

Critical Thinking Seminar 2

All second-year students are required to enrol for one of the following eight seminars in the Monsoon semester. For the 2015 Monsoon Semester, the following courses were offered:

1. *Computer Science: Logic and Computation*

Faculty: Sanjva Prasad and Manav Bhushan

Course Description: In this course, we will illustrate how logic can serve as a language for describing problems and scenarios from a variety of walks of life, not merely the computational world. The course will introduce to students some of the connections between reasoning and computation, and illustrate how computational solutions can be extracted from logical specifications of certain problems.

2. *English: Literary Modernism*

Faculty: Saikat Majumdar

Course Description: This course will take a close look at literary modernism with a focus on its commitment to the textures of everyday life. Topics will include newer aesthetic meanings of the ordinary, its relationship with late 19th and early 20th century developments in ethnography, art, emergent landscapes of urban modernity, flanerier and the poetics of space, advertising, consumerism and the export of imperialist ideologies, gender-relations, representations of domesticity and boredom.

Note: CTS in English counts toward the Major and the Minor in English.

3. *History: Historical Thinking*

Faculty: Aparna Vaidik

Course Description: This course introduces the students to the art and science of historical thinking. What does it mean to think and write like a historian? Historical thinking is a training in questioning what we know, challenging the world as it is presented to us and mastering the skill of drawing out connections between disparate events in the human past. The fact that History is an evidence-based field of knowledge distinguishes a historian from creative writers and philosophers. That is, it forces us to ask how do we know what we know; compels us to explain the connection between evidence and conclusion; and to differentiate between an assertion and an argument. In this course the students have an opportunity to conceptualize their own 'historical-inquiry project' where they will be choosing and refining a topic of personal and historical significance, digging deeply and critically into that topic, connecting their findings with broader themes, all

the way to creatively sharing their conclusions in a public forum. The format of the course will be a series of conceptual lectures interspersed with lab work and discussion.

Note: CTS in History counts towards a Minor in History.

4. *Mathematics: Introduction to Proofs*

Faculty: Maya Saran

Course Description: