

Theory/Praxis Course
FORUM ON CONTEMPORARY THEORY

	Year	Theme	Resource Person(s)	Collaborating Institute	Venue
1	2003	<p>Introduction to Theory and Its Application The first Theory/Praxis Course was an exploration into the very notion of theory and its academic, social and cultural manifestations. The course revolved around how theory possibly sheds more light on ways of knowing and doing disciplines and how it impacts our understanding of everyday life and its aesthetics.</p>	Sitanshu Yashaschandra, Gujarati poet and playwright, E. V. Ramakrishnan, Malayalam poet and critic, and Associate Professor of English at South Gujarat University, Surat	Departments of English and Sociology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	Baroda, Gujarat
2	2004	<p>Interrogating Cultural Studies The 2004 course explored culture as an epistemic category and in terms of life worlds and domains of knowledge and charted the trajectory of cultural studies as an interdisciplinary field. The course focused on contemporary concerns of cultural studies and the way it informs and interprets everyday social phenomena and disciplines. In the coming two years, the courses revolved around two major thinkers, Derrida and Said respectively.</p>	R. Radhakrishnan from the University of California at Irvine; Sura P. Rath from Central Washington University; E. V. Ramakrishnan from South Gujarat University; Satish Poduval from the CIEFL, Hyderabad; Dilip Das from Berhampur University	Departments of English and Sociology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	Baroda Gujarat
3	2005	<p>Theory After Derrida The Course an intensive study of the life and works of Derrida, influences that shaped his thought and how he impacted the ideas to come.</p>	R. Radhakrishnan; Nagesh Rao , Wake Forest University, US; Tejaswini Niranjana from the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore	Indian Institute of Technology Gauhati	Guwahati, Assam
4	2006	<p>Secular Criticism: Theory, Ethics and Critical Practice after Said The focus was on the context(s) and</p>	Vivek Dhareshwar from the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore; R. Radhakrishnan; Prafulla	Department of English, Berhampur University	Berhampur, Odisha

		politics of Said's thought and his contributions to interpreting religion, ethics, imperialism, colonialism, orientalism and humanism.	Kar from the Centre for Contemporary Theory, Baroda		
5	2007	<p>The Course revolved around the idea of language, its politics, aesthetics and changing functions; game-play and its applications in the reading of texts and society and cosmopolitanism as it evolved in the debates between Gandhi and Tagore.</p> <p>(a) Language Revisited from Saussure to Derrida The course consisted of a vast amount of readings from linguistics and poststructuralist theory including select work by Edward Sapir, Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Helene Cixous, Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Walter Ong, and Derrida. Beginning with a brief anthropological introduction to society, culture and the patterning of life, the discussions steered into the thick swampy waters of linguistics, and finally to a broad, rudimentary closure hinted at through an analysis of Derridean complexities such as the metaphysics of presence and the transcendental signifieds.</p> <p>(b) The Poetics of Game-Play The Course was a study of the theory of game-play in its philosophical, sociological dimensions, and in its usefulness to the reading of literary texts. Analyzing man as a player of games rather than as a thinker led us to many interesting ideas, including</p>	<p>(a) Vicki Kirby, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of New South Wales, Australia</p> <p>(b) Sura. Rath from the Department of English, Central Washington University</p> <p>© R. Radhakrishnan</p>	Department of History, Berhampur University	Berhampur, Odisha

		<p>consideration of human beings as homo ludens. Seminal texts such as J. Huizinga's Homo Ludens and Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World were discussed. Rath's paper on game-play as a critical paradigm of fiction, where he talks about Faulkner's Light in August, gives us a very lucid model of any literary text's journey through various stages of the game-play structure.</p> <p>(c) Rethinking Cosmopolitanism The last course, "Rethinking Cosmopolitanism," taught by R. Radhakrishnan, was organized around debates between Gandhi and Tagore. Drawing connections between these debates and the ideas of cosmopolitanism was not difficult, and the discussions in this course covered a vast intellectual terrain, from identity to political cathexis, from simple understanding of nationalism/cosmopolitanism to a broader and more inclusive understanding. Some of the questions that were raised were concerned with the positions which Tagore and Gandhi had taken up within the discourse of nationalism.</p>			
6	2008	<p>(a) Colonialism, Culture and Gender Rajeswari Sunder Rajan established gender as an underpinning force of the many other cultural aspects and practices in any human society. While doing so she made some crucial reflections on the interrelatedness of colonialism, nationalism and gender that necessitate the power and pursuit</p>	<p>(a)Rajeswari Sunder Rajan from the Department of English, New York University (b) Aditya Nigam Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi</p>	Department of English, University of Goa	Goa

