contentious relationship between memory and history, culture and politics, and understanding how deeply gendered this history of homogenisation of Northeast has been. This will be done by looking at beliefs and practices, customary laws and tradition, labour and the emerging women's movements in the region.

The aim of the course is to understand the region through a critical feminist lens to interrogate how memories, both individual and collective, become cultural artifacts put into the service of nation building or identity formation. The course thus attempts to unpack 'Northeast' as a 'cultural category' and at the same time critically engages with State policies and State making in the creation of the 'Other'. The role of the political economy and the forces of market and developmental discourse of the post-colonial state in the construction of the region are important aspects to look at. One of the ways in which Northeast is looked at is through colonial texts and records and the language of state in post-colonial India as the region of conflict. Hence, the idea is to read the text against the grain with feminist sensitivity where people's memory is used and evoked through different kinds of texts. Memory here is then used as a methodological and pedagogical tool rather than a conceptual category.

Objectives:

To start a discussion and engage students on the discourse of Northeast India and the mainstream through historical, cultural, political and everyday context, and the gendered experiences making reference to colonial histories and the post-colonial Indian State discourses.

To offer students the opportunity to engage with post-colonial scholarship from the region and on the region using feminist sensibilities and criticality and the emerging discourses around it.

As this course is taught from a feminist perspectives, it aims to discuss intersections between region, race, materialities of culture, gender, age, location, class, family and the State.

SECTION: 1

Theorising Memory and the Political in the Framing of India's Northeast Region

This section will look at the colonial history and the construction of India's 'Northeast region'. The complex histories and trajectories of the region through the concept of time, memory and history in history making are important aspects. The intersection of race, ethnicity, culture, region and politics in identity formation is central to the discourse of the region. One of the central questions that the section will address is how the gendered history was/is completely missed out in the discourse of making or framing India's Northeast region even. Hence, the challenge here as a feminist will be to use gender as an analytical category to theorise the region as political using people's memory and history.

Essential Readings for Section- 1

- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. "The Reconstruction of the Past, and The Localization of Memories" in, *On collective memory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp.
- Stoler, Ann Laura and Strassler, Karen. 2000. "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in 'New Order' Java," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 1. pp. 4-48, Cambridge University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2696632>

- Karlsson, Bengt G. (2013). "Evading the State: Ethnicity in Northeast India through the Lens of James Scott," in *Asian Ethnology*, Vol. 72, No. 2, Performing Identity Politics and Culture in Northeast India and Beyond, pp. 321-331.
- Bodhisattva Kar. 2011. "Can the Postcolonial Begin?: Deprovincializing Assam," in Saurabh Dube (ed.), *Handbook of Modernity in South Asia: Modern Makeovers*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 43-58.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade 2003. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses," In *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. New Delhi: Zubaan, pp. 17-42.

Suggested Readings

- Chris Healy. 1997. *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nicholas B. Dirks. 1990. History as a Sign of the Modern, in *Public Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 2. pp. 25-23.
- Banerjee, Prathama. 2011. Culture/Politics: The Curious Double-bind of the Indian Adivasi, in Pandey, Gyanendra (Ed.) *Subaltern Citizens and their Histories: Investigations from India and the USA*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 125-142.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. "Whose Imagined Community?," in *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3-13.
- S.K. Chaube. 2012. *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2012, pp. 1-10, 30-44, 49-62.
- Scott, James. 2011. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNkkEU7EoOk>
- Ramirez, Phillippe. 2014. "Across Ethnic Boundaries," in *People of the Margins: Across Ethnic Boundaries in North-East India*. Guwhati: Spectrum Publications, pp. 61-98.

SECTION: 2

The Hegemony of the State: Identity and the Creation of 'Other'

This section will look at the creation of the hegemony through different aspects in exerting power. The discourse on borderland politics is important in the making and unmaking of India's 'Northeast' region. It will also look at the process of creating and the reinforcement of Northeast as a 'culture category' without its own 'Historicity'. This is done through the process of reverse orientalism and exoticism in the Post-colonial India which will be closely interrogated. Importantly, peoples memory's are used both in the creation of the hegemony as well as in interrogating the state and its agencies.

Essential Readings for Section- 2

- Baruah, Manjeet. 2012. "Assamese Language, Narrative and the Making of the North East Frontier of India: Beyond Regional Indian Literary Studies," in *Modern Asian Studies*, [pp. 1-31](#).

- Sundar, Nandini. 2011. "Interning insurgent populations: The buried history of Indian democracy", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVI, No.6, pp. 47-57.
- Baruah, Sanjib. 2010 (2013). "Northeast India: Beyond counterinsurgency and developmentalism," in Preeti Gill (Ed.), *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*, New Delhi: Zubaan, pp. 29-56.
- Pachau, L K Joy, 2014. "Framing the Margins: The politics of Representing India's Northeast," in *Being Mizo: Identity and Belonging in Northeast India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 32-81.

