

MPhil Research Methodology 2019

Department of English

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1. Course Outline

- A. The Research Methodology course is the only obligatory MPhil course, and it comprises three components that count for grading – Academic Reading and Writing (ARW), Research Skills (RS), and Literary Historiography (LH). The students will be divided into two groups –Group A and Group B – for all the sessions pertaining to these components. The two groups will meet their respective tutors in parallel sessions. All the sessions of ARW will be held in Room No. 63. The corresponding parallel session (of RS or LH as the case may be) will be held in Room No. 60.
- B. Apart from the first meeting (which will be an introductory session), joint meetings will be held on the days of the orientation on library resources on 28 January 2019, talks that are part of RS on 18 February 2019, faculty presentations on 15 April 2019, and the feedback session on 22 April 2019. The combined meetings will be held in Room No. 63. The activities in the joint meetings will *not* be counted for evaluation.
- C. Table 1 below shows the relative weightage of the three components that count for grading:

Table 1: Relative weight of the components

Sl	Component	Weight	Tutors
1.	Academic Reading and Writing (ARW)	30%	<i>Hany Babu & Swetha Antony</i>
2.	Research Skills (RS)	25%	<i>Subarno Chattarji, Ira Raja & Nidhi Vats</i>
3.	Literary Historiography (LH)	45%	<i>As given in Table 2</i>

- D. The ARW component is intended to give students training in basic skills of academic reading and writing. There will be seven sessions of ARW, five of which that are one and a half hours long. The remaining two sessions are an hour long each. Students are expected to do both in-class and take-home assignments as part of ARW. Classroom activities will be based on the worksheets provided in the class. The activities will enable the students to understand the basic features of an academic text, and also will train them in various types of writing that are needed for academic purposes. This component makes up 30% of the total evaluation, which comprises 15% for a written assignment and 15% for classroom tasks.
- E. The RS component is meant to introduce students to the methods and tools of research in the study of literature. This part of the course will take up three class hours. All sessions will be of one-hour duration each. This component will also require many independent research hours outside of the class to fulfill the requirements of its two take-home assignments, coded RS-A1 and RS-A2. This component accounts for 25% of the course in terms of evaluation.
- F. The LH component comprises essays related to literary historiography, hermeneutics, dialectics, and translation. It takes up five sessions and accounts for 45% of the evaluation. Each of the five sessions is one and a half hours long and will run parallel to the ARW sessions. There are specific readings assigned for each of the

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five sessions of LH. The readings are aimed at helping students develop a sense of literary historiography, alongside an understanding of the art and craft of reading and writing. Here literary history is to be taken beyond the “background” that helps throw light on primary questions pertaining to authors, genres and movements, but related to the presuppositions, both philosophical and practical underlying all of literary activity. To this end, we will look at the question of different genres of writing, the literary object as differentiated from the field of art and/or culture in general, the question of truth and objectivity in literary interpretation, the relationship between historical and rhetorical hypothesis, close and distant readings, the question of periodizing, continuity and rupture as ways of understanding traditions.

- G. As part of the LH component, each student is supposed to do a written assignment under the guidance of a supervisor assigned to her. Apart from this, the students are required to participate in discussions that are structured as follows:
- i. Each group will be divided into five subgroups of four/five members each. The subgroups of groups A and B will be numbered A1 to A5 and B1 to B5 respectively.
 - ii. The readings for LH are numbered 1 to 5 as given in Table 3.
 - iii. On each of the meetings of LH, the members of a particular subgroup will lead the discussion on the reading assigned for that day. That is to say, on the day of LH1, the subgroups A1 and B1 will lead the discussions in their respective groups.
 - iv. Each member of the subgroup is expected to play an active role in leading the discussion. The leading points for the discussion will have been arrived at after extensive debate and discussion with the respective group A or B, prior to the class discussions. In the classroom each student will contribute in his or her individual capacity, and not by means of a rehearsed (individual or joint) presentation. The supervisor will moderate as well as aid in the discussion, but the burden of the discussion rests on the students.
 - v. It is imperative that each member of the entire group (i.e. Groups A and B) read each of the readings allotted as per the schedule.
- H. In addition to the above three components (all of which will be graded), on 18 February, there will be two talks as part of the Course: one on plagiarism and the other on publishing. On 15 April, some of the faculty members will discuss their own work purely from the point of view of *methodology*. There would be four or five presentations of about 20 minutes each. Each presentation will be allocated 10 minutes time for discussion.
- I. Those who fail to meet the deadlines will be penalized in any of the following ways: reduction of grade, repetition of the specific component(s), or expulsion from the course. Those who fail to secure the required grade would be asked to redo the assignment(s), repeat the specific component(s), or the course, as the case may be.
- J. The overall outline of the course is given in Table 2 below. The list of the readings for the LH component can be found in Section 2 (Table 3). The details of the assignments for RS and LH are given in section 3 (Table 4). Section 3.1 is a guide to

