

**Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences Curriculum Development**

**Name of Institute:** Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts

## Course Name: Modern Indian Theatre and Performance: History, Theory, Text and Culture

## Course Code: T6568

## (UG/PG): UG

**Number of Credits:** 4 (60 Hrs)

**Level: 2**

**Introduction:**

Since its inception in the mid 1800s, modern Indian theatre has been a central source of pleasure, entertainment and popular imagination. Its ability to blend formal modes of Western and classical theatre with the vivacious, playful forms of Indian folk theatres has been its strength in being both a popular and a critical medium. It has played a significant role in the formation of the modern Indian consciousness and sensibility. Theatre and drama have closely been associated with socio-political histories in both the colonial and postcolonial periods. Indian playwrights as well as theatre practitioners have often heralded new ways of thinking and responding to changing terrains of nation, gender and identity.

This course brings together some key theatre texts alongside with critical writing about theatre and socio political histories to highlight the relevance of studying theatre both historically and analytically. The attempt is to look at both the dramatic text, and its actual performance in the history of Indian theatre. Thus, the focus will be on playwrights, directors, performers etc as well on texts and authors. The framing of the course is through writings on popular entertainment, nation, colonialism, post-colonialism and gender debates.

This course engages with politics, history, language, literature and cultural studies. It is placed under the growing discipline of performance and theatre studies.

**Course Objectives:**

* To familiarize students with modern Indian theatre
* To trace socio-political and cultural trajectories of a nation by examining closely text, performance and history
* To think of theatre in terms of larger connections and in turn, learn to apply performance theories to politics and culture
* To identify themes and motifs in theatre and drama
* To understand both literary traditions as well as performative traditions of contemporary Indian theatre
* To read with pleasure some outstanding works in translation

**Teaching Methodology:**

* The classroom teaching will be supplemented by discussions of handed out material and play texts
* Students will be encouraged to use dramatic readings as a way of understanding performance histories of theatre
* Use of other media-such as TV and films that have visualized plays, news papers reports and other writings in the popular media about theatre, censorship reports of theatre etc
* Comparative approach to also introduce students to other writings about theatre across the world as well as other dramatic texts

**Prerequisites: NA**

**Course Outline**

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| **Sr. No** | **Topics** | **Hours** |
| **1** | Unit 1: The Subject of Modern Indian Theatre* Introduction
* Beginnings and origins
* Genealogy and Historiography
* Debates
 | 8 hrs |
| **2** | Unit 2: A Colonial Theatre: Influences, Breaks, Hybrids* Shakespeare and Parsi Theatre
* Nationalist Expressions in Bangla Theatre
* Peoples Theatre: IPTA
* Women and nation
 | 10 hrs |
| **3.** | Unit 3: A “National” Body of Theatre* Indian State and the role of theatre/performance
* What is the national?
* Formation of a canon
 | 6 hrs |
| **4.** | Unit 4: Two Narratives of the Past: Myth and History in Post Colonial Theatre* Myth and History as shaping discourses about the present
* Irony and Ambivalence
* Case Studies: Specific Examples of Plays:AndhaYug, Urubhangam, Chravyuh, Ashadkaek din, BakiIthas and Tughlaq
 | 12 hrs |
| **5.** | Unit 5: Realism in Theatre* Socio-political form and contemporary questions
* Case Study: Mahesh Elkunchwar and Vijay Tendulkar
 | 6 hrs |
| **6.** | Unit 6: Folk Theatres: Re-thinking Binaries* Brecht and Habib Tanvir
* Case Study: TanvirCharandasChor
* Gender and anti realism
 | 6hrs |
| **8.** | Unit 7: Politics and Theatre* UtpalDutt
* BadalSircar
* Safdar Hashmi and Theatre Activism
 | 6 hrs |
| **9.** | Unit 8: Women, Actresses and Theatre* Role of the autobiography of the actress
* Gender bending in theatre
 | 6 hrs |
|  | Total  | 60hrs |

**Suggested Evaluation Methods:**

As per SIU Rules on Pg no. 20 – 5.1 e) III.

**Suggested Book List:**

* Banerjee, Sumanta.*The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta*. Calcutta: Seagull Publishers. 1989.
* Brandon, James. *Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
* Dalmia, Vasudha.*Poetics, Plays and Performances: The Politics of Modern Indian Theatre.* Oxford University Press, 2008.
* Dharwadker, Aparna Bhargava .*Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press,
* Lal, Ananda. *Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre*. New Delhi: OUP, 2004
* Nandi, Bhatia. *Modern Indian Theatre: A Reader.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.
* Solomon, Rakesh H. *Culture, Imperialism, and Nationalist Resistance: Performance in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.
* Tendulkar, Vijay. *Collected Plays in Translation*. New Delhi: OUP. 2004
* Yarrow, Ralph.*Indian Theatre: Theatre of Origin, Theatre of Freedom.*London: Routledge. 2000
* Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater and Anthropology and Performative Circumstances from the Avant Garde to Ramlila.* Calcutta: Seagull Publishers. 1983

All the plays mentioned in the course outline

**Parallel/Similar courses in the existing curriculum:**

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| S.No. | Name of the course | Institute where it was offered |
|  | NA |  |
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| Name of Member | Ms.Gayatri Mendanha | SreeSathya Venugopal | Ms. Sujata Mukherjee |  |  |
| Designation | Assistant professor | Assistant professor | Visiting Faculty SSLA, Freelance |  |  |
| Org. / Inst. | SSLA | SSLA | SSLA |  |  |
| Signature |  |  |  |  |  |

Name of the Expert: SreeSathya Venugopal

Signature: Date