

## 2017-2019: TEACHING FEMINISMS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

### *Questions of Identity, Pedagogy and Violence in India and the UK*

Funded by the University Grants Commission and UK-India Educational Research Initiative and led by Radhika Govinda (Sociology) and Krishna Menon (Gender Studies), this is a 2.5 year North-South research and pedagogic collaboration between the University of Edinburgh, UK and Ambedkar University Delhi, India. Co-Is from the University of Edinburgh are Meryl Kenny (PIR), Fiona Mackay (PIR), Kanchana Ruwanpura (Geography) and Pablo Schyfter (STIS). Co-Is from Ambedkar University Delhi are Sumangala Damodaran (Development Studies), Rachana Johri (Psychology), Bindu KC (Gender Studies) and Rukmini Sen (Sociology).

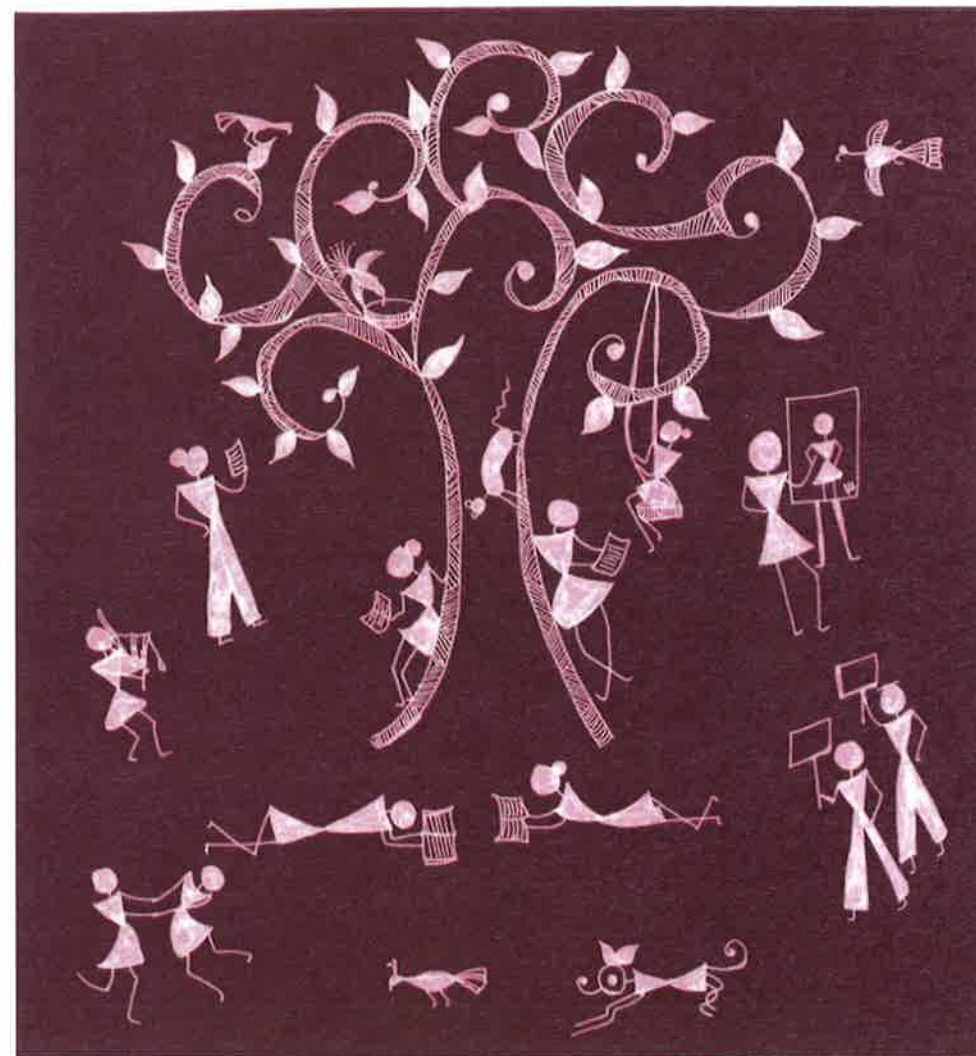
The project offers a unique opportunity for us as feminist academics to reflect collectively and comparatively on the transformative potential of feminist classrooms at the University-level, delving into questions of identity and violence in two differently diverse yet hierarchical, neoliberal contexts in Northern and Southern locations. The central questions of interest are: How has feminism become institutionalised in the academy, and what part have women's movements played in this regard in contemporary UK and India? What opportunities and challenges do students and teachers encounter in present-day feminist classrooms, especially with respect to questions of identity and violence? Given the push for digital social sciences, can digital technology be used to develop innovative pedagogic tools to confront social inequalities within feminist classrooms? How is neoliberalism affecting feminist activism and knowledge production, and are feminist classrooms addressing this issue? By engaging with these questions comparatively and within a single project, we hope to make an important contribution to ongoing efforts to decolonise the academy and decentre feminist knowledge production and dissemination.

