



NARRATIVE MODE AND FICTION

PROF. SARBANI BANERJEE

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Roorkee

COURSE OUTLINE :

The course familiarizes students with the generic features of epic, novel and short story. It explores the development and historical trajectories of novel and short story, and their similarities and differences. It studies the inception and evolution of science fiction as a genre and the major features of magical realism. The course consults important critical thoughts and reads a range of literary works to understand the different genres. Literary texts covered include some of the seminal works that are taught at the Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels – Cervantes' Don Quixote, Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Mary Shelly's Frankenstein, Charles Dickens' David Copperfield, Flaubert's Madame Bovary, Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass, Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis, James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses, Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude, and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children; short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Margaret Atwood, and Thomas King. At the end of the course, students will be equipped with the art, craft and literary techniques of different forms of fiction.

ABOUT INSTRUCTOR :

Prof. Sarbani Banerjee earned her PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Western Ontario (2015). Her areas of specialization include Postcolonial literatures and theory, Canadian literature and culture, Post-Partition Bengali literature and cinema, Diasporic literatures, and Women's studies. She worked as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Post Doctoral Fellow (University Grants Commission, 2017-20). Currently, she is Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT, Roorkee.

COURSE PLAN :

Week 1 : A Study of Genology: Genre and neo-/classical formulation; Prescription of generic purity and hybridity of genres in practice; Genre and cultural context; Intermediate genres; Genre as reflecting the spirit of the age

Week 2 : Fiction and Different Modes of Narrative: Epic and Novel – relation of time and space with events; Scope and worldview of epic and novel; Epic hero and novel hero; Era of novelization

Week 3 : Commentary on the Genre of Novel: Through selected artwork, following topics will be discussed – Polyglossia and the essence of history; The protagonist as the novel hero; Hilarity understood through horizon of expectations; From novel to history as a metafictional device; New readership and a new language mode

Week 4 : Novel and Existence: Novel and different aspects of existence (Seinsvergessenheit); Novel in/and the changing society; Dasein; Novel and being in the world (in-der-welt-sein); Polyhistoricism

Week 5 : Features of the Novel: Narrative strategy - Story and plot; Reader and critic; Time, narrative, narrative voice/s; History and novel; Fantasy and dream; Life and Fiction; Fantasy and Prophecy; Parody and Intertextuality

Week 6 : Tragedy and Comic Absurdity in Novel: Protagonist's journey as a lack of totality and telos; Failure of language and breakdown of communication; Circular pattern of narrative and futility of existence

Week 7 : The Modern Novel: Through selected novel/s, following topics will be discussed – Human psyche; Agency of the reader; Imagination, irrationality, reflection; Narrator and/as character; Time and temporality; Theme and poetic unity

Week 8 : Short Story in the Modern and Post-modern Era: Short story as a genre; Through selected short stories, following topics will be discussed – brevity, non-story, multiple truths, quest for identity, disruption of/from the familiar

Week 9 : Short Story and Novel: Narrativity, time and form; Plot, central problem and stylistic devices; Realistic and metaphorical approaches, character as a symbol; Historical trajectory

Week 10 : Science Fiction: Inception and development of Science Fiction; Science Fiction and Techno-Cultural Experience; Speculation, extrapolation and critical investigation; Science Fiction and pulp tradition; Science Fiction film; Science fiction and feminism – the Cyborg

Week 11 : Magical Realism: Magical realism and post-modern artwork; From Expressionism to Magical Realism; Mystic and magical; Syncretism and the magical ideal; New objectivity; Derealization, defamiliarization and fabulation

Week 12 : Future of Fictional Writing: New genres and experimentations; Reading a book and/in the era of digitization; Narrative and temporality in the era of digitization; Reading in translation