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the RS assignments. Section 4 has two tables: Table 5 presents the schema for evaluation, and Table 6 gives the important dates at a glance. Section 5 provides a brief gloss of the weekly readings for LH.

Table 2: Timetable

Week	Date	Time	Group A	Group B	
I	21.01	2.45 – 4.45	<i>Introduction to the MPhil Research Methodology Course</i>		
II	28.01	2.45 – 4.45	<i>Orientation to Library Resources</i>		
III	04.02	2.45 – 3.45	ARW – 1	LH – 1 (<i>Shormishtha Panja</i>)	
		3.45 – 4.45	LH – 1 (<i>Shormishtha Panja</i>)	ARW – 1	
IV	11.02	2.45 – 4.15	ARW – 2	RS – 1 (<i>Ira Raja & Nidhi Vats</i>)	
		4.15 – 5.45	RS – 1 (<i>Ira Raja & Nidhi Vats</i>)	ARW – 2	
V	18.02	2.45 – 3.45	RS – 2: “Plagiarism” (<i>Subarno Chattarji</i>)		
		3.45 – 4.45	RS – 2: “Getting Published” (<i>Ira Raja</i>)		
		Submission of First Draft of ARW Assignment (ARW-A)			
VI	25.02	2.45 – 4.15	ARW – 3	LH – 2 (<i>Tapan Basu</i>)	
		4.15 – 5.45	LH – 2 (<i>Tapan Basu</i>)	ARW – 3	
VII	11.03	2.45 – 4.15	ARW – 4	LH – 3 (<i>Subarno Chattarji</i>)	
		4.15 – 5.45	LH – 3 (<i>Subarno Chattarji</i>)	ARW – 4	
		Submission of RS-A1			
VIII	25.03	2.45 – 4.15	ARW – 5	LH – 4 (<i>Rimli Bhattacharya</i>)	
		4.15 – 5.45	LH – 4 (<i>Rimli Bhattacharya</i>)	ARW – 5	
IX	01.04	2.45 – 3.45	ARW – 6	RS – 3	
		3.45 – 4.45	RS – 3	ARW – 6	
		Submission of Second Draft of ARW Assignment			
X	08.04	2.45 – 4.15	ARW – 7	LH – 5 (<i>Raj Kumar</i>)	
		4.15 – 5.45	LH – 5 (<i>Raj Kumar</i>)	ARW – 7	
XI	15.04	2.45 – 5.45	<i>Faculty Presentations on Research Methodology</i>		
		Finalization of supervisor for LH Assignment			
		Submission of RS-A2			
XII	22.04	2.45 – 3.45	<i>Feedback Session</i>		
08.07.2019		Submission of LH Assignment			

2. Readings

Table 3 below gives you the details about the readings for Literary Historiography.

Table 3: Readings for LH

Code	Week	Date	Text	Tutor
LH 1	IV	04.02	Christopher Pinney , ' "A secret of their own country: Or, how Indian nationalism made itself irrefutable,"' from Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed) <i>Beyond Appearances?: Visual Practices and Ideologies in Modern India</i> , Delhi: Sage Pubns, 2013, pp 113-151. Nicholas Mirzoeff , 'The Right to Look, or, How to Think With and Against Visuality,' from <i>The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality</i> , London: Duke UP, 2011, pp 1-34	Shormishtha Panja To be announced
LH 2	VI	25.02	Walter Benjamin , "The Author as Producer", <i>New Left Review</i> , 1/62, July-August 1970, pp. 83-96.	Tapan Basu
LH 3	VII	11.03	Peter Nicholls , "Wars I Have Seen," in Stephen Fredman, ed. <i>A Concise Companion to Twentieth Century American Poetry</i> (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2008)	Subarno Chattarji
LH 4	VIII	25.03	Francesca Orsini , "How to do multilingual literary History: Lessons from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century north India", <i>The Indian Economic and Social History Review</i> 49.2:225-46, 2012.	Rimli Bhattacharya
LH 5	X	08.04	Arjun Dangle , "Dalit Literature: Past, Present and Future" Introduction to <i>Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature</i> . Edited by Arjun Dangle. Bombay: Orient Longman, 2004, pp.xix-liv.	Raj Kumar