Suggested Readings

- Gill, Preeti. Ed., "Introduction: Engaging with the Northeast: The 'outsiders' looks," in *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*. (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2010 (2013)), pp. 1-12.
- Thomas, John. 2016. *Evangelising the Nation: Religion and the formation of Naga Identity*. New Delhi: Routledge (Selected section).
- Richard, Eaton. 1997. "Comparative History as World History: Religious Conversion in Modern India", in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No.2, pp. 243-271.
- Bhaumik, Subir and Bhattacharya, Jayanta. 2005. "Autonomy in the Northeast: The Hills of Tripura and Mizoram," in Ranabir Samaddar, ed., *The Politics of Autonomy: The Indian Experiences*, New Delhi: Sage Publications. pp. 216-241.
- Erik de Maaker, 2013. "Performing the Garo Nation? Garo Wangala Dancing between Faith and Folklore," in *Asian Ethnology*, Volume 72, Number 2, pp. 221–239.

SECTION: 3

Gendered Location: Associated Beliefs and the Everyday

This section will look at the cultural practices and beliefs to interrogate the gendered identity in the gendered world of India's 'Northeast' region. The assumption that women in the region enjoy equal position in the so called egalitarian society, or that Northeast India is matrilineal and thus women are liberated is problematic. Hence the question, how egalitarian was/is the society in India's Northeast region? This section will look at memory, oral history, folklore, performance and representations to study the people and its complex cultural history and gendered identity formation, and in the process unpack the 'cultural category.'

Essential Readings for Section- 3

- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist. 1974. "Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, (Ed), *Women, Culture and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 17-42.
- Katyal, Anjum. 2012. "Manipuri Theatre's Sabitri Devi: Embodying protest," in Kavita Punjabi and Paromita Chakravarti's (eds.), *Women contesting Culture: Changing frames of Gender Politics in India*, Kolkata: Stree, pp. 42-57.
- Jimo, Lovitoli, 2015. "Gendered Representation and Social Significance: Sumi Weaving and Handloom Traditions," in Chakravartty, Dharitri Narazary and Sarkar, Surajit, 2015, *Objects, Identities, Meanings: Insider Perspectives from North East India*, Delhi: Ambedkar University Delhi, pp. 37-51.

- Syiem, Esther. 2010 (2013). "Khasi Matrilineal Society: The Paradox within," in Preeti Gill (Ed.), in *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*, New Delhi: Zubaan, pp.133- 143-108.

Suggested Readings

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, pp. 271-313.
- Zote, Mona. 2005. "Heaven in Hell: A Paradox," in *India International Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No.2/3, pp. 203-212.
- Longkumer, Arkotong. 2013. "Who sings for the Hornbill?: The performance and Politics of Culture in Nagaland, Northeast India, in *The South Asianist*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 87-96.
- Swu, Ahikali. 2014. "The Days Are Counting Away" and "An Orphan Song", in *A Glimpse of Long Ago: Sumi-English Folk Poems*, Dimapur: Heritage Publishing House, pp. 3-8 and 17.

SECTION: 4

Gendered Work and Labour

This section will look at the idea of work which is gendered considering the agrarian nature of the region and the centrality of women's labour in the economy. It will look at labour history in the tea plantation during the colonial period and how it was translated in the post-colonial context in the unorganised form through customs and tradition. The division of labour, and the rights and equality enjoyed both by men and women based on age, gender, location, race, tribe etc will be interrogated along with the societal norms of governance

Essential Readings for Section- 4

- Chatterjee, Piya, 2001. *A Time for Tea: Women, Labor, and Post/Colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 51-83 & 168-234.
- Borooah, Romy. 2000. "Transformations in Trade and the Constitution of Gender and Rank in Northeast India," in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 371-399.
- Tiplut Nongbri. 2004. "Northeast India: Market and the transition from communal to private property," in Dev Nathan, Govind Kelkar and Pierre Walter's, *Globalisation and Indigenous peoples in Asia: Changing the local-global interface*, New Delhi: Sage publications, pp. 184-206.
- Butalia, Urvashi. 1998. The Other Side of Silence.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ_v1oxGwFQ
- McDuie-Ra, Duncan. 2012. "Leaving the Militarized Frontier: Migration and Tribal Masculinity in Delhi," in *Men and Masculinities*, Vol.15, No. 2, pp. 112-131.
<http://jmm.sagepub.com>

Suggested Readings

- Dutta Priyanka. 2015. *Locating the Historical Past of the Women Tea Workers of North Bengal*, Bangalore: The Institute for Social and economic Change.
- Jayeeta Sharma. 2009. "Lazy Natives, Coolie Labour, and the Assam Tea Industry," in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (Nov., 2009), pp. 1287-1324. Cambridge University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40285014>.
- Sumi Krishna. 2005. "Gendered Price of Rice in North-Eastern India," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 25, pp. 2555-2562.

