Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Winter Semester (January-May 2017)

School: School of Human Studies (SHS)

Programme with title: MA Gender Studies

Semester to which offered: (I/ III/ V): IV

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

Credits: 4

Course Code (new): SHS202842

Course Code (old):

Type of Course: Elective

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

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

Course Coordinator and Team: Lovitoli Jimo

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

Pre-requisites: None

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 the binary “other”. The course intends to deconstruct the idea of one homogeneous Northeast in the popular imagination within Indian nation state. It will look into the diversity of cultural practices and complexities the region is associated with and how the region is not a homogenous entity but with complex politics, culture
and history because of race, region, ethnicity, history and geo-politics etc. The role of political economy and the forces of market and development strategy of the post-colonial India in the construction of the region will be looked at.

The main aim of the course is to understand the region through a feminist sensitivity and criticality by looking at culture and memories, politics and dilemmas, and the voices of the difference thus unpacking “Northeast” as a “cultural category”. It will also look at the change and how the region is represented, shaped and evolved over time as a result of the interface with different agents and forces to the present day.

**Brief description of modules/ Main modules:**

**SECTION: 1**  
**The Making/ Framing of India’s Northeast Region**  
This section will look at the colonial history and how the construction of “Northeast” came into being. It will look at the complex histories and trajectories of the region by bringing in the question of race, ethnicity, culture and region in identity formation which is central to the discourse of the region. Impact of Hinduisation and Christianity, and the discourse on borderland politics are important in the making and unpacking of India’s ‘Northeast” region. One of the central questions that the section will be dealing with is how the gendered history was/is completely missed out in the whole discourse.

**SECTION: 2**  
**Gendered Location: Associated Beliefs and Realities**  
This section will look at the culture 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 positions 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? The course will also look at memory, folklore, performance and representations to study the people and its complex cultural history and gendered identity formation. Thus 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. The division of labour and the rights and equality enjoyed by women will be interrogated along with societal norms of governing the people and how it was translated into customary practices and laws.

**SECTION: 3**  
**Voices of Difference: Private and Public**  
This section will study two central tropes. Firstly it will look at the customary and the role of women within the customs. Interrogate the trope of motherhood assigned to women through customary lens and look at the role of women in identity formation. Secondly, it will look at the issue of women as victims of different forms of violence played out both by the family and state. These issues will be looked at 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 question the voices of women in the politics of the region. Thus, the section will look at the
politics being played out and the resistance leading to the polarization of us and them within and outside.

References:

**Essential Readings for Section- 1**


**Essential Readings for Section- 2**


Readings for Section- 3


- McDui-Ra, Duncan, 2012. Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge and Retail. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. (Selected section).


SUGGESTED READINGS


-Bimol Akoijam, 2006. From Indica to Bharat via India: Imprints of the Past and Estranged Present in South Asia, Man and Society, ICSSR-NERC.


- Irawati Karve, Kinship map of India. Section from Introduction


- 'Listen to your mother before you kill your brother' infochangeindia.org/agenda/peace-building/listen-to-your-mother-before-you-kill-your-brother.html

- Mamang Dai, An Obscure Place (poem).


-Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri, () The Institutionalization of Tribal Religion Recasting the Donyi-Polo Movement in Arunachal Pradesh. *Asian Ethnology* Volume 72, Number 2, 259–277.


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Date/period in which Assessment will take place</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>January to April, 2017</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1st Assessment</td>
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<td>28 April, 2017</td>
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