*'Feminist Taleem' in the project title is a combination of an English word 'feminist' and an Urdu / Hindustani word 'taleem'. Together they mean 'a feminist educational practice'. The project title also alludes to a feminist version of Mahatma Gandhi's pedagogical principle of 'Nai Talim', wherein education is lifelong, social and holistic in character.*

*The cover design is inspired by Warli art form, which is said to have originated as early as 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. in the Western Indian state of Maharashtra where it is practiced by the Adivasis even today.*

# Feminist **تعلیم**

## Teaching Feminisms, Transforming Lives



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

2<sup>nd</sup> PROJECT WORKSHOP  
19 – 23 February 2018



Ambedkar University Delhi

# Feminist **تعليم**

Teaching Feminisms, Transforming Lives

A University of Edinburgh-Ambedkar University Delhi Project

Sponsored by UGC-UKIERI

## WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

University of Edinburgh, 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018

### MONDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

*Morning Session 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

- 9:30 am      **Tea / Coffee**
- 09:45 am      **Welcome by Dr Radhika Govinda**
- 09:55 am      **Launch of the second project workshop by Prof Linda McKie, Head of School of Social and Political Science**
- 10:00 am      **Feminism and the Academy: Paper Presentation Session I**  
Presenters and Discussants: Dr Radhika Govinda and Lisa Kalayji (Dr Rukmini Sen), Dr Rukmini Sen (Dr Radhika Govinda and Lisa Kalayji), Sarah Golightley (Naghma Abidi), Prof Krishna Menon (Prof Fiona Mackay)  
Chair: Prof Linda McKie, Professor of Sociology and Social Policy
- 12 noon      **Lunch**

*Afternoon Sessions 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

- 1:00 pm      **Feminism and the Academy: Paper Presentation Session II**  
Presenters and Discussants: Dr Meryl Kenny (Prof Rachana Johri), Shailly (Orla Murray), Prof Fiona Mackay (Prof Krishna Menon), Prof Rachana Johri (Dr Meryl Kenny)  
Chair: Dr Angelica Thumala, Lecturer in Global Sociology
- 3:00 pm      **Tea / Coffee**

3:30 pm

### **Working Within the Academy as Feminists: A North-South Dialogue**

Speakers: Dr Maria do Mar Pereira (University of Warwick) (keynote), Prof Sumangala Damodaran (Ambedkar University Delhi), Dr Rukmini Sen (Ambedkar University Delhi), Dr Delwar Hussain (University of Edinburgh), Dr Meryl Kenny (University of Edinburgh) and Diva Mukherji (LiberatED, EUSA)  
Chair: Dr Radhika Govinda

Vote of thanks by Dr Meryl Kenny, Co-convenor, Gender and Politics Research Group (finishes 5.30pm)

06:30 pm

**Welcome dinner hosted by Prof Fiona Mackay at 1/6 Warrender Park Crescent, Marchmont**

### TUESDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

*Morning Session 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

- 09:30 am      **Tea / Coffee**
- 10:00 am      **Teaching and Learning Feminisms: Autoethnographic Narratives Session I**  
Presenters and Discussants: Prof Sumangala Damodaran (Dr Radhika Govinda), Lisa Kalayji (Nancy Yadav), Lauren Wilks (Nibedita Hazarika), Kamya Choudhary (Dr Bindu KC)  
Chair: Dr Barbara Bompani, Reader in Africa and International Development
- 12 noon      **Lunch**

*Afternoon Session 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

- 01:00 pm      **Teaching and Learning Feminisms: Autoethnographic Narratives Session II**  
Presenters and Discussants: Dr Radhika Govinda (Prof Sumangala Damodaran), Abdul Rahman (Megan Canning), Nibedita Hazarika (Lauren Wilks), Megan Canning (Abdul Rahman)  
Chair: Dr Ayaz Qureshi, Lecturer in Anthropology
- 03:00 pm      **Tea / Coffee**

03:30 pm **Edinburgh Walking Tour: Paths of Inspirational Women**  
led by Invisible's (Social Enterprise) Biffy

*Evening King Khalid Lecture Theatre*

05:30 pm **Reach King Khalid Lecture Theatre**

06:00 pm **Feminist Explorations of Contemporary South Asia**  
Chrystal Macmillan Lecture: Prof Krishna Menon, Ambedkar  
University Delhi  
Introduction by Prof Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice Principal  
Vote of thanks by Prof Fiona Mackay, Director, GenderED

07:15 pm **Reception**

08:00 pm **Dinner at Sylvesters, 55-57 W Nicholson Street**

WEDNESDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY

*Morning Session Assembly Room, ECCI*

09:30 am **Tea / Coffee**

10:00 am **Teaching and Learning Feminisms: Autoethnographic Narratives  
Session III**  
Presenters and Discussants: Dr Rukmini Sen (Dr Pablo Schyfter),  
Orla Murray (Shailly), Nancy Yadav (Kamya Choudhary), Dr Bindu  
KC (Dr Kanchana Ruwanpura)  
Chair: Dr Mary Holmes, Senior Lecturer in Sociology

12 noon **Lunch**

*Afternoon Session Assembly Room, ECCI*

12:45 pm **Teaching and Learning Feminisms: Autoethnographic Narratives  
Session IV**  
Presenters and Discussants: Dr Pablo Schyfter (Dr Rukmini Sen),  
Naghma Abidi (Sarah Golightley), Dr Kanchana Ruwanpura (Dr  
Bindu KC)  
Chair: Prof Nasar Meer, Professor of Race, Identity and Citizenship

