

Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

WINTER SEMESTER (January –May 2018)

School: School of Human Sciences

Programme with title: M.A. GENDER STUDIES/M.A. Psychosocial Clinical Studies

Semester to which offered: 2

Course Title: Ways of Humans

Credits: 4

Course Code: SHS201703

Course Code (old):

Type of Course: Foundation

Course Coordinator and Team: Thokchom Bibinaz Devi & Bindu K.C.

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Pre-requisites: None

Aim:

- Look at the “Human” as a conceptual category.
- Historicise the category
- Look at the major critiques around the category
- Look at the retrieving of the category in contemporary theory

Brief description of modules/ Main modules/Readings:

Module 1: What do we mean when we say “Human”

The Great Chain of Being – Purusha Suktam – Against which comes Humanism

The Human Page in Wikipedia to look at evolutionary biology as discourse.

Nick Bostrom – the transhuman ideas to see how they derive from evolutionary biology discourse of progress of human race.

Module II: Historicising the Idea of the Human

This unit deals with the time and space of the emergence of universal discourse on the human. The space/time of European modernity and the idea of the human is placed there.

Jagger, Alison. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*. Sussex: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983.

Module III: Boundaries of the Human

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human>

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. "Introduction: The Persistence of Vision." In *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge, 1989. Pp: 1-15. (Google Books).

III: (A) The Animal

Kafka, Franz. "A Report to the Academy."

Adams, Douglas. *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, Chapter 17.

Pinney, Christopher. "The Politics of Popular Images: From Cow Protection to M.K. Gandhi: 1890-1950." In *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2004. 105-144. – check this for a history of representation of the cow in popular visual culture and how the cow becomes a site of struggle for the past 100 years.

<http://kafila.org/2015/11/06/a-memory-from-the-1970s/> J Devika on the cow.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQYRinzRGXU>

Massumi, Brian. *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
Fandry.

III: (B) The Object

Latour, Bruno. "Crisis." In *We have Never been Modern*. Catherine Porter (Trans). Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1993. Pp: 1-12. (human relationship with objects)

Also add sections from Sanal Mohan. *Modernity of Slavery*. (Collected from Bombay) (dalits as objects)

"Slave Auction, 1859." <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/slaveauction.htm>

William, Patricia J. "On Being the Object of Property." *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1988: pp. 5-24. (blacks as objects)

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism : Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford UP, 1999: 833-44.(Woman as object).
Black Mirror Episode -

Module IV

Critique of Human Rights

Zizek, Slavoj. "Against Human Rights." *New Left Review* 34 july-aug. 2005. Pp: 115-131.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Righting Wrongs." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Volume 103, Number 2/3, Spring/Summer 2004, pp. 523-581.

Module V

The Human as Grievable

Judith Butler Ph.D. (2003) "Violence, Mourning, Politics," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 4:1, 9-37, DOI: 10.1080/15240650409349213

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Trans). Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Assessment:

The student will be expected to think about the category "human" and the making of it through the elaboration of its margins in a final assignment. The first 2 weeks itself should be used to imagine an assignment (in conversation with the teacher) with the 3rd week as deadline to send the abstract idea.

The middle of the semester will see to the presentation and the end of the semester will lead towards the writing of the assignment. The assignment can be a short research paper that takes up some of the readings that are used in the course.

Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:

| S.No | Weightage | Date/period in which Assessment will take place | Assessment |
|------|---------------------|--|--------------|
| | 20% | Abstract on presentation idea – 2-February-2018 (Friday) | Assessment 1 |
| 1 | (30%) | Presentation – 23-February-2018 (Full day presentation) | Assesement 2 |
| 2 | (30%) | Assignment – 20-March-2018 | Assesement 2 |
| 3 | 20% (Attendance and | 20-March-2018 | Assesement 3 |

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| | participation) | | |
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