3. Assignments

Table 4 below provides the details of the assignments. The guidelines for the Research Skills assignments 1 and 3 are given in section 3.1.

Table 4: Assignments

Code	Week	Date	Task	%
ARW	V	18.02	Submission of the first draft of an academic essay in about 1500 words on any topic you choose in consultation with your tutors. Topic to be finalised via email by 28 January 2019	15%
	IX	01.04	Submission of Second Draft.	

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RS-A1	VII	11.03	Choose an essay from a major journal/ or book in their field of interest and write an analysis in which you do the following: a. Discuss the main questions the essay attempts to answer. b. Examine the kinds of evidence used in the essay. c. Discuss the essay's organization. d. Determine its critical orientation. e. Evaluate its effectiveness. (Word Limit: 1500 words)	10%
RS-A2	XI	15.04	Select a canonical text (poem, play, novel, work of prose), based on which you will undertake the following exercises: a. Make a bibliography of significant studies of that work during the last fifteen years. b. Make another bibliography of textual studies of that work. c. Write an essay of no more than four pages in which you characterize recent directions of criticism and scholarship on the text, paying special attention to the effects of theoretical developments like feminism, gender studies, new historicism, cultural studies, and so on. List the sources you use in drawing up your bibliographies, and comment briefly on the usefulness of each. (Word Limit: 1500 words)	15%
LH	08.07.2019		Write a 2500 word theoretical essay based on themes emerging from the readings in the historiography course in consultation with the supervisor. (<i>Topic and supervisor to be finalized by week XI, i.e. by 15.04</i>)	45%

3.1 Guide to Assignments RS-A1 and RS-A2

The word limit for all the assignments is 1500 words (each).

RS-A1

This is a comprehension exercise, training students to read academic writing critically, with a view to its approach, its argument, its evidence (does it use historical evidence, does it use textual evidence/ quantitative or qualitative, and so on?). Basically anything that you observe about a scholarly piece of writing. It is an exercise that, apart from teaching you to read texts critically also encourages you to notice how an argument is structured, what are the different elements that go into structuring an argument, the craft of academic writing if you will. This first exercise forces you to delve into the text and grapple with it in a critical fashion (and this may involve identifying its critical approach -- is it feminist, Marxist, postcolonial or a mix).

RS-A2

This takes you outside the text to see how it has been received over a period of time. Imagine you are a teacher putting together a bibliography for your students. What kind

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of books would you put in the bibliography? What editions of the text are available, whether new ones have come out (your accompanying essay should explain the strengths and limitations of the various essays)? Then there will be textual criticism (i.e. critical writing focused on a close reading of the literary text in question) followed by a representative sample of the major critical perspectives from which the text has been approached in the last howsoever many years. Looking at critical writings on a Shakespearean text over the last century would give you a good sense of the major developments in literary criticism, starting with new criticism, Marxism, structuralism, post structuralism, feminism, new historicism, post colonialism, post-humanism and so on.

Some texts are more approachable from one perspective than another. For example, some may attract postcolonial enquiry others may draw feminist criticism. Basically not all texts would have been approached through all these different critical perspectives so you will have to identify which approaches have been dominant at what times in the text you are looking at. Your accompanying bibliographic essay will have to explain these trends in textual/ theoretical criticism.

4. Evaluation Schema and Important Dates

Table 5 gives you the evaluation schema in a nutshell. Table 6 gives you the important dates at a glance.

Table 5: Evaluation

Sl	What	How	When	%
1.	ARW	Writing tasks given in class	Weeks III to XI	15%
		Assignment	Week V: 18.02. & Week IX: 01.04	15%
2.	RS	2 take-home assignments	RS-A1: Week VII: 11.03	10%
			RS-A2: Week XI: 15.04	15%
3.	LH	Take-home assignment	<u>Finalization of Topic:</u> Week XI: 15.04 <u>Submission:</u> July 08, 2019	45%

Table 6: Important Dates

What	When
Course begins	Week I: January 21
Submission of First Draft of ARW Assignment	Week V: February 18
Submission of RS-A1	Week VII: March 11
Submission of Second Draft of ARW Assignment	Week IX: April 1
Submission of RS-A2 & Finalization of topic and supervisor for LH Assignment	Week XI: April 15
Submission of LH Assignment	July 08, 2019

5. Gloss of Literary Historiography Readings

LH 1 (Week III: 04.02)

Visual Studies (*Shormishtha Panja*)

Christopher Pinney, 'A secret of their own country: Or, how Indian nationalism made itself irrefutable,' from Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed) *Beyond Appearances?: Visual Practices and Ideologies in Modern India*, Delhi: Sage, 2013, pp 113-151.

Christopher Pinney's essay analyses the rejection of the colonial visual project by Indian artists in the 19th and early 20th century. Deploying a number of concepts like absorption, the internalized gaze and the xeno-real in his examination of Indian chromolithographic art, Pinney puts forward the argument that the hybridity of Indian art, with Hindu mythological figures seated in western pastoral landscapes, defeated the idea of semblance or a blind imitation of the colonial model.

Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'The Right to Look, or, How to Think With and Against Visuality,' from *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, London: Duke UP, 2011, pp 1-34.

Mirzoeff reminds readers that visual politics is often constitutive of authority. Countervisuality, or a steady reading against the grain, is the scholarly method that he sets out, with particular reference (in this essay) to the dismantling of the legacy of imperialism.

LH 2 (Week VI: 25.02)

The Problem of Political Correctness or a Revolutionary Stance (*Tapan Basu*)

Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer", *New Left Review*, 1/62, July-August 1970, pp. 83-96.

This is a foundational essay that discusses the relation between political correctness and literary merit or quality. Through the category of the author as producer, Benjamin opens up the question of writing as not merely supplying a particular apparatus of production, but also imparting skills and techniques, which will transform the productive process, by turning more and more readers into producers and writers.

LH 3 (Week VII: 11.03)

Representing War (*Subarno Chattarji*)

Peter Nicholls, "Wars I Have Seen," in Stephen Fredman, ed. *A Concise Companion to Twentieth Century American Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2008)

In this essay Peter Nicholls looks at a body of American war poetry from the First World to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. He considers the value placed on poetic representations of war and why this is so. How and why is it that a genre that is seemingly marginal occupies such a valuable space in literary conceptualizations of war? What does it mean to "see" war and how are those perceptions communicated in varied poetic language? What role does language play in a world where lies and propaganda seem to dominate representations? In thinking about poetry, poetics, language Nicholls enables us as readers to approach war poetry in ways that we may not have thought about.

LH 4 (Week VIII: 25.03)

Translation as Interpretation (*Rimli Bhattacharya*)

Francesca Orsini, "How to do multilingual literary History: Lessons from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century north India", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 49.2:225-46, 2012.

The Indian subcontinent has been a remarkable space for multilingual literary culture. Orsini's article questions research models based on single languages by looking at the archives available for the 15th century in North India. It shows how sites of literary

production may move from the court to other spaces, how oral-performative practices make possible different modes of circulation for texts. It also offers perspectives on the relationship between language, script and transmission of texts. The article works towards an alternative literary historiography.

LH 5 (Week X: 08.04)

Dalit Aesthetics (Raj Kumar)

Arjun Dangle, "Dalit Literature: Past, Present and Future" Introduction to *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. Edited by Arjun Dangle. Bombay: Orient Longman, 2009, pp.xiv-liv.

Arjun Dangle's essay "Dalit Literature: Past, Present and Future" outlines the historical emergence of Dalit literature in Maharashtra which later became an all India phenomenon. Dangle discusses various features of Indian caste society and protests against caste practices including Dalit Panthers movement. While emphasizing on the political aspects of Dalit literature he also introduces the idea of Dalit aesthetics.