02:15 pm **Leave for the Scottish Parliament**

02:30 pm **Tour of the Scottish Parliament**  
followed by tea/coffee and presentation by Elaine Smith MSP and  
Ann Henderson (finishes 4.30pm)

*Evening Session LLC Screening Room, 50 George Square*

05:00 pm **Reception hosted by Edinburgh University Student Association's  
(EUSA) Liberation Societies**

05:30 pm **An Evening of Feminism and Creative Resistance**  
Lec-Dem by Prof Sumangala Damodaran (Ambedkar University  
Delhi) and Poetry by Edinburgh-based poets, Nadine Aisha Jassat  
and Anni Cameron  
Vote of thanks by Diva Mukherji, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)  
Officer, EUSA

07:30 pm **High Tea**

THURSDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY

*Morning Session 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

09:30 am **Tea / Coffee**

10:00 am **MOOC Planning Session I**  
Ideas and Know-How: Interactive Workshop led by Jo Spiller,  
Head, Educational Design and Engagement (1 hour 30 mins)  
Recapping 5 Themes for 5 Weeks (all) (30 mins)

12 noon **Lunch**

*Afternoon Session 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

01:00 pm **MOOC Planning Session II**  
Look and Feel Storyboard Presentation by Jo Spiller (20 mins)  
Interactive Storyboarding (small groups) (1 hour)  
Report and Review (40 mins)

03:00 pm **Tea / Coffee**

03:30 pm **Joint Project Meeting**

*Evening Session 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room, CMB*

- 05:00 pm      **Teaching and Tackling Violence Against Women: Perspectives from India and the UK**  
Speakers: Dr Anni Donaldson (University of Strathclyde), Dr Bindu KC (Ambedkar University Delhi), Prof Rachana Johri (Ambedkar University Delhi), Prof Lesley Mcmillan (Glasgow Caledonian University) and Dr Anuj Kapilashrami (University of Edinburgh)  
Chair: Prof Fiona Mackay  
Vote of thanks by Dr Kanchana Ruwanpura/ Dr Wilfried Swenden,  
Co-director, Centre for South Asian Studies
- 07:00 pm      **Reception hosted by the Centre for South Asian Studies**
- 08:00 pm      **Farewell dinner at Divino Enoteca, 5 Merchant Street**
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**PAPER ABSTRACTS**

*In the order in which they appear in the programme*

**RADHIKA GOVINDA AND LISA KALAYJI**

**Fifty Years of Doing Feminisms in the Academy: Where Do We Stand? Reflections from Britain**

This paper is an attempt to take stock of where we stand as feminists within the academy nearly fifty years after Britain's first women's studies course was taught by Juliet Mitchell in 1969. It critically examines how the changing relationship between academe and activism, the challenges and possibilities for feminists and feminist allies of working within and across disciplines, the neo-liberal approach to education and the increasing corporatisation of universities, and the rise and fall of political regimes have shaped (and troubled) the contours of women's and gender studies as an 'interdisciplinary discipline' in the UK. It simultaneously highlights the ways in which feminist perspectives have informed and transformed curriculum, research and institutional processes in UK Universities. Written from the perspectives of a post-colonial feminist and a queer feminist, both of whom identify themselves as 'insider-outsiders' to the British higher education context,

this paper shows how questions of 'difference', 'exclusion' and 'erasure' remain paramount in feminist pedagogy and knowledge production even today. The paper also cautiously interrogates the transformative potential of foundational feminist pedagogical practices. The authors pose a set of questions that they claim feminists in the British academy must engage with if they wish to remain relevant in future.

**RUKMINI SEN**

**From perspective to discipline: Mapping 40 years of Women's/Gender Studies in India**

This review paper is a background, mapping a trajectory towards the present moment of Women's and/or Gender studies in India. What began as knowing about and researching on women primarily to address the early 1980s question where are the women has become a discipline, knowledge. This paper attempts to map the institutions (educational and legal), movements (women's and civil liberties), and publications (journals, magazines, independent publishing houses)—all of which took an important role towards creating new grounds for research on women. By the late 1990s, the process of institutionalizing women's studies in Indian Universities expanded through Women's Studies Centres, receiving grants from University Grants Commission, not just conducting research but also granting research degrees (MPhil/PhD) on Women's Studies to students. Research also proliferated with NGOs working on women's issues—generating detailed study/reports of their activities. Complex questions around interdisciplinarity, employability, funding continue to dominate discussions around women's and gender studies as it starts being taught as Masters degree as well as in the Undergraduate programmes since the initial years of this decade.

On the one hand difference has become a significant pedagogical and political language through which the category of women, gendering of disciplines and Gender Studies as a specific area of knowledge has surfaced in the last decade and a half. On the other hand, there is a bigger and more interventionist role of the State institutions towards addressing as well as researching on women/gender. It is an interesting juncture that Women and Gender studies knowledge production is in contemporary times—where crisis and promise co-exist.

