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


**Suggested Readings**


**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**


Suggested Readings


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


Suggested Readings


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

- Butalia, Urvashi. 1998. The Other Side of Silence. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ_v1oxGwFQ

Suggested Readings
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


Suggested Readings

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


Suggested Readings


**Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:**

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