SECTION: 5

Customary Practices and Laws, and Traditions

This section will look at the tradition and customs and its translation into customary practices and laws which is based on oral history and culture. The role of women within the customary practices and laws and the everyday; the trope of motherhood assigned to women through customary lens and role played by women in identity politics. Place between tradition and conflict situation, how women have to negotiate between the tradition and state power, where the private public divide is blurred through her role as home maker, the peace maker and also as a provider through fractured everyday experience and reality.

Essential Readings for Section- 5

- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2002. "Black Women and Motherhood," in Thorne, Barrie and Yalom, Marilyn, *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, pp. 215- 240.
- Fernandes, Walter, Melville Pereira and Vizalenu Khatso. 2005. *Customary Laws in North East India: Impact on Women*, Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre (Selected Section).
- Ao, Temsula. 2006 (2013). "The Night" in *These hills called home: Stories from the war zone*, New Delhi: Zubaan, pp. 44-56.
- Nongbri, Tiplut. 2014. "Deconstructing Masculinity: Fatherhood, and Social Change," in *Development Masculinity and Christianity: Essays and Verses from India's North East*, pp. 37-64.
- Haripriya, Soibam. 2012. "Agitating women, Disrobed Mothers," in Gender in Meitei society, *Eastern Quarterly*, Vol.8, Issues I & II, pp. 18-34.
- Nag, Sajal. 2006. "'Her Masters' Voice: Women, Peacemaking and the Genderisation of politics," in Prasenjit Bishwas and C. Joshua Thomas (eds.), *Peace in India's North-East: Meaning, Metaphor and Method: Essays of Concern and Commitment*, New Delhi: Regency Publications, pp. 208-228.

Suggested Readings

- Vitso, Adino. 2003. *Customary Law and Women. The Chakhesang Nagas*. New Delhi: Regency Publications (Selected Section).
- Crenshaw, Kimberly. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," in *Stanford Law Review*, Vol.43, No. 6, pp. 1241-1299.
- McDuie-Ra, Duncan. 2015. "Is India Racist?": Murder, Migration and Mary Kom," in *Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 304-319.

SECTION: 6

Politics, Resistance and Citizenship: 'Women's Movements' and Participation

The last section will look at the issue of women as victims of different forms of violence played out both by the family and state. It is within this context and situation different women's group in the region emerged with the language of peace and security. This will be interrogated through the nuanced understanding of the political economy of the region and the troubled history that led to the region becoming one of the most militarized parts of the country in the post-colonial India. Placed within customary and agency, it will critically engaged with question of the voices of women in the politics of the region. The section will look at the politics played out and the resistance leading to the polarization of us and them within and outside. There is a need to engage, contextualize and theories the different agents and functionaries of patriarchies in the context of India's Northeast region which this course will consciously made an effort to.

Essential Readings for Section- 6

- Deka, Meena. 2013. "Changing Patriarchy and Women's Space in Politics", in *Women's Agency and Social Change: Assam and Beyond*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 123-147.
- Nongbri, Tiplut. 2008. "Ethnicity and Gender: Identity Politics among the Khasi", in Mary E. John (Ed.), *Women's Studies in India: A Reader*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, pp. 482-491.
- Chakravarti, Uma. 2007. "Archiving the Nation-state in Feminist Praxis: A South Asian Perspective," New Delhi: *Centre for Women's Development Studies*. Available at <http://www.cwds.ac.in/OCPaper/uma%20occasional%20paper.pdf>. (Selected sections)
- Banerjee, Paula. 2007. "Between two armed Patriarchies: Women in Assam and Nagaland," in Rita Manchanda, (Ed.), *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 214-251.
- Bora, Papori (2010), "Between the Human, the Citizen and the Tribal: Reading Feminist Politics in India's Northeast," in *International Feminist Journal of politics*. Taylor and Francis, 12:3-4, pp. 341-360.

Suggested Readings

- Minh-Ha, Trinh T. 2003. "No Master Territories," in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, Ed., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 215-218.
- Manchananda, Rita. 2007. "Where are the women in South Asian Conflict?", in Rita Manchanda, (Ed.), *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, pp. 9-41.
- Kikon, Dolly. 2015. *Life and Dignity: Women's Testimonies of sexual Violence in Dimapur* (Nagaland), Guwhati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, pp. 14-83.
- Sanjoy Hazarika. 2010 (2013). "In times of conflict the real victim are women" in Preeti Gill (Ed.), *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*, (New Delhi: Zubaan, pp. 66-79.
- Misra, Tilottoma. 2010 (2013). "Women Writing in Times of Violence", in Preeti Gill (Ed.), *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*. New Delhi: Zubaan, pp. 307-334.

- Tellis, Ashley. 2008. "Differing resistances: Mediating the Naga struggle in Esterine Iralu's a terrible matriarchy and Temsula Ao's These Hills called home", in *Eastern Quarterly*. Vol. 5, Issues 1, pp. 34-42.

Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:

Weightage	Date/period in which Assessment will take place	Assessment	S.No
20%	January-April 2018	Class attendance and participation	1
25%	January 30th, 2018	Written Submission	2
20%	March 25th, 2018	Presentation	3
35%	April 5th, 2018	Written Submission	4