**SARAH GOLIGHTLEY**

### **Social Work Education and Compulsory Able-Bodiedness in England and Scotland**

Building on feminist critiques of compulsory heterosexuality, I intend to discuss compulsory able-bodiedness within social work education. Described by Robert McRuer, 'compulsory able-bodiedness' is a social devaluation of disability, "able-bodiedness is considered a 'normal' requirement for life in the industrial capitalist system, having an able body becomes compulsory... and there is a constant need to affirm able-bodied identity" (McRuer 2016, p. 396). Whilst disabled and psychiatrised people, often called 'service users', are increasingly a part of delivering social work training in England and Scotland, we are rarely in power to set the agenda. Select service user perspectives are embraced by the academy but, crucially, many service user voices, experiences, and knowledges are left to the periphery of social work education. The conditions of social work, in practice and in academia, requires work under conditions which are routinely disabling and exclusionary towards those with dual social worker- service user identity. As a disabled, white, queer and feminist, cisgender woman in the social work classroom I reflect on how, why, and to what extent colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and compulsory able-bodiedness are inextricably linked foundations of social work education. Considering the in/exclusion of social work, there are several questions to raise for its future. Can social work ever become truly liberatory, or is it foundationally a mechanism of social control? Could a queer and crip social work ever exist?

**KRISHNA MENON**

### **When Women Study: The Feminist Possibilities of Women's Education**

Substantive understanding of equality establishes the significance and centrality of access to education in a liberal democracy such as India and the other South Asian states in the region. A series of exclusions have however characterized this landscape in the region. My paper will argue that the nature of this exclusion has been gendered and one of the most significant lines of exclusion has been along caste and gender. In order to address this exclusion the Constitution of independent India for instance, incorporated within it the provision for special provision for backward castes and groups, while also affirming the universal right to equality. Of the many special provisions, the introduction of 'reservation' of seats and positions in government funded educational institutions has been

the most controversial. The existence of single-sex, especially women only educational institutions has been another provision. This paper will examine a history of modern education for women in the region, with specific focus on women's only educational spaces and its role in challenging dominant perceptions of gender and power in South Asian societies. Do these spaces challenge conceptions of women's role in a traditional society? Or is it a merely token, or worse still does it reinforce the existing understanding about women's role in an unequal society? Do these institutions extend the surveillance and control of female sexuality and agency that are so typical of the role of families in the South Asia? This would provide a backdrop for an evaluation of the role played by women's studies as an academic discipline in this region and the possibility of resistance emerging from these centres.

**MERYL KENNY**

### **Social and Political Science in Practice: An Experiment in Co-Production**

This paper explores the potential of student co-production as a mechanism for advancing feminist pedagogies. It summarises the findings of a recent experiment in student co-production at the University of Edinburgh, drawing on lessons from the course Social and Political Science in Practice, convened by the author. SPS in Practice provided a framework for a faculty-student team to co-produce interactive learning and teaching resources for a new introductory-level course Understanding Gender in the Contemporary World, intended to offer a rigorous (but accessible) introduction to gender to students from an inter-disciplinary social science perspective. The paper reflects on how the project was set up, how it operated, and its outcomes, and in doing so, seeks to contribute to wider debates over the promises and drawbacks of interdisciplinary feminist pedagogies, collaborative teaching, and the co-production of knowledge.

**SHAILLY**

### **Construction of Boyhood in Schools of Delhi**

This paper aims to develop the relationship between gender, education and schooling. It draws on feminist theoretical frameworks to unpack the links between gender and society and identify its strains within the contemporary educational sphere, policy, curriculum and classroom practices. The evolutionary



nature of boyhood influences the construction of adult male. Although the construction of boyhood starts right after birth in the Indian society, it blooms at primary level. As a boy leaves the secure environment of home, he reorients himself to fit into the school space. School is considered as a miniature version of society. It promotes its own set of culture, values and ideologies as per its understanding of gender roles. Predominant patriarchal bias at home makes a neutral construction of boyhood difficult for most boys as he interacts with living and non – living elements in the school. Non- living elements are the physical activities, duties and spaces demarcated for boys. Living elements can be interaction between peers, teachers, students and curriculum. This paper seeks to explain how gender stereotypes through formal and hidden curriculum impacts the construction of boyhood in Government schools of Delhi associated with urban villages of South Delhi.

**FIONA MACKAY**

#### **An Outsider Within: dilemmas of an academic feminist in management**

Women have made uneven progress in the Academy: whilst they now outnumber men in most universities in the global North, academia remains stubbornly gendered as masculine as well as patterned by horizontal and vertical segregation. Cultural, economic and social barriers remain, which marginalise women and privilege majority men (Atkin & Vicars, 2016; Equality Challenge Unit 2015). There is a small but growing body of work that addresses gendered and intersectional inequalities in the Academy – as a workplace, as a professional field, a set of organisations, and arena of knowledge production. Much of the attention has been focussed on efforts at gender mainstreaming.

Whilst still rare, women are achieving important leadership roles inside Universities. This paper will explore the practical, political and theoretical dilemmas posed for feminists who enter leadership positions in the age of the rise of the “neo-liberal Academy”. These are familiar dilemmas for feminists working inside bureaucracies (see, for example, Ebyn and Turquet 2013). So what do – or can – feminist academics do when they take on senior management roles? How do academic feminists experience being simultaneously the embodiment of institutional authority (to manage, regulate, quantify, monetise) as well as a source of oppositional knowledge? To what extent are there opportunities to work with the grain of an institution to challenge the gendered status quo from within? Or

are academic feminists-who-manage inevitably co-opted and compromised? The paper will provide me the opportunity to reflect upon a sustained period of senior academic leadership at the University of Edinburgh.

