



University of Mumbai
Department of English

National Webinar on Cultural Studies



Inaugural Address
Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni
Hon'ble Pro-Vice Chancellor
University of Mumbai



Keynote Speaker
Prof. Ami Upadhyay
Hon'ble Vice Chancellor
Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar
Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat



Special Presence
Prof. Rajesh Kharat
Hon'ble Dean, Faculty of Humanities
University of Mumbai



Special Presence
Dr Sudhir Nikam
Chairperson, Board of Studies in English
University of Mumbai



Resource Person
Prof. Debarshi Prasad Nath
Department of Cultural Studies
Tezpur University, Assam



Resource Person
Prof. Desmond Kharmawphlang
Department of Cultural and Creative Studies
North Eastern Hill University, Shillong



Valedictory Address
Dr Anupama Nayar
Department of English Studies,
Christ University, Bangalore



Convener:
Dr Rajesh Karankal
Head, Department of English
University of Mumbai

To join the webinar on YouTube



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<https://rb.gy/kdqh8h>

Day & Date

Friday, August 28, 2020
(10 a.m. to 02 p.m.)

About the Department

The University Department of English was established in October, 1962. The department has a legacy of well-known scholars as its Heads, such as Dr G.C. Bannerjee, Nissim Ezekiel and Dr Vilas Sarang. To commemorate this legacy, the Department organises G.C. Bannerjee Memorial lecture every year. Since its inception the Department has played an important role in establishing relevant specializations such as English Language Teaching, American Literature, Gender Studies, Politics Ideology and English Studies. Some of the recent additions include Comparative Literature, Canadian Literature, Australian literature, African Literature and Subaltern Studies.

Two specialized Honours programmes: M.A. (Hon) in English and M.A. (Hon) with research in English, are offered by the department. Moreover, it has established itself as a vibrant research centre in English Studies through its M.Phil. and Ph.D. programme. The Department is highly involved in research in areas such as Post-colonial studies, diaspora studies, Dalit Studies and language pedagogy. The Department plans to promote further research in emerging areas such as inter-disciplinary studies and cultural studies. There has been a long tradition of international academic links and exchange programmes as part of the MoUs signed with the universities in Europe. It also has had the history of Writer-in-Residence Programme, and faculty and students exchange with the universities such as the Otto-von-Guericke University of Magdeburg, Germany, Queen Mary College, University of London, U.K., University of the Fraser Valley, B.C. Canada. Besides, the department conducts Certificate courses in Functional Proficiency in English and Professional Proficiency in English. The Department was recognized as the centre of Potential for Excellence in the previous NAAC assessment.

Concept Note

“Culture cannot be separated from politics. The arts, philosophy and metaphysics, religion and the sciences, constitute culture. Politics are the science or art of organizing our relationships to allow for the development of life in society”.

As rightly quoted by French Avant-garde playwright Eugene Ionesco, culture is deeply imbedded in various spheres of our lives and that necessitates the study of culture to probe our lives.

Cultural Studies, an essential product of the social turmoil of the 1960s, is a discipline that encompasses political economy, communication, sociology, social theory, literary theory, media theory, film studies, cultural anthropology, philosophy, art history/ criticism etc in its ambit to explore cultural phenomena in various layers of life. It is an innovative interdisciplinary field of research and academics which lays special emphasis on the matters concerning ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class and gender.

It received impetus with the publication of Richard Hoggart’s *Use of Literacy* (1957) and Raymond Williams *Culture and Society* (1958), and with the establishment of ‘Birmingham Centre’ for is Contemporary Cultural Studies in England in 1968. Hoggart's aforesaid book dealt with the working class life in Post-War Britain from the personal, experiential point of view, while Williams' book discussed the problems of distancing 'culture' from 'society' and 'high culture' from 'culture as a whole way of life'. Cultural Studies inspects the process in which power relations govern the cultural artefacts (food habits, music, cinema, sport events etc.). It studies ‘popular culture’ and everyday life, which was dubbed as ‘inferior’ and barely deserved academic attention.

This branch of knowledge seeks to transcend the boundaries of a particular discipline such as literary criticism or history. It not only engages politically but rejects the distinction between “high” and “low” art or ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ culture. It not only deals with the cultural works but also the means of production. ‘Representation’ is a core concept of cultural studies. Representation denotes a language in which all objects and relationships get defined. It is a language that concerns the issues of class, power and ideology, and situated within the context of “discourse”. It observes the experiences which involves representation – the consumption of signs, the making of meaning from signs and the knowledge of meaning.

Everyday life deems as fragmented, fluid, and multiple in Cultural Studies, where meanings are hybridized and contested; i.e., identities that were more or less homogeneous and frigid in terms of ethnicities and patterns of consumption, are now completely hybrid, especially in big cities. With the advent of globalization, the local cultures are linked to global economies, markets and needs, and hence any study of contemporary culture has to examine the role of a non-local market/ money which requires a postcolonial awareness of the exploitative relationship between the First World and the Third World even today.

Cultural Studies, as an academic discipline needs to be adaptive, cumulative and all-pervasive unlike other theories that got enunciated, evolved and extinct in the course of time, since it deals with the culture which constantly undergoes changes. The present webinar proposes to render a platform for the intellectual deliberation on all these nuances of the Cultural Studies.

Our Patrons

- **Prof. Suhas Pednekar**
Hon’ble Vice Chancellor
University of Mumbai
- **Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni**
Hon’ble Pro-Vice Chancellor
University of Mumbai
- **Dr Vinod Patil**
I/C Registrar, University of Mumbai
- **Prof. Rajesh Kharat**
Dean, Faculty of Humanities
University of Mumbai
- **Smt. Madhavi Ingole**
Finance and Accounts Officer
University of Mumbai

Convener:
Dr Rajesh Karankal
Head, Department of English
University of Mumbai

Organising Committee

- **Dr Shivaji Sargar**
Professor,
Department of English
- **Dr Bhagyashree Varma**
Associate Professor,
Department of English
- **Dr Sachin Labade**
Assistant Professor,
Department of English