

## **HU 714: Socio-Political Issues in Understanding North Eastern Region**

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### **Course Overview:**

Northeast India is characterized by its rich ethnic-cultural diversity, unique geographical features and a complex socio-political landscape. Identity-based politics play a significant role in Northeast India, with demands for recognition and autonomy often influencing electoral outcomes and government policies. Issues related to language, religion, ethnicity, and indigenous rights are central to the region's political discourse. This course intends to familiarize the scholars with the socio-political landscape of the Northeastern region of India by critically examining a diverse range of interdisciplinary readings and theoretical frameworks. It touches upon themes of nationalism and (post)coloniality, ethnicity and indigeneity, territoriality and securitization, mobility and citizenship etc. The objective is to equip the scholars with necessary skills to interrogate and systematically analyze the production of knowledge, identity formation, literary discourses and power dynamics with respect to the region. By the end of the course, the scholars are expected to acquire a nuanced understanding of and be able to engage with the cultural vis-à-vis socio-political complexities of Northeast India.

### **Mode of Instruction:**

Please do the readings beforehand. It's okay not to bring fully developed ideas to classes; but you're expected to be familiar with the readings and, derived from it, bring a questioning approach to the classes. At the PhD level, please don't expect us to "teach" the readings as it is typically done in an undergrad or Masters class. Indeed, we'll discuss the readings, and use them as a springboard to mount onto certain problematiques. You're expected to "engage" with, not memorize the content of, the readings; and use them as resources to hone your critical thinking.

### **Examinations & Grading**

Internal Assessment X 20 marks: Term Paper

Mid-sem exam X 30 marks: Sit-down exam

End-sem exam X 50 marks: Sit-down exam

### **Assignment Instructions:**

You will complete one term paper assignment worth 20 marks, due on 30 April 2024, midnight. Please email me both PDF and .docX versions. Consider meeting deadlines as a part of your training. Late submission will attract a penalty of 10% of the overall grade per day. Reasonable extension of deadlines, against genuine reasons, may be sought at least a week in advance. It is advisable that you start working on the term paper earlier than later -- don't procrastinate!

In administering territorial borders, the postcolonial nation-building apparatus, notably in India's Northeast, has blocked the flow of people, goods, and ideas across the region, thus transforming it from a vibrant corridor and centre of cultural-economic exchange to a 'hinterland.' How does this reflect on the literary discourses, and relatedly knowledge production, on and from the Northeast? What ramifications do literary discourses (not necessarily representations or fictions) have upon the production of knowledge on the Northeast? How do such discourses reconfigure objects of study in connection to the Northeast? The assignment will demonstrate your *critical reflection*. Your reflection -- to be evaluated upon its originality and argumentative quality -- should be able to connect ideas from at least three readings from the course with your own concerns in order to make an argument about the theme in question. Please abstain from descriptions, summaries, plain textual analysis etc. We encourage using the 'first person' in your essay.

Your term paper should be of ~2000 words (excluding bibliography and references). Do proofread it carefully. Remember, the computer sometimes can't distinguish between homophones or identify syntactically correct but incoherent/illogical sentences. Please abide by the APA, the MLA, or the Chicago stylesheet consistently. Use Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1.5 spacing for the body of the text, and 11-point single spacing for footnotes/endnotes, bibliography/references etc.

### **Academic Integrity & Resources**

Plagiarism will be treated with zero tolerance and will, without an exception, attract 0 (zero) grade on the assignment. Recycling materials which you've already claimed authorship to -- you may not be familiar with this -- also constitutes (self-)plagiarism. At the PhD level, it's your responsibility to educate yourself on plagiarism and its implications.

You should not use racist, sexist or other discriminatory language in class discussions or written work. To avoid sexist language, you may consult this [resource](#). For the stylistic aspect of academic writing, you may consult this [resource](#).

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## Lesson Plan & Readings



### **Introduction**

#### **Class 1 (01.03.24): PB**


(i) Christopher, S., Shutzer, M., & Ziipao, R. R. (2023). [An Introduction to Tribal Ecologies in Modern India](#). *Journal of Tribal Intellectual Collective India*, 7(1), pp. 1-18.

