

An Introduction to Cultural Studies

Programme: B.Tech
Course: OE (HSS)

Year: IV
Credits: 03

Semester: 2020-21(I)
Hours: 40

Course Context and Overview (100 words):

This course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of what does 'culture' mean in contemporary times. It seeks to obtain a nuanced understanding of how the different socio-political discourses at any given time intersect to constitute individual as well as collective ideologies and perceptions. Accordingly, it will cover the deeper workings of varying discourses such as that of nation, postcoloniality, and gender vis-à-vis an extensive study of theories, texts, and films. The course will thus deconstruct the various grand/ dominant narratives of our society, in turn uncovering how those shape our identities.

Prerequisites Courses: None

Course outcomes (COs):

On completion of this course, the students will have the ability to:

CO1: unravel the normative definitions of culture

CO2: understand the deeper implications of postcolonial Indian culture

CO3: probe the hierarchies and inequities in the society

CO4: analyze how culture informs us and vice-versa

CO5: critically understand the alarming issues of contemporary culture

Course Topics:

| Topics | Lecture Hours |
|--|---------------|
| UNIT – I Cultural Studies as a discipline | 6 |
| 1.1 History of Cultural Studies both 'within' and 'outside' academy; What is the general understanding of culture; and the political implications of culture | |
| 1.2 'High' and 'low' culture: Modernity, Modernism and Postmodernism | |
| 1.3 Popular and media culture as areas of contemporary cultural study | |
| UNIT – II Discussion of Key terms and theories in cultural studies | 6 |
| 2.1 Antonio Gramsci- Hegemony and Subalternity in various contexts; Functioning of different social hierarchies and ideologies | |
| 2.2 Identity, Voice and Agency; Representation and its politics | |
| 2.3 Michael Foucault- Power and Discourse; Victimization, marginalization and construction of subjectivity | |

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.4 Louis Althusser and Interpellation; Ideological State Apparatus and Repressive State Apparatus and its operationalizing in modern societies | |
| UNIT – III: Cultural Studies through the lens of Post-colonialism | |
| 3.1 Edward Said and Orientalism; Homi Bhabha and discussion on ambivalence, hybrid and hyphenated identities; Multiculturalism and Neo-orientalism | 10 |
| 3.2 Franz Fanon and the politics of skin; Racism and identity politics in media narratives | |
| 3.3 Colonial Hegemony and neo-colonialism in modern nation states; Caste Identities in the social system of India | |
| UNIT – IV: Gender and its representation in today’s time | |
| 4.1 Patriarchy and Feminism; an understanding of the movement and the ideological framework- a brief discussion of Simon de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and bell hooks | 8 |
| 4.2 Post-feminism; Judith Butler and Gender Trouble; Moving beyond the gender constructions and queer politics | |
| 4.3 Studying the changing representations of gender in contemporary films and advertisements | |
| UNIT – V: Globalization and a postmodernist culture | |
| 5.1 Derrida and deconstruction of language; Jean Francois Lyotard and the death of grand narratives; and Jean Baudrillard’s celebration of ‘simulcra’ | 10 |
| 5.2 Various expressions of intertextuality, metafiction, self-reflexivity, pastiche and magic realism- brief discussion of major practitioners of postmodernist art and literature | |
| 5.2 Internet, Information Age, and Identity Politics in consumerist culture- Stuart Hall, Ulrich Beck and Slavoj Zizek | |

Reference books:

1. Pramod K. Nayar. *An Introduction to Cultural Studies*. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2016
2. Peter Barry. *Beginning Theory*. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2018
3. Nilanjana Gupta. *Cultural Studies: Approaches in Literary Theory*. New Delhi: Worldview Publications, 2007
4. Ziauddin Sardar. *Introducing Cultural Studies*. Icon Books, 1999
5. Mary Klages. *Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Bloomsbury, 2005
6. Lois Tyson. *Critical Theory Today*. Taylor and Francis, 2014

Additional Resources: **Select NPTEL lectures**

| Item | Weightage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Quizzes (2/3) | 20 |
| Seminar Presentation | 15 |
| Mid Term | 25 |
| End Term | 40 |
| | |

Prepared by: Dr. Payel Pal
Last Update: March 2021