**RACHANA JOHRI**

#### **Engaging Resisting Subjects**

Feminist thought has radically transformed the teaching of Social Sciences and Humanities in the past several decades. Given feminist concerns with questions of epistemology and the production of subjectivity, it is not unusual for students of these disciplines to acquire a capacity of self reflexivity that enables them to reflect upon questions of gendered violence in their life outside the class room. My concern in this paper is to shift the focus away from this familiar space to other Or are academic feminists-who-manage inevitably co-opted and

disciplines such as Commerce and Management that are often taught within the same Campuses as Social Sciences and Humanities but rarely concern themselves with questions of feminism or of gendered violence. In India, such Programs are amongst the most popular and sought after. However, my assumption is that the practices of such disciplines effectively produce subjectivities that may be fundamentally resistant to questions of gendered violence. My interest in this domain comes from an assumption that these students are educated into the rationality of the ‘Market’ and therefore see themselves as epitomising modernity and success. My concern in this paper is to ask how questions of gendered violence are understood by such students. Does the curriculum taught to students of Commerce and Management in Indian Universities include a reflection on these questions? Does a tradition of research exist within these fields that critically reflects upon such questions? This paper will seek to answer such questions with a view to understand how such an engagement might be brought into classrooms.

**SUMANGALA DAMODARAN**

#### **Interrogating the Self and Categorising the Other: A Feminist Lens to Understanding Performance and Social Location**

Social discrimination and its manifestations in universities and other public spaces have been thrown into the limelight in recent years by the spate of attacks against women, dalits and religious minorities in India, as also by the movements against such discrimination. Universities have been important spaces where both

## Public Events

**WORKING WITHIN THE ACADEMY AS FEMINISTS:  
A North-South Dialogue**

3.30-5.30pm  
Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> February  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room  
Chrystal Macmillan Building  
University of Edinburgh

**Speakers**  
Sumangala Damodaran, Ambedkar University Delhi  
Dalmar Hussain, University of Edinburgh  
Meryl Keene, University of Edinburgh  
Dina Muehry, Libero & Co. USA  
Marta da Mor Pereira, University of Warwick  
Rashmi Saxi, Ambedkar University Delhi  
Chair: Rodrika Goussia, University of Edinburgh

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2<sup>nd</sup> PROJECT WORKSHOP  
19-21 February 2018

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI

**AN EVENING OF FEMINISM AND CREATIVE RESISTANCE**



Songs of Protest by Sumangala Damodaran and Poetry by Nadine Aisha Jassat and Anni Cameron

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THE CHRYSAL MACMILLAN LECTURE SERIES 2018

**FEMINIST EXPLORATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**KRISHNA MENON**  
PROFESSOR AND DEAN  
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN STUDIES  
AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI (AUD)




THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
School of Social and Political Science

**TEACHING AND TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**  
*Perspectives from India and the UK*

5.00-7.00pm  
Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor Common Room  
Chrystal Macmillan Building  
University of Edinburgh

**Speakers**  
Anni Donaldson, University of Strathclyde  
Rachana Johri, Ambedkar University Delhi  
Anuj Kapilashrami, University of Edinburgh  
Bindu KC, Ambedkar University Delhi  
Lesley McMillan, Glasgow Caledonian University  
Chair: Fiona Mackay, University of Edinburgh

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AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI

*followed by a reception hosted by Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Edinburgh*

discriminatory as well as resistant articulations have taken place. My paper will discuss the experience of teaching two courses on discrimination, where questions of race, caste and gender are taken up beyond the intersectionality lens, and what challenges this has produced within the classroom. The two courses, one in Development Studies titled Identity, Discrimination and Development and the other in Performance studies titled Music and the Popular Imagination both take up theoretical issues and debates around fundamental notions of the self and the other, but also extensively examine experience, i.e., notions of the self and other as lived experiences. Specifically, the experience of interrogating the self in a collective exercise with the students and the complexities of social location that it throws up, one in the case of understanding development and the other in the case of understanding the production and reception of music, will be addressed in the paper.

#### **LISA KALAYJI - Decolonising Methodology in the Archive: Feeling Data through Literary Ethnography in Researching British Radical Feminism**

Growing calls to decolonise academic knowledge and research practices have led to a growth of interest in decolonising methodologies. This area of work has yielded powerful methodological tools, but has also raised questions about the extent to which the project of decolonisation may itself be subject to colonisation or misrepresentation. Decolonising methodologies also often (and unsurprisingly) focus on research with peoples and in lands subject to colonisation, with less discussion of research on colonising cultures. In this paper, I argue that while we must be mindful of the dangers of obscuring the material realities of colonisation, it is also necessary to uproot it in all of its forms, which requires a rethinking of knowledge itself. One key case of the colonisation of knowledge has been the colonial (re)production of the false binary between 'reason' (or cognition) and emotion, and in this paper, I explore one way that methodological decolonisation can be directed at the undoing of this pervasive illusion. Drawing upon archival research on the emotion culture of British radical feminism, the paper elaborates the way that the instrumentalisation of the researcher's emotions as a legitimate source of knowledge unsettles the implicit coloniality of academic knowledge regimes, and opens up space for methodological decolonisation in documentary research on colonising cultures. I conclude with some reflections on the way that we as researchers relate to the decolonisation imperative, and how our motivations for decolonising may help to reproduce or unsettle the subject/object relations that decolonising methodologies are intended to undo.

**BINDU K.C.**

#### **The Framing of Gendered Violence in Neoliberal Times: Challenges for Feminist Pedagogy**

The paper examines the changing discourse on violence in contemporary Indian feminism, focussing on issues of public spaces and mobility for women. Two movements which serve as a background for this paper as the Nirbhaya movement and the Kiss of Love movement. Unlike the discourse some years ago, these movements do not present the "safety" discourse as a bargain that good women have to make with patriarchy throwing the "bad girls" into its brutal arms. Yet, the unfortunate pitching of the agential pleasure asserting woman figure against the slum dwelling, criminal lower class (very often embodied as lower caste and sometimes minority community) man in this discourse might work towards punishing the poor – with the state and penile apparatus working towards the incarceration (in real prisons as well as abstract exclusions from spaces) of lower class men as solution to the problem of violence against women in public spaces. This exposes the agential woman – the feminist figure of our contemporary times – as colluding with a caste-class structure – while asking, quite legitimate questions about safety, mobility, violence and agency.

This paper deals with how these questions translate into feminist classrooms. How does one deal with the post-Nirbhaya generation in a gender studies classroom? How to keep the hope and legitimate expectations of feminist solidarity alive but with the knowledge of collusion of neoliberal feminisms with caste-class structures? How to impart this complexity in order to keep a politics of hope alive? That is the challenge I have faced as a teacher of issues of violence in classes that deal with feminism.

**LAUREN WILKS**

#### **'Soft' Topics & 'Soft' Teachers: Some Reflections on Teaching (Gender and Feminism) at University**

As feminists working within the academy, we are often all too aware of the ways in which gender and feminism are side-lined within 'mainstream' university courses and teaching. Indeed, gender and feminism are frequently framed as 'topics' (as well as ones that are 'soft') and relegated to a single book chapter or lecture/tutorial – something which in turn limits possibilities for more meaningful engagement with gender theory and feminist scholarship. As a young PhD student and woman from a working-class background, moreover, specialising in and



teaching gender and feminism can be doubly tricky, as well as uncomfortable. Drawing on Patricia Hill Collins's (1986) concept of the 'outsider within', and noting more recent literature which has recognised how women and (other) marginalised groups negotiate their position as 'outsiders' within the traditionally white, male and middle/upper-class space of the academy, I reflect in this paper on my own experiences of teaching gender and feminism as a tutor (teaching assistant) at the University of Edinburgh. I discuss the ways in which my partial-outsider status and feelings of uneasiness in the academy – connected to my age, gender and class background, and commonly referred to as 'imposter syndrome' – impact upon my teaching, leading me to emphasise my approachability and downplay my 'expertise' and 'authority' in the classroom – something which may help less-privileged students to feel more comfortable, but which, at the same time, may mean that I am perceived as 'soft', 'unserious' and 'inexperienced'. I explore some of these issues, negotiations and concerns, elaborating with an example taken from my first semester of tutoring.

**RADHIKA GOVINDA**

#### **Decolonising Feminist Classrooms – A Reflexive Account**

The call to decolonise the feminist academy first emerged nearly three decades ago in the writings of trailblazing feminist scholars like Chandra Talpade Mohanty. So what has changed since then in feminist classrooms? What are the pedagogical challenges of engaging with questions of difference and decolonisation in feminist classrooms today? How does the global neoliberal logic of knowledge production and dissemination affect the project of decolonising feminist classrooms? What are the particular dilemmas that a feminist of colour like myself encounters when attempting to 'teach to transgress' to 'Western eyes'? How do I get my students to engage with questions of marginalisation and privilege, ethnocentrism and hegemony? What impact does this engagement have on my own sense of location and subjectivity? This paper is a reflexive account of the potentials and problems of trying to decolonise pre-dominantly white feminist classrooms in an elite British University in the age of neoliberalism. It explores the politics of embodied intersectionality, of questioning institutionalised white bias in the curriculum, and of making space for feminism in the broader structures of neoliberalism in higher education.

**ABDUL RAHMAN KC**

#### **Identity of Male Student doing Women Studies: Some Pedagogical Reflections**

My academic life in Women's and Gender studies started with my masters. As a student coming from "religious education", doing women's studies has always been a dilemma, at least going by the mainstream understanding of it. While religion and religious education are considered to be mired in patriarchal discourses and hence exclusionary and violent in nature gender studies is taken to be a default liberatory space. Nevertheless, my experience in straddling both the disciplines has been something that puts into question this neat binary characterization. Coming from a religious studies background, especially an "alienated male space" to a so-called "radical and liberal space" I have had to face a lot of questions. The foremost of them was self-doubt as to how to reconcile the seemingly antithetical disciplines. Secondly, the questions posed by my family and friends at erstwhile institute regarding my choice to opt for gender studies for my higher education. Finally, and most importantly, the ones that I had to face from the academia, which often flirted with humiliation. I consider the third set of questions to be of paramount importance for it raises a series of problematic regarding our discipline. For the tenor of these questions were not that of curiosity, rather that of a condescending attitude resulting in a kind of exclusion.

Given the subtle ways in which exclusion, and as a corollary, violence work in our discipline, the questions that concern me are: what is the ideal subject position poised to do the discipline of gender studies? In relation to this, what are the ways in which my own subjectivity enables or disables me from doing the discipline "properly". My paper will be an attempt to navigate through these nagging pedagogical and epistemological questions.

**NIBEDITA HAZARIKA**

#### **Questioning the Self, Identity and Gender in a Conflict Zone**

Growing up and travelling from one remote area to another in Assam during the 1990's; when the state was passing through a turbulent period brought about a wide array of experiences. Some of the areas both in the hills and plains offered ample scope to experience the traditions, customs and the way of life of the tribal communities and to particularly understand the role of women from these communities, their livelihood pattern which is so closely related to their culture. Similarly, growing up in areas close to high conflict zones and encountering stories of men and women fleeing or migrating from these places in search of security of work and life were disturbing enough to start questioning atrocities committed on

questions around the concept of gender dynamics. My research paper tries to critically examine the concept of gender and its relationship with work, migration and conflict by looking at women workers from the Bodo tribe; the largest plain tribe of Assam migrating to handloom clusters of Assam.

**MEGAN CANNING**

**Putting 'Gender' in 'Gender and Development': Autoethnographic Reflections on Feminist Teaching and Practice in Development Studies**

The field of Gender and Development (GAD) includes a rich and diverse literature incorporating empirical, conceptual and theoretical work across a range of academic disciplines with implications for Development Studies. GAD builds upon five decades of feminist critique of development processes- from the Women in Development movement (WID) which focused on the inclusion of women within modernisation theories of development, the Women and Development movement (WAD) which sought to incorporate women in dependency models of development, and finally to GAD itself, which moves beyond the focus of women in development, to situate gender relations between women and men as a central organising category through which critiques of development theory, planning and policies are to be understood. Methodologically, the variety of disciplines within the field mean there are a plethora of methods in use in gender and development analysis, but the conceptual core of good gender and development methodology is that it must 'build gender into the analysis rather than making the position of women the central focus' (Guyer 2005: 110). Despite this, 'gender' is still often synonymous with 'women' in development planning and practice; and in Development Studies classrooms, gender is often still isolated into a particular week of teaching, rather than gender aware conceptualisation being built into the core of Development Studies teaching. In this paper, I reflect on my own experiences as a development practitioner, researcher, and teacher, and discuss some of the challenges of mainstreaming gender and introducing feminist theory in non-feminist classrooms and project settings. I also consider what these experiences may say about the continued prevalence of gender blindness in development teaching and practice, and the ways in which this side-lining risks perpetuating the same essentialist and androcentric assumptions within Development Studies which have been present since the birth of the field.

**RUKMINI SEN**

**Between discomfort and negotiation: Reflections on teaching law through (feminist) Sociology**

With diversity and hierarchy as the reality of classrooms in India, this paper will build upon experiences and pedagogies of transacting transforming complex ideas on intimacy through the legal landscape. In a country, where law is dominantly seen as liberator, how do young minds encounter and engage with law's promise and its fissures with everyday societal constraints? Classrooms become an important space of access to (progressive) information and political/legal possibilities, but also a site of discomfort—since most women and men find ideologies of the classroom/university and the home/family in contradiction. This paper comes out from reflexive exercises on the classroom practices of a course titled Law and Society aimed at Sociology students, with one objective being learning feminist critiques of the legal construction of sexuality and intimacy (through laws on sexual violence and marriage). How does the Masters student negotiate this 'troubled' socio-legal territory? Does law remain distant in the midst of caste and sexuality norms determining everyday choices (for example marital partner) and un-freedoms? Does feminist pedagogy create enabling language in this complex meandering?

**ÓRLA MURRAY**

**Challenging Epistemological Privilege: From Confessional Identity to Analytic Reflexivity and Accountability**

Feminist researchers have long engaged with the role of the researcher in knowledge production, highlighting that who does research and how they do it matters. While identity is central to these discussion it is not a deterministic or blunt indicator of research quality, and as Raju (2002), and many others, observe, two people with the same positionality representing 'their group' might focus on different things, come to different conclusions, and present contradictory or dissimilar views. The question of how best to 'represent' and assess the quality of research from a feminist perspective does not disappear if the research is a member of the group she is discussing.

I will explore the importance of reflexivity and accountability for feminist academics, moving from a discussion of abstract and self-focused, often

'confessional', forms of personal reflexivity towards a more situated, relational and ongoing reflexivity, alongside highlighting the importance of accountability. I argue that a central part of the feminist and decolonial project to change the exclusionary, elitist, colonising academy, is for researchers to dismantling our own epistemic privilege as 'legitimate knowledge producers', encouraging more accountability to our participants and readers, rather than relying on identity or expert status alone to justify our knowledge claims. This will draw on the epistemology chapter of my PhD thesis, which seeks to develop clear accountable methods of text-focused institutional ethnography, a feminist approach to research developed by Dorothy E. Smith that I use in my PhD.

**NANCY YADAV**

**Engaging with Feminisms, Literature and Ethnography: reflections across disciplines**

In this paper I will dwell upon my interdisciplinary engagements from being a student of English literature, engaging with an ethnographic study of indigenous Bonda tribe and analysing native life of Bonda PVTG(Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) women from Women's and Gender studies perspective. I will share my reflections on understanding issues of indigenous tribes and the need to understanding the 'her-stories' of the women in the communities.

In this paper, I will share the thoughts, observations, anecdotes from my understanding of the indigenous women within their community and their issues. I will explain how ethnographic and fictional narratives of indigenous culture are reflective of the production, representation and contextualization of the community knowledge. In what ways an author(novelist or ethnographer )crop up the fictive imagination and empirical data in their narrative. The act of reading and analysing literature and ethnography helped me in exploring the common ground that lies between the fields of enquiry. Ethnography as fiction or fictional depiction of ethnography is the issue of interdisciplinary debate. In what ways the multidisciplinary reflections and research can let us learn and teach feminism in the remote tribal areas. How does the narrative analysis of fictional ethnography and fiction inform by ethnography can help us understand, across a wide range of audience, the theoretical constructs of gender and culture better? Keeping in mind these questions, I will reflect upon the necessity of the teaching feminism and ensuring sustainable development of the Bonda tribal women.

**KAMYA CHOUDHARY**

**'Being' Brown: an intersectional account of identity and the post-graduate experience in the UK**

The paper discusses the active manifestation of intersectionality in the quotidian aspects of classrooms and life in India and the UK. Taking an autoethnographic approach, it examines the experiences, ideas and negotiations that underpin identity politics and 'brown-ness' for a South Asian student in a learning environment. Starting off from India, the narrative progresses to Scotland with honest discussions about pressures and insecurities that I faced as an international female student of colour. The sections begin with the importance of studying feminist content and an inquiry into the value of 'self' and ones academic preparedness vis-à-vis that of someone from the Global North. In addition, the paper shall also touch upon a range of challenges I encountered while navigating my Indian identity in class and the university, as well as demonstrate the energy required to undergo an 'international student experience'. The paper discusses the privileges language, culture and finances accord in making opportunities more/less accessible and how identity shapes larger university experiences. Recognizing my own role in the potential maintenance/disruption of harmful stereotypes is an important part of this introspective exercise. I also attempt to unpack the impact of the availability and non-availability of faculty of colour and diverse courses can have for international students in conjunction with ideas of 'representativeness'. Drawing from personal experiences and those I have gleaned from interviews and interactions with other international students while studying in Edinburgh, I hope to add to the burgeoning anthropological content available on the lived experiences of feminists themselves.

**PABLO SCHYFTER**

**Science, Gender and the Ship in the Bottle: teaching away easy assumptions in science studies and gender studies.'**

My paper will compare pedagogical ambitions, challenges and opportunities in teaching introductions to science studies and gender studies. Specifically, I will study how each sets out to challenge and undermine powerful, ubiquitous and stubborn assumptions. Science studies takes aim at the unsullied and objective scientific fact; gender studies confronts the universal and immutable sex binary. In both cases, the challenge is to demonstrate the importance and benefit of casting

aside comfortable ideas and embracing messier understandings. Just as important is the ambition of affecting students' perception of their social surroundings. I consider what pedagogical lessons can be transferred between fields.

**SYEDA NAGHMA ABIDI**

**As I Struggle, I Write the Script for My Daughter**

Maternal subjectivity is defined in terms of emerging agency of a mother as a woman within the interface with her child. It entails how she engages with the experience of motherhood and womanhood and able to define for herself a sense of self. One finds that maternal subjectivity is a fairly recent phenomenon with interest emerging from the shift in the lens to look at a mother as a subject in her own right. There is domination of white women voices in its exploration with the women of color beginning to add their voices which has added perspective to the interface of womanhood with motherhood. In India, there is emergence of the academic dialogue around women issues and their concerns but one finds absence of writing on Muslim women as independent subjects. Their issues are generally picked up as focus of interest. This paper is about Muslim mother as a person which emerges from the researcher's own exploration of the relationship with her mother. As an Indian Muslim mother who is exploring maternal subjectivity one finds that there is dearth of documented experiences of Muslim mothers who negotiates her maternal position at multiple levels – inter-generational shift of understanding of idea of motherhood, the dynamic national and international milieu where Islam is seen as a threat. The paper talks about the complexity arising from being exposed to education and the notion of progressive identity.

**KANCHANA RUWANPURA**

**The Born-Again Feminist? [OR Feminist Pedagogy versus the Feminist Self OR Troubling Academia: Iterative and Irritant Feminists]**

21st century British academia: why am I even writing about feminism and feminist politics within academia? Weren't feminist struggles for gender equity won eons ago, when I was an undergraduate in a small women's only liberal arts college in the USA - as I saturated in a feminist awareness and politics in the classroom and outside? It takes being thrown into a mostly men, mostly scientist work environment to rudely wake up to the reality that gender equality considerations get trodden on a frequently troubling rate that my feminism is reborn again with

equal measure of invigoration and despair. This auto-ethnography traces why we feminists will not go away and are here to stay; and equality measures are much more than a documenting, tick-box exercise; they are hard work and involve solidarity politics.