		<p>of knowledge in pre-colonial cultures.</p> <p>(b) Reflections on Violence Dr. Nigam's course dealt with the works of Arendt, Sorel, Derrida, Benjamin Foucault and Fanon and their vivid pictures of violence and power. According to him the idea of violence goes back to Marx's understanding of the state since for Marx, the state is no longer the symbol of universal ethical existence, but merely the instrument of the ruling class. Referring to the Indian aspect and quoting eminent thinkers such as Sudipta Kaviraj, Dr. Nigam claimed that the difference between the West and India is that for the latter, both colonialism and capitalism came simultaneously.</p>			
7	2009	<p>(a) Ideas of the Radical Enlightenment The Course analysed 'Enlightenment' through literary, political, philosophical and social perspectives and also presented a critique of the Eurocentric views of 'Enlightenment'.</p> <p>(b) Law's Imperial Fields Through a close examination of legal</p>	<p>(a)Akeel Bilgrami from Columbia University, New York (b)Renisa Mawani from The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada ©Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak from the Centre for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University, New York</p>	Department of English, St. Berchmans College, Changanassery, Kerala	Changanassery, Kerala

		<p>imperial regimes, the course studied new knowledges, concepts of justice, subjectivities, violence and coercion.</p> <p>(c) Can Learning from the Subaltern Be Helpful for Us?</p> <p>The course read into the very idea of subalternity by reading texts, contexts and social histories and pondered on how the insights gathered from such an exercise prove helpful in the formation of ideas and methods of knowing and interpreting.</p> <p>(d) Globalization, Women, and Gender</p> <p>Through an engagement with cultural theory and transnational feminist theory, the course theorized the difficulties and possibilities of building cross border feminist coalitions to mobilize against imperialist capitalism of the globalized world.</p> <p>(e) What Future for Democracy?</p> <p>After tracing the origins, manifestations and transformations of democracy across time and locations, the course delved deep into the contemporary avatars and varieties of democracy and in the light of the challenges, reflected on democracy's relevance and possible readjustments.</p> <p>(f) On Suffering: Probing the Limits of Thought</p> <p>The course examined the ways in which the physical experiences of intense pain and suffering have transformed and destabilized contemporary philosophy and culture.</p>	<p>(d) Esha Niyogi De from the University of California, Los Angeles</p> <p>(e) Patricia I. Vieira from the Georgetown University, Washington D. C</p> <p>(f) Michael Marder, Georgetown University, Washington D. C</p>		
8	2010	<p>(a) Matters of Life & Death</p> <p>The course explored the [human] body as the locus of a number of fundamental</p>	<p>a)Costica Bradatan, Department of Philosophy, Texas Tech University</p> <p>(b) Milind Wakankar Centre for the</p>	Department of English, University of Pune	Pune, Maharashtra

		<p>experiences: the experiences of a living (embodied) being, “thrown into the world”, of living in limit-situations (torture, starvation, physical degradation), the experience of finitude and imperfection, of overcoming one’s natural fear of death, finally the experience of self-transcending and re-signification through dying a violent voluntary death.</p> <p>(b) Subalternity and Region</p> <p>(c) Subaltern Studies: Theory, History and the Futures of Theory</p> <p>(d) Subalternity and the Biopolitics of Difference</p> <p>The second part of the course was devoted to Subaltern Studies, that is an approach to the study of the history of colonial and post-colonial people which focuses on the lives, problems, activities, struggles and sufferings of the peasantry and the urban working class, what were once referred to as the ‘lower orders’ of society. I had been looking forward to this part of the Summer School, as it concentrated on the social reality of British India and beyond.</p>	<p>Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore</p> <p>(c) Pramod K. Nayar from the Department of English, University of Hyderabad</p> <p>(d) Dilip K. Das English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad</p>		
9	2011	<p>(a) Deep Ecology and the End of Anthropocentrism?</p> <p>The Course highlighted eco-philosophy and eco-criticism through the philosophical lens of “being in the world.”</p>	<p>(a) R. Radhakrishnan</p> <p>(b) Dilip P. Gaonkar from Northwestern University, Illinois</p> <p>(c) Sumathi</p>	Osmania University Centre for International Programs, Hyderabad	Hyderabad

		<p>(b) Global Cultural Studies: From Post-Colonial to Transnational Cultural Analysis The Course focused on “transnational minor” in global studies and destabilized perceived conceptions about citizenship, transnationalism, and diaspora.</p> <p>(c) The World as Picture: The Work of Vision in the Age of European Empires The course explained “vision” through the concept of interocularity”/“intervisuality”: a dense visual experience in which images produce conversations among each other. Interpretations of such experiences depend heavily on grasping the historical and political contexts of image production, circulation, and consumption.</p>	Ramaswamy from Duke University, Durham		
10	2012	<p>(a) The ‘Vernacular’ in a Comparative Frame The course discussed the importance of language that not only determines human thought, but also passes through us and is not fully subject to human intentionality. One of the issues raised in this course was whether there is a fundamental error in the association of vernaculars with tradition.</p> <p>(b) When was Postcolonial The course examined the operations of colonialism and its aftermath that we popularly term as ‘postcolonial studies’. Discussions included an evaluation of categories such as ‘Third World’, ‘postcolonial’, ‘global’, ‘ethnic’, ‘minority’, ‘marginal’, ‘subaltern’ and ‘hybrid’ and focused on the ways in which various colonial and postcolonial conditions may be</p>	Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar University of Pittsburgh Gaurav Desai, Department of English, Tulane University Rajeswari Sunder Rajan Mohamed Mehdi, Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois	Osmania University Centre for International Programs, Hyderabad	Hyderabad

		<p>re-imagined.</p> <p>(c) Trajectories of Secularism The course explored the role of secularism in contemporary global geo-politics which has opened up its historical genealogies and trajectories to renewed scrutiny. It comprised a revision of complex issues relating to caste, gender and minorities embedded it in the politics of nation-state and democracy of India .</p> <p>(d) The Moral Psychology of Political Power The course provided insights into the concept of non-violence, power, and fearlessness and analyzed what it means to speak about emotions like fear, shame, hurt feelings in face of political collectivities.</p>			
11	2013	<p>(a) Modernity, Democracy, and the Politics of Disorder</p> <p>The course was an introduction to ‘crowd theory’ which tracked representations of the <i>demos</i> – the non-elite, undifferentiated, ‘ordinary man’ gathered in crowds and masses – through the whole sweep of the Western European tradition of thought, from Plato to contemporary philosophers like Hannah Arendt.</p> <p>(b) Critical Plant Studies The Course demonstrated how the western philosophical tradition may be read and developed upon in a novel way – through plants,</p>	<p>(a) Dilip Gaonkar Associate Professor in Rhetoric and Public Culture; Director, Center for Global Culture and Communication, Northwestern University; Director, Center for Transcultural Studies; and Executive Editor, <i>Public Culture</i></p> <p>(b) Michael Marder Ikerbasque Research Professor of Philosophy at the University of the Basque Country, Vitoria-Gasteiz; Editorial Associate, <i>Telos</i> (New York)</p> <p>© Patricia Vieira Department of Spanish and Portuguese, a member of the Comparative Literature Program and of the Film and Media Studies Program at Georgetown University</p> <p>(d) S. Shankar from the Center for South Asian Studies at</p>	Department of English, Goa University	Goa

		<p>not only as explicit ‘subjects’ of philosophy, but as image and metaphor, from the plane tree in Plato to Kant’s tulips, and further as claimants of rights to ethical treatment.</p> <p>(c) Perpetual Peace Dr. Vieira’s module traced the utopian ideal in Western thought, from the classical or epic ‘Golden Age’ which located the perfect state in the past, across the watershed of Christian theology whose ‘City of God’ was promised and to-come, to its projections onto the New World by explorers; through literary utopias from Thomas More to Aldous Huxley; and through political projects from Kant’s unrealised proposal for ‘perpetual peace’ to the United Nations charter.</p> <p>(d)“Translation, Comparatism and the Vernacular in the Context of Postcolonial Studies Dr. Shankar’s course invited the participants to the field of postcolonial studies, oriented around the concept of the vernacular, the practice and theories of translation, and comparatism as a method of theoretical work (extending beyond comparative literature merely).</p>	the University of Hawaii, Manoa		
12	2014	(a) Toward a New Humanism: Frantz		Institute of	Jaipur, Rajasthan

		<p>Fanon, Edward Said The course tried to make sense of the idea of humanism in intellectual history through a close reading of the works of Fanon and Said and explored the connection of humanism to notions like the self, the subject, the nation and the like.</p> <p>(b) Critical Pedagogy: feeling and Thinking Radical Transformation The course examined the neo liberal assault on education and humanities in particular and proposed some critical approaches to pedagogy in humanities.</p>	<p>(a) R. Radhakrishnan from the University of California at Irvine (b) Mohamed Mehdi, Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois</p>	Development Studies, Jaipur	
13	2015	<p>(a) The Promises and Discontents: Decolonial Options and World (Dis)Order The course historically examined the process and idea of decoloniality as a political, ethnical and social project and in the light of neoimperialist and globalizing forces analyzed the (im)possibility of a world order.</p> <p>(b) Decolonization as a Theoretical Problem The course studied the political and extra-political dimensions of decolonization and argued that cultural and psychological decolonization is an ongoing procedure</p>	<p>(a) Walter D. Mignolo, William H. Wannamaker Professor and Director, Centre for Global Studies and Humanities, Duke University. (b) Simon Gikandi, Robert Schirmer Professor of English, Princeton University</p>	The English and Foreign Languages University, Shillong Campus	Shillong, Meghalaya
14	2016	<p>(a) Religion, Politics and Value The course studied religion and secularism through textual sources and historical contexts and contemplated on how religion is connected to ethics and politics by subjecting to analysis such ideas as identity, multiculturalism, democracy, nationalism, rationality and justice.</p>	<p>(a) Akeel Bilgrami, Sidney Morgenbesser Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University (b) Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Albert Guérard Professor in Literature in the Departments of Comparative Literature and of French & Italian, Stanford University</p>	University of Hyderabad	Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

		<p>(b) Towards a Philosophy of Presence: Genealogical and Epistemological Aspects</p> <p>In its attempt to understand 'Presence' in a nuanced way, the course moved through the domains of being, self, subjectivity and other complex notions of hermeneutics, connecting 'presence' with space and temporality.</p>			
15	2017	<p>(a) Baroque and the Early Modern Cultural Change</p> <p>The course was concerned with how broad cultural changes, of the sort that occur across several national literatures over a century or more, are theorized and interpreted. The course illustrated how the emergence of the Baroque is a complex step toward modernity.</p> <p>(b) Exilic Writing, Cosmopolitanism, and the Making of World Literature</p> <p>This course was about the centrality of exile and exilic writing in the making of world literature. The discussion of exile and world literature is embedded in an analysis of cosmopolitanism as a discourse with specific - and historically shifting - political significance.</p>	<p>(a) Roland Greene, Mark Pigott KBE Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, and, by courtesy, Iberian and Latin American Cultures and Director, Department of Comparative Literature at Stanford University</p> <p>(b) Galin Tihanov, George Steiner Professor of Comparative Literature at Queen Mary, University of London</p>	The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad	Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh