

SESSIONAL

Reading E. V. Ramaswamy (Periyar)

Dr. Antara Ray

In the present sessional, the students will be asked to read the works of Periyar and critically engage with it. The following two books will be provided:

1. Geetha. V. and S. V. Rajadurai (ed.), *Revolt: A Radical Weekly in Colonial Madras*, Chennai: Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam.
2. *Collected Works of Periyar E.V. R*, compiled by Dr. K. Veeramani.

The students undergoing this sessional will have to submit reports on a regular basis. Furthermore, there will be regular discussions on distant digital mode where the focus will be on critically examining Periyar's works.

MARXIST FEMINISM TO CONTEMPLATE THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Bhaskar Chakraborty

ABSTRACT

The independence of sex and gender has been professed but it is still debatable as to whether it is a social, cultural or natural phenomenon. Sex is the container and gender the context the former being fixed. Most feminists work on the premise that sex precedes gender without recognizing the relationship between division and hierarchy, which are the quintessential issues to address the question of sex and gender. The biological sex facilitates the different functions for the procreation of males and females that determines from natural, feminist and patriarchal schools of thought. Also biological sex can be taken as a salient factor for making these physiological and social demarcations. But this thinking is dichotomous and hierarchal in nature. Lastly, the concept of Marxist feminism is discussed to give a background setting to study the liberation of women via microfinance institutions. It has been flagrantly nuanced that women are the cynosure in household tasks and national economic development. However, the role of women is impeded because they generally hold a low status in many developing countries. Owing to historical and cultural disadvantages, women are also more vulnerable to poverty. In congruence to being a human rights agenda, the prevailing condition of women calls for taking measures to empower them. The emancipation of women is the baseline for transubstantiating their lives at the household level and in the wider society. In this context, the provision of microfinance is an approach towards women empowerment.

Keywords- Marxist feminism, Microfinance institutions, women empowerment

CPURSE EVALUATION-Term paper(50 marks)

(Bhaskar Chakraborti)

Art and Activism (Niloshree Bhattacharya)

Resistance can take various forms; well-organised people's marches and sit-ins which sometimes sustain over a period of time and culminate into social movements, spontaneous acts of violence and cultural expressions of dissent. In this sessional, we will address the interface of politics and culture, identify the overlaps between the seemingly separate categories, by studying cultural and political aspects of acts of resistance.

Historically, some genres of music, art, theatre and literature have evolved in the context of ongoing social movements such as Jazz music, Dalit Literature, Situationist International and so on. Protest sites and social movements have been spaces where ordinary citizens have created protest art, street theatre and revolutionary music. Artist collectives have also taken up a particular cause, expressed their ideological positions through their artistic mediums, and have come forth to support social movements. The field of art and activism is indeed rich with various forms of expressions by artists, activists, and also those who claim to be artist-activists. Does 'art' matter politically, and if so, how? What kind of artistic expressions are considered to be political acts?

While artistic expressions have inspired resistance cultures, it is necessary to distinguish between the various forms of creative expressions which are associated with resistance, by historically mapping the emergence of particular genres of resistance art, music and performance, particularly focusing on how it is produced and consumed over a period of time.

In this sessional, students will be expected to write a term paper addressing the above questions, based on a particular case from the field of art, music, literature or performance.

Niloshree Bhattacharya

September 2020

Sessional 2020-21 by Sana Rahman

In this paper the students are expected to analyse the impact of COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of gender. Students will be expected to select a particular category of women for the analysis. It could be the non-working or working women belonging to a particular class or religion, etc. For example it could be female teachers, domestic help, the middle class homemakers, rich homemakers, college girls, female doctors, business-women, etc. The paper shall focus on the socio-economic & psychological experience of the respondents. Considering the limitations in interaction & movement due to the current situation we shall decide on a suitable research methodology depending on the sample chosen.

How can statistics be Applied in Sociological Inquiry?

Sessional offered by Souvik Mondal

In this era of overwhelming collection and availability of quantitative data, the importance of learning the methods in the field of quantitative research have become more relevant and essential than ever. This sessional aims at extending the general introduction to Statistics, which is already present there in our syllabus for every student, to more into an applied arena for particularly students who are interested in quantitative research. Here focus would be on the review of available social researches to understand the applications of social statistics to start with, and then students would be required to conduct a small scale quantitative research based on data available online. If possible then this sessional would also provide a very short introduction to the R software, which is widely used to compute large-scale quantitative data.

Goffman and the Production of Personas

Dr. Hia Sen

The sociologist Erving Goffman had a close relationship with the business of performance in his personal life. His acquaintance with the world of theatre as well as his biographical experiences of having to maintain varying impressions influenced his academic interest in personas. The sessional will require students to acquaint themselves with the works of Erving Goffman in order to see how they influenced the concept of personas in Sociology. It will begin with close readings of his texts – “*The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*” and “*Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*”. Students will then choose from his various texts and probe how they can be read in relation to his more well-known conceptualizations of “self-presentation”/personas/impressions/ fronts. In the final instance, students will read selected works from contemporary sociology, which interact with Goffman’s writings and those which address related questions like habitus or performance, critically reflecting on his conceptualization of persona and how it is produced.

Students will be continuously evaluated. They will be expected to write two primary assignments: a critical review of one book and a paper on any question about “personas” and their production drawing from the prescribed and chosen readings.

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Hand-sanitisers and the question of the pure self

Sukanya Sarbadhikary

The international hand sanitising industry has received the greatest impetus in recent times, due to the WHO's published Covid 19 protocols. The adoption of this 'new' indispensable cosmetic in handbags, pockets, and car shelves, has however been relatively spontaneous. This spontaneity is related to a long history of understandings of hygiene, public health, and immunity in general. However, material and cultural roots of the sanitisation discourse run deeper. So, varied physical and social principles have come together in the sanitisation market: the liberal importance of self-protection, the relation of the self and community understood as both the preservation of individual health and social responsibility, and even more, self-preservation as *itself* the ideal ethic of healthy communality. Other registers relate to nuanced sensory undercurrents. Thus, there have been studies in the Covid discourse, suggesting how we touch our faces un-self-consciously, several times, and therefore the need for alert hand-behaviour. Touch, is understood in the philosophy of the senses, as the most basic bodily grounding, for a number of different reasons. For instance, its un-self-conscious performance is an insistent basis of self-consciousness. Thus, conscious cleaning of the hands has significant implications for our notions of the aware self. Further, purity has long been a central concern in Indian social life, and the ethic of sanitisation thus also fits seamlessly with an earlier habitus of embodying the social. Most crucially, hands are sensorimotor organs: they are body parts which can sense as well as reach out to the external world. They are the only corporeal element, which can relate to the self as well as others, in equal sensory capacity, most literally. From Aristotle to Immanuel Kant, the Mahabharata to recent neurophysiological studies of the mind, hands have been understood as the most critical tools of rational and ethical social behavior, centrally tied to the brain's evolutionary development, and alongside it, the progress of civilization. Hands, sanitising themselves as part of state directive, as a marker of social responsibility, and their interiorising themselves into cocoons of preservatory morality, away from the domain of touching another, so preservation becoming the best means of sociality, and un-self-conscious touch becoming self-conscious about being only its own object: have very far reaching consequences for the unwrapping of a new normal, a global civilization.

We shall try to think through these questions this semester. Students shall hopefully find easy access to people's narratives of sanitisation, pharmaceutical agencies making and selling sanitisers (and many who have actively volunteered to establish small companies during the pandemic), reading online discussions about this new cosmetic, including potential carcinogenic and other dangers posited by it, etc. Additionally, students would be encouraged to try and relate their thoughts with any line of theoretical imagination that they may find useful. Finally, and hopefully, students may be able to think about themselves, their new everyday, the community around them, the planet we inhabit, and the very corpus tying all this together: our hand-skin, through fresh lens of touchability and untouchability, purity and irresponsibility, health and death, good, clean, global citizenship, and indiscriminate touch.

Locating Elderly population in the Pandemic situation.

Sumita Saha

The last months have marked the emergence of a global health threat that has taken the world by its knees. The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the SARS-CoV-2 has crippled the public health, economy and the daily lives of billions. Pandemics like Covid19 are not merely biological phenomena. They affect society at a large, having long-lasting psycho-social implications, many of which tends to outlast the pandemic itself. Even though the virus is considered to be global public health problem, certain sections of the society are at a clearly defined and increased risk. One such section are the senior citizens. Amidst all the chaos of the ongoing crisis, certain sections of the population like the elderly are as vulnerable to the virus as to the psychological effects of the pandemic and the situations put in place to control it.

Any form of pandemic brings huge transformation in daily lifestyle patterns. With reference to the Corona Pandemic, a parallel notion which comes is 'social distancing', which has diverse affects across different age parameters. In case of elderly population, the pandemic not only affects their daily lifestyles but it also has affects them physically and mentally. With reference to the former, recent studies on the pandemic clearly suggests the impact of comorbidity factors in case of any patients. From these aspects, it can be remarked that the elderly population is more susceptible to the disease , which often prove fatal for them. On the other hand, elderly population has often been seen to be dependent entities who often need help for their daily chores. At this juncture, we need to problematize the impact of social distancing for the elderly population. They had often been deprived of any domestic help too in the wake of these pandemic outbreak followed by lockdown. Further, it is also seen that the uncertainty and fear of the pandemic can have increased effect on the minds of the aged, as they are aware of their vulnerability. The fear of death stays lost in the existential fear of losing their loved ones and guilt of possibly being the carriers of the infection. This can lead to significant 'what after me' issues and self-neglect, which can in turn lead to non-compliance to the prescribed standards of precautions.

In the aforesaid paragraphs, an attempt has been done to explore the various facets of elderly interactions in coherence to the pandemic. Students are now hereby requested to submit their sessional with reference to elderly discourses and analyse it through pandemic lenses.

SESSIONAL ODD SEMESTER 2020

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MIGRATION AND CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

Suvrata Chowdhary

Movement of individuals, community or tribes has resulted in much of the change that different societies have undergone for many centuries now. Conceptualization of this phenomena as migration has thereby initiated many critical studies in several contexts. As a social process of change migration not only brings with it human resource from one place to another it also means movement of cultures (language and traditions), transformation of both rural and urban space, economic opportunities and nature of work. This sessional will entail study of literature on migration, its theoretical and empirical dimensions. Central to the discussion will be the nature of change that societies have endured and how it has impacted the politics and cultures in particular contexts.

Sessional:

Introduction to Borderland studies

This sessional paper would attempt to extend an understanding of the introduction to 'Borderland studies' with special reference to South East Asia through the works of William Van Schendel and James Scott. The students would be introduced to a couple of works from both the above-mentioned authors that would help garner a general idea of borderland studies in respect to South East Asia. The sessional would have a more precise focus on the concept of 'Zomia' prescribed by Van Schendel and nuanced much further by Scott in his writings. The materials would be circulated once the course begins and there would be online sessions for discussions on the readings.

Thondup Bhutia.

Institutional Forms: Revisiting Higher Education in India

Upal Chakraborti

What is a college? What is a University? What is a research institute? Are these institutional forms of higher education in India separated/separable by different aims of learning? Do they have different infrastructures, pedagogic methods, personnel, and strategies of governance? Why are they linked to different structures of funding and regulation, like the University Grants Commission, Department of Science and Technology, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research? What are undergraduate and postgraduate courses? Why do they have different durations, credits, curricula and modes of assessment? What is the difference between research programs like M.Phil and Phd? How and why did this entire infrastructure of publicly-funded higher education with different institutional forms develop in India? And most importantly, what is the basis for the recent proposals of a radical reshaping of this infrastructure, laid out in drafts of the New Educational Policy?

In this sessional paper we will be historically revisiting links between forms of higher educational institutions and imperatives of governance in India. This differentiated and elaborate web of forms strongly suggest that the framers of this web seemed to conceive an essential relation between the 'what' and the 'how' of higher education. Students working for this paper will be expected to understand and critically re-evaluate the framing rationalities of this relation. They will interrogate the social visions inscribed in the existing formations, and their future directions.