Research area related courses

Perspectives on Sexuality (Prof. Balaganapathi D.)

The course will introduce broad trends and issues in Sexuality. Basic tenets will be discussed with the help of writings of major thinkers in the area. The focus would be on the four major aspects of Sexuality: Gender, Body, Desire and Celibacy.

Sexuality and Gender

Sexuality and Body

Sexuality and Desire

Sexuality and Celibacy

Further Readings


Feminist Theory, A Philosophical Anthology, Edited by Ann E. Cudd and Robin O. Andreasen, Blackwell Publishing House, 2005

A study of Smriti with reference to Jayant Bhatta and Madhvacarya
(Prof. Balaganapathi D.)

This course provides an understanding of the place of Memory in Indian Epistemology. It gives an account of the role that memory plays in pramanas such as Perception, Inference, testimony, Anupalabdhi with reference to the Indian Philosophical systems. The basic focus of the course is on the arguments of Jayanta and Madhvacarya.

Essential Readings:


Further Readings:


Athalye, Y. V. (1930). *Tarka-samgraha of Annambhaṭṭa, with the authors own Dīpikā and Govardhana's Nyāya-bodhini*. Edited with critical and explanatory notes. 2nd Edition: Bombay Sanskrit Series, No. LV.


**Postmodern Ethics (Prof. P. Kesava Kumar)**

1. Postmodernism as a critique of modernity
2. Significance of Postmodern philosophy and ethics
3. Foucault and Ethical subjectivity
4. Philosophy and Ethics of Derrida

**Suggested Readings**


“On the Genealogy of Ethics” “The Ethics for the Concern of Self as a Practice of Freedom.”


**Duties and Rights, Charity and Justice (Dr. Shashi Motilal)**

**The Objective:**

The course is aimed at studying the ethical issues surrounding the question – Do we have a moral duty to help the distant needy? The phenomenon of Global Poverty is a pressing issue facing the world today the eradication of which is one of the top priorities in the list of Sustainable Development Goals: Post 2015 put forward by the United Nations. The ethicist seeks to know if there are moral obligations that humans have to help distant strangers who are much worse off economically. Perhaps, the project of eradicating poverty will be more successful if these reasons are known. The course will seek to study contemporary literature around this topic with focus on the text by Judith Lichtenberg entitled *Distant Strangers: Ethics, Psychology, and Global Poverty* (2014)

**Main Text:**


The topics to be discussed shall be:

Entanglements and the claims of mere humanity

Duties and Rights, charity and justice

“Negative” and “positive” duties

Oughts and cans
Why people do what others do – and why that’s not so bad

Whose poor?/who’s poor?: deprivation within and across borders

 Hopefully helping: the perils of giving

On motives and morality

Conclusion: morality for mere mortals

**Further Readings:**


**Research Topic Specific Course: Fundamentals of Speech Act Theory**

**(Dr. Shashi Motilal)**

**Objective:**

The main objective of this guided readings course is to direct, structure and create points of focus for Mr. Raj Ayyar’s proposed PhD dissertation on ‘Is an Ethics of Facebook Possible?’

The readings will include major writings in Speech Act Theory by J.L. Austin, John Searle, Ramchandra Gandhi and others. In addition, there are select readings in the area of Philosophical Ethics and Postmodern/Poststructuralist Philosophy, the Sociology of Performance and Everyday Dramaturgy, and Virtual Reality.
The readings will help to clarify Mr. Ayyar’s twofold thesis objective: a) to develop a taxonomy of virtual speech acts, and b) to inquire into whether a meta-ethics of social media is possible, using Facebook as a paradigm case.

Reading List:


Gandhi, Ramchandra: Presuppositions of Human Communication. OUP, 1977


**Lyotard’s Notion of the Meta-Narrative (Dr. Enakshi Mitra)**

The term ‘meta-narrative’ was brought into prominence by Jean-Francois Lyotard in 1979 with the claim that belief in meta-narrative is the most significant characteristic of modernity and the ‘post-modern’ can be characterised in terms of its “incredulity towards meta-narrative”. According to Lyotard, ‘meta-narrative’ or ‘grand-narrative’ is a theory which tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account of various historical events and experiences, whereby the social and cultural phenomena are based upon an appeal to a universal truth or universal value. All narratives of our experience get their historical meaning, attain the status of knowledge or come to acquire societal legitimation through an anticipated completion of a master idea - a ‘meta-narrative’ - marked by universal laws or principles.

The PhD proposal that this course-work caters to is titled: ‘Critique of Meta-Narrative Approach to Ethics: With Special Reference to Lyotard and Rorty’. An essential part of the project will be to recast Lyotard’s notion of meta-narrative as an effective tool to displace some modernist theories of ethics – including those of Kant and Aristotle. Accordingly this course incorporates the suitable texts of Lyotard that address the pivotal notion of meta-narrative along with their suggested application to the ethical theories of Kant and Aristotle. Parallelly the course will run a brief survey of these two modernist theories themselves - as the required groundwork for constructing an effective critique from Lyotard’s perspective.

**Essential Readings**


**Further Reading**:


