

Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Winter Semester (January – May 2018)

School:	Undergraduate Studies			
Programme with title:	BA (Honours)			
Semester to which offered:	VI Semester			
Course Title:	Psychology for India			
Credits:	4 Credits			
Course Code (new):	SUS1PS712			
Course Code (old):	P15			
Type of Course:	Compulsory	yes	Cohort	BA (H) Psychology
	Elective	yes	Cohort	BA (H) other than Psychology

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

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

Course Coordinator and Team: Anshumita Pandey

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Pre-requisites: A student must have completed successfully Understanding Personality (P01)

Aim To bring to the student

- a critical relationship with psychology as a discourse and the universalistic assumptions inherent in the same.
- an appreciation of the need for ‘situated knowledge’: psyches, life experiences are embedded in historical, cultural, socio-political contexts.

- an attempt to imagine the praxis of a critical cultural Psychology in India through discussing themes of self, health, caste, and gender.

Brief description/ Main modules:

The paper, premised on the limits of a universal psychology, attempts to circumscribe what passes off as the discipline of psychology into a culturally located form: located in a primarily western European context. It questions the relevance of a psychology emanating primarily from West/Europe to Non-western and Non-European cultures, experiences and psyches and attempts to look for resources for a culturally sensitive psychology. Have Indian psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists dealt with the question of ‘the Indian psyche’? Does this situated lens carry a potential to re-define critical ideas within psychological corpus? Do we need to critically examine the insights emanating from the Indian side as well? Through this bivalent, critical engagement with both with both the west and the east, with the received discipline of psychology and its Indian counterpart, the paper endeavors to carve out a space and appreciation of a possible ‘Psychology for India’.

Unit 1: Do we need a “Cultural Psychology”?

Is the discipline of psychology a ‘global’ or a ‘glocal’ affair? What are its inclusions? What remains on the outside? Are disciplines constructed? Do disciplines have a history? What is the history of psychology as a discipline? Does it offer us an understanding of the Indian psyche? Through questions such as these, the introductory unit hopes to start a dialogue with the student about disciplines as discourses, the relationship of power and knowledge and the need for a culturally sensitive psychology.

Unit 2: Indian Psychology or Psychology for India?

What are the constitutive assumptions on which a cultural perspective bases itself? More specifically, the central premises underlying ‘Indian’ epistemological traditions? What is ‘Indian’ Psychology? Can there be an essential model of *an Indian psyche*? Is there ‘an Indian way of thinking’? How does Psychology as a discipline render itself **relevant** in Indian soil scents? The unit opens up the need for self –reflexive praxis of Psychology in India.

Unit 3: Notions of Self and Identity

Self and its intimacies forms the leitmotif of this unit as we begin to explore psychic structures in India. What are the theories of personhood, consciousness, motivations and aesthetics that shape psyches here? How does a specific configuration of family and relational ties impact questions of separation and identity? What forms of representation have these found in the discipline of psychology? We proceed through a close reading of writings by modern day psychologists and social theorists on notions of self and identity.

Unit 4: Caste in India

The unit attempts to bring together the subject and the abject as it focuses and discusses Caste in India, its rootedness in psyches and psychosocial reality and the ‘ontological trauma’ of being born as an other. Stories of oppression, resilience and critique, these life narratives become lenses to look at ‘situatedness’ anew as they de-center entrenched locations of the normative. Ambedkar’s life and writings become an essential conduit.

Unit 5: Gender and Morality

Routing itself through a critical reading of myths and folklore, writings on the lived realities of Woman in India, the unit attempts to explore notions of identity, of masculinity and femininity, questions of motherhood and daughterhood as they inform and shape self-experience of being a woman in India.

Unit 6: Mental Health in Indian traditions

The unit traces the departures from western notions of mental health and chronicles indigenous approaches to classification and treatment. Sites of cultural healing, a key emphasis, opens up alternative discourses of cure and notions of self and modalities of 'being-in-the-world' as one sets up a dialogue and between culture and psychology.

Assessment Details with weights:

SNo	Assessment	Date/period in which Assessment will take place	Weightage
1	Reflective Writing (Essay/Article Review)	Mid- February	30%
2	In Class Exam	End –March	40%
3	Viva (End Term)	End –April	30%

References:

- *Handbook of Psychology in India*, Misra G ed., Oxford University Press, 2011
- *Critical Psychology: An Introduction*, Fox D, Prilleltensky I ed, Sage Publications, 1997
- *Culture and Psyche*, Kakar S, Oxford University Press, 2008
- *The Indians*, Kakar S, Penguin, 2009
- *The Non – Pradigmatic Crisis of Indian Psychology: Reflections on a Recipient Culture of Science*, Nandy A, Indian Journal of Psychology, 1974
- *Is there an Indian Way of Thinking?*, Ramanujan AK, Contributions to Indian Sociology, 1989
- *Sita Shakti: Cultural Paradigms for Indian Women*, Guzder J, Krishna M, Transcultural Psychiatric Research Review, 1991
- *Cultural Psychology: Essays on comparative human development*, Stigler JW, Shweder RA, Herdt G ed., Cambridge University Press, 1999
- *Folktales from India*, Ramanujan AK ed., Penguin, 2004
- *The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory*, Guru G and Sarukkai S, Oxford University Press, 2012
- *Annihilation of Caste (Annotated Critical Edition)*, Ambedkar BR, Navyana, 2014
- *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, Rich A, WW Norton, 1995
- *Anek Ramayan*, Documentary film, Sen, Theatrically Active Parents for Education (TAPE), 2007
- *Sita sings the blues*, Animated film, Paley N, 2008