

**UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS**  
**B.A. DEGREE COURSE IN ENGLISH**  
**SYLLABUS WITH EFFECT FROM 2020-2021**

<b>Title of the Course</b>	<b>Core Course BEN-DSC14: CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE</b>		
<b>Category of the Course</b>	Year & Semester <b>Third Year &amp; Sixth Semester</b>	Credits <b>4</b>	Subject Code
<b>Hours:</b>	<b>90</b>		
<b>Objectives:</b>	To introduce a few modern and contemporary writings, in all its diversity to study the issues and experiences that dominated the world in the twentieth century and after.		
<b>Course Introduction (to be considered for internal assessment only)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is contemporary literature? What are the major world events that define contemporary literature?</li> <li>• What do the following critical terms signify? Multiculturalism, diaspora, globalization, hybridity, alienation, acculturation, assimilation, identity crisis.</li> <li>• How can these critical terms be used to analyze the texts prescribed for study?</li> </ul>		
<b>Course Components</b>	<p><b>UNIT 1: Poetry</b></p> <p>1.1 “Blackberry Picking” -Seamus Heaney</p> <p>1.2 “Talking to Myself” -KishwarNaheed</p> <p><u>1.3 “Latin Women Pray” - Judith Ortiz (Cofer)</u></p> <p>1.4 “Home” -Arundhati Subramaniam</p> <p>1.5 “Words for Father” -Shirley Lim</p> <p>1.6 “A Dog has Died” -Pablo Neruda</p> <p>1.7 “A Great Number” -Wisława Szymborska</p> <p>1.8 “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” -Maya Angelou</p> <hr/> <p><b>UNIT 2:Prose</b></p> <p>2.1 “The Joys and Dangers of Exploring Africa on the Back of an Elephant” - Paul Theroux</p> <p>2.2 “That Crafty Feeling” (from Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays) - Zadie Smith</p> <p>2.3 “Mother Tongue” - Amy Tan</p> <p>2.4 “Freedom From the Known”- Chapter 6 - J. Krishnamurti (Lines Beginning- <i>Fear, Pleasure, Sorrow, thought and Violence are all interconnected... upto.. When the house is on fire, do you argue about the colour of the hair of the man who brings the water?</i>)</p> <hr/> <p><b>UNIT 3: Graphic Fiction</b></p> <p>3.1 <u><i>Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood and The Story of a Return</i></u> – Marjane Satrapi</p> <hr/> <p><b>UNIT 4: Short Story</b></p> <p>4.1 “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers” -Salman Rushdie</p> <p>4.2 “Birth Day Girl” -Haruki Murakami</p> <p>4.3 “Distant Relations” -Orhan Pamuk</p> <p>4.4 “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” - Gabriel García Márquez</p> <hr/> <p><b>UNIT 5: Fiction</b></p> <p>5.1 <i>The Night</i> - Elie Wiesel</p>		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>At the end of the course the students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ examine the representation of contemporary trends, thematic concerns and innovations in genres</li> <li>➤ identify key concepts like, multiculturalism, globalization, acculturation, displacement, alienation and identity crisis in contemporary texts post World War II</li> <li>➤ categorize major streams of thought, literary styles and issues that dominate the world</li> <li>➤ analyze the inter-connectedness of human experiences with a developed understanding of their social, cultural and aesthetic contexts.</li> </ul>		

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**Prescribed Texts/ Web Sources:**

- <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-dog-has-died/>
- <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/talking-to-myself-23/>
- <https://sites.google.com/site/soyinkawolepoetry/home/dedication-for-moremi-1963>
- 1.3 <http://travis-brackenpoetryproject.blogspot.com/2012/05/latin-women-pray-by-judith-ortiz-cofer.html>
- 2.1 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/the-joys-and-dangers-of-exploring-africa-on-the-back-of-an-elephant-558778/>
- 2.2 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/nov/15/changing-my-mind-zadie-smith-review>
- <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6425404-changing-my-mind>
- 2.3 <http://www.umsl.edu/~alexanderjm/Mother%20Tongue%20by%20Tan.pdf>
- 2.4 <http://jiddu-krishnamurti.net/en/freedom-from-the-known/1968-00-00-jiddu-krishnamurti-freedom-from-the-known- chapter-6>
- 3.1 *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood and The Story of a Return* by Marjane Satrapi. Vintage 2008.
- 4.1 <https://fdocuments.in/document/at-the-auction-of-the-ruby-slippers-salman-rushdie.html>
- 4.2 [https://kupdf.net/download/haruki-murakami-birthday-girl\\_59d622dc08bbc53b7d686ec5\\_pdf](https://kupdf.net/download/haruki-murakami-birthday-girl_59d622dc08bbc53b7d686ec5_pdf)
- 4.3 <http://www.portifex.com/ReadingMatter/New%20Yorker%20Story/2009/PamukDistantRelations.htm>
- 4.4 <https://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~cinichol/CreativeWriting/423/MarquezHandsomeDrownedMan.htm>

**FURTHER READING** (to be considered for internal assessment only)

- *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie
- *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez
- *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro
- *Maus'* by Art Spiegelman
- *The Name of the Rose'* by Umberto Eco
- *White Teeth'* by Zadie Smith
- *Norwegian Wood'* by Haruki Murakami
- *Interpreter of Maladies'* by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *Ice-Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa
- *Homegoing'* by Yaa Gyasi
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- [http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets\\_contemporary.html](http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets_contemporary.html)
- <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/series/contemporary-dramatists/>

**RECOMMENDED MOOC**

NPTEL: Contemporary Literature <https://nptel.ac.in/courses/109/106/109106053/>

**TED TALKS**

- How Fiction can help us better understand our reality:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/christian\\_wickert\\_how\\_fiction\\_can\\_help\\_us\\_better\\_understand\\_our\\_reality](https://www.ted.com/talks/christian_wickert_how_fiction_can_help_us_better_understand_our_reality)
- Contemporary Absurdities and the Power of Literature | Vera Nünning | TEDxUniHeidelberg  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35vx8xPC\\_Z8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35vx8xPC_Z8)
- The inspiring truth in fiction: Tomas Elemans TED@Tommy  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/tomas\\_elemans\\_the\\_inspiring\\_truth\\_in\\_fiction](https://www.ted.com/talks/tomas_elemans_the_inspiring_truth_in_fiction)
- Francisco Díez-Buzo: Why should you read "One Hundred Years of Solitude"?  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/francisco\\_diez\\_buzo\\_why\\_should\\_you\\_read\\_one\\_hundred\\_years\\_of\\_solitude](https://www.ted.com/talks/francisco_diez_buzo_why_should_you_read_one_hundred_years_of_solitude)