



GLOBAL INITIATIVE OF ACADEMIC NETWORKS
(GIAN)

Course Name: Objects and Commodities

Tentative Dates: 19 - 23 December, 2023

Overview:

The study of objects through material culture provides unique insight into people and society. The meaning of the objects can critically be decoded only in relation to their creators as well as the social and historical conditions within which the objects have been produced. Hence objects have social significance as they reflect the history of the culture in which they are produced. Whereas commodity is a useful external object produced for exchange in a market. Hence the existence of market and social division of labour form the necessary condition for commodity production. This simple process gets complicated when the ideology behind exchange value is politicized. The predetermined ideologies obtain social control through illusion and manipulation that leads to the maintenance of social hierarchy and consent of order and acceptance of the products. In other words, capitalism manipulates the consumers and consumption as means to craft personal self and identity in a globalized world. The commodity and the entities related through commodity play a vital role in the social reproduction of class and gender division. The need and desire of the consumer along with production and circulation determines the value of the product. The conformity of the consumers creates commodity fetishism which is deliberated through aesthetic ideals. Habermas rightly stated this process where the rational citizens become non-rational consumers. The structure of authority is established when a commodity is standardized by reinforcing the power to construct capitalistic ideologies. To put together, commodification and consumer culture have intimate relationship between large scale economic systems, particularly market capitalism and hegemonic cultural ideologies. In contemporary context every entity is being commodified – starting from food, clothes, shelter, water, environment, disease, tradition and above all women – through objectification. Within this premise this course on “Objects and Commodities” will highlight on the theoretical aspects of cultural fetishism and its relevance in decoding contemporary literary and popular culture.

Foreign Faculty:



Mino Moallem is a Gender & Women's Studies Professor and the Director of Media Studies at the University of California Berkeley. Her area of research and interest include, Transnational and Postcolonial Feminist Studies, cultural studies, Commodity Cultures, Visual and Material Cultures of Religion, Immigration and Diaspora Studies, Middle East Studies, and Iranian Studies. She is the guest editor of a special issue of Comparative Studies South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East on Iranian Immigrants, Exiles, and Refugees.

Host Faculty:



Angkayarkan Vinayakselvi is an Associate Professor of English and Director of Center for Canadian Studies at the Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. Her area of research and interest include, Women and Feminist Studies, Culture Studies, Comparative Literature, and Environmental Humanities. She has participated in conferences including North-East Modern Language Association Conference under CAITY Travel Grant in 2012 at USA and won Best Presentation Award in International Conference on Language, Literature and Culture Studies, San Francisco, USA in 2018. She has won Shastri Conference and Lecture Series Grant 2022.

Who can attend?

- Faculty members, scholars and students of Literature, Culture Studies and Women/Gender Studies.
- Students, researcher and freelance scholars from the discipline of Arts and Humanities and/or Social Sciences.
- Journalists, policy makers, administrators and researchers from governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Course Fee:

The participation fees for the course is as follows:

Participants from abroad : US \$100
Faculty members and Scholars from India : Rs. 2000/-
Students from India : Rs. 1000/-

The above fees include all instructional materials, computer use for tutorials and internet facility at the host institute during the course. The participants will have to take care of their travel. Accommodation and food can be arranged for the participants on first-cum-first-serve basis strictly against payment. For any queries regarding registration or other practical information, please contact the course coordinator.

Course Co-coordinator:
Dr. Angkayarkan Vinayakselvi
Contact: 0431-2407055, 9444602609
avs@bdu.ac.in