

**School of Undergraduate Studies**

**Ambedkar University Delhi**

**Course Outline**

**Time Slot- 2 hours**

**Course Code:** SUS1EN244

**Title:** Contemporary Indian Drama

**Type of Course:** Discipline (English)

**Cohort for which it is compulsory:** Cohort BA (H) English

**Cohort for which it is elective:** All other Majors

**No of Credits:** 4

**Semester and Year Offered:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Semester

**Course Coordinator and Team:** Vikram Singh Thakur

**Email of course coordinator:** vikram@aud.ac.in

**Pre-requisites:** Interest in drama and theatre

**Aim:** The course is designed to introduce students to various issues involved in contemporary Indian drama. Along with the study of plays the students will also be introduced to various dramatic traditions of India in which these plays are located. This will help students in contextualizing contemporary Indian drama and appreciate it in a nuanced and critical manner. By the end of the course the students will have a fair amount of idea about ten to twelve contemporary Indian dramatists.

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

The course will introduce students to: realism in post-Independence drama, appropriation of folk and traditional idioms in urban drama, politics of caste and gender, revisiting history and mythology and political drama. Besides studying these plays students will also be shown video recordings of as many plays as possible to help them differentiate between drama and other genres of literature and develop a nuanced understanding of the styles and themes of various plays. Dramatic reading of at least one/two plays will be done in class to give them hands on experience of reading a play script. Students will also be encouraged to focus on dramatic traditions and linguistic sectors other than the ones covered in the course in the form of presentations which will be part of their continuous assessment.

**The following plays will be taken up for detailed study in class:**

## **Module 1 | INTRODUCTION: INDIAN DRAMA**

This module introduces students to Indian drama and theatre – both ancient and modern. This will largely survey a brief history of drama in India covering classical Sanskrit drama, folk theatres, colonial theatres in India including the popular Parsi theatre and post-Independence theatre in India. The module features a documentary film *Theatre of India* by the well-known theatre director Jabbar Patel.

## **Module 2 | REALISM AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN DRAMA**

This module would introduce students to realism in Indian drama as employed by various post-colonial playwrights. The module will take up detailed analysis of Vijay Tendulkar's *Shantata! Court Chaluhale* (Silence! The Court is in Session).

## **Module 3 | APPROPRIATING FOLK IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN DRAMA**

An important component of post-Independence Indian theatre is the appropriation of the folk and traditional in urban dramas. The module will take up detailed analysis of Habib Tanvir's *Charandas Chor* (Charandas the Thief).

## **Module 4 | HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN DRAMA**

History and mythology have fascinated post-Independence Indian playwrights. The plays written by Girish Karnad, Indira Parthasarthy, Dharamvir Bharti, et al have used history and mythology to interpret the contemporary realities of their times. The module will look at the relationship between history/mythology with contemporary drama and take up Karnad's *Tughlaq* for detailed analysis.

## **Module 5 | GENDER, CASTE AND CONTEMPORARY DRAMA**

Identity has been crucial to contemporary Indian playwrights. Whether it is sexual, political, religious or social Indian dramatists have dealt with such identity issues in their dramas. The module will specifically engage with Kusum Kumar's *Suno Shefali* (Listen Shefali) a play exploring the correlation between gender and caste in contemporary India.

## **Module 6 | POLITICS AND CONTEMPORARY DRAMA**

Political theatre has always challenged the status quo. The module will explore the connection between the politics and theatre further and take up a detailed analysis of Utpal Dutt's *Mahavidroha* (The Great Rebellion 1857).

### **Texts for Student Presentations:**

Dharamvir Bharati, *Andha Yug* (The Blind Epoch)

Mohan Rakesh, *Adhe Adhure* (Halfway House/The Unfinished)

Mahesh Elkunchwar, *Atmakatha* (Autobiography)

Manjula Padmanabhan, *Harvest*

Chandrashekhara Kambar, *Jokumaraswami*

Badal Sircar, *Michil (Procession)/Bhoma*

Mahashweta Devi, *Mother of 1084*

Indira Parthasarthy, *Aurangzeb*

G P Deshpande, *Udhwastha Dharmashala (A Man in Dark Times)*

Mahesh Dattani, *Thirty Days in September*

Select plays of Jan Natya Manch

**Supplementary Readings:**

Awasthi, Suresh. "Theatre of Roots': Encounter with Tradition". *The Drama Review* 33.4 (1989).

Bharucha, Rustom. "The Revolutionary Theatre of Utpal Dutt". *Rehearsals of Revolution: The Political Theatre of Bengal*. Calcutta: Seagull, 1983.

Dharwadkar, Aparna. "Realism and the Edifice of Home". *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947*, New Delhi: OUP, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Alternative Satges: Antirealism, Gender, and Contemporary "Folk Theatre""  
*Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947*, New  
Delhi: OUP, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Ironic History of the Nation". *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and  
Urban Performance in India since 1947*, New Delhi: OUP, 2006.

Gunawardana, A. J. Interview with Utpal Dutt. "Theatre as a Weapon: An Interview with Utpal Dutt". *The  
Drama Review*, 15.2, (Spring, 1971).

Mee, Erin B. "Introduction". *Theatre of Roots: Redirecting the Modern Indian Stage*. Calcutta: Seagull  
Books, 2008.

**Assessment structure (modes and frequency of assessments):**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Period in which the assessment will take place</b>	<b>Weightage</b>
1.	Class Participation	Throughout the semester	10%
2.	Mid-semester Exam	End Sep/early Oct	30%
3.	Home Assignment	Early Sep	10%
4.	Class Presentation *	End Oct/early Nov	20%
5.	End-semester Exam	As per AUD academic calendar	30%

\* The class presentation component of the assessment may include critical/creative work. Students may choose to work on various components that theatre entails – music, dance, performance, scenography, etc. Others may choose a play analysis based on themes, characters, style, form, etc.