#### **Module 1: Indigenism, Nationalism and Ethnicity**


#### **Class 2 (04.03.24): PB**

- (i) Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India  Sixth Schedule.pdf
- (ii) Assam Accord 1985  The Assam Accord - English.pdf

### **Class 3 (05.03.24): PB**

- (i) Elwin, V. (2009). [A Philosophy for NEFA](#). Gyan Publishing House.  
(Part One: “The Fundamental Problem”)
- (ii) Gurung, T. (2023). Frontier Tribes and the Mughals in the Eighteenth Century. In S. Nag (Ed.), *The Mughals and the North-East* (1st ed., pp. 243-268). Routledge.  
 The Mughals & the North-east\_ Encounter & Assimilation in Medieval India.pdf

### **Class 4 (07.03.24): AR**

- (i) Banerjee-Dube, I., & Ray, A. (2020). Introduction: Nation, Religion, Identity— Crisscrossing Concerns. In I. Banerjee-Dube, & A. Ray (Eds.), *Nation, Nationalism and the Public Sphere: Religious Politics in India* (1st ed., pp. 1-16). SAGE.
- (ii) Saikia, A. (2023). *The Quest for Modern Assam: A History*. Penguin Books.  
 Arupjyoti Saikia - The Quest for Modern Assam\_ A History-Penguin Random House India ...
- (iii) van Schendel, W. (2017). [Afterword: Contested, Vertical, Fragmenting: De-Partitioning ‘Northeast India’ studies](#). In M. Vandenheksen, M. Barkataki-Ruscheweyh, & B.G. Karlsson (Eds.), *Geographies of Difference* (1st ed., pp. 272-288). Routledge India.

### **Class 5 (22.03.24): AR & PB**



\*This week’s readings are outside of the modules, but are meant to help you think through the assignment\*

- (i) Foucault, M. (1972). [Archaeology of Knowledge](#) (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1969)
- (ii) Hacking, I. (1999). [The Social Construction of What?](#) Harvard University Press.

*Preliminary Presentations on term-paper topics (see above for details)*

## **Module 2: Writing North East: Re-examining the Canon**

### **Class 6 (26.03.24): PB**

- (i) Viswanathan, G. (2014). *Masks of Conquest: Literary study and British rule in India*. Columbia University Press.  gauri-viswanathan-masks-of-conquest.pdf
- (ii) Asaduddin, M. (2022). Introduction: Canon Formation and Literatures from India's Northeast: Some Reflections. In K.M.B. Islam (Ed.), *Literatures from Northeast India* (1st ed., pp. 1-12). Routledge.  Literatures from NE India\_ Beyond the Centre–Periphery Debate.pdf

### **Class 7 (02.04.24): PB**


(i) Misra, T. (2010). Women Writing in Times of Violence. In P. Gill (Ed.), *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*, (pp. 249-272), Zubaan.

 The Peripheral Centre\_Voices from India's Northeast.pdf

(ii) Gaikwad, N. (2015). Men against matrilineage: Contestations around gender in Shillong, Northeast India. [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Minnesota]  Gaikwad\_Dissertation.pdf

### **Class 8 (09.04.24): PB & AR**


(i) Dutta, N. (2008). [Nationalism and Otherness: Reading Nation in the Literature Classroom](#). *The Global South*, 2(1), 71–90.

(ii) Dutta, N. (2018). View from Here – English in India: The Rise of Dalit and NE Literature. *English: Journal of the English Association*, 67(258), 201–208.  Nandana Dutta 2018.pdf

### **Module 3: Zomia, Mobility, Flows & Frictions**

### **Class 9 (16.04.24): AR**

(i) Ludden, D. (2022). [Spatial History in Southern Asia: Mobility, Territoriality, and Religion](#). In G. Cederlöf & W. Schendel (Eds.), *Flows and Frictions in Trans-Himalayan Spaces* (pp. 27-50). Amsterdam University Press.

(ii) Ziipao, R.R. (2022). Frontier tribes and nation-states: Infrastructural intersection at the Indo (Naga)-Myanmar borderland. *Asian Ethnicity*, 23(3), 587-607.  R.R.Ziipao.pdf

### **Class 10 (23.04.24): AR**

(i) Ghosh, S. (2011). Cross-border activities in everyday life: the Bengal borderland. *Contemporary South Asia*, 19(1), 49-60.  S. Ghosh 2011.pdf

(ii) Sur, M. (2021). *Jungle Passports: Fences, Mobility, and Citizenship at the Northeast India-Bangladesh Border*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

 Jungle Passports\_Fences,Mobility,Citizenship at the NEI-Bangladesh Border.pdf

### **Class 11 (30.04.24): AR & PB**

Final Presentations, Assignments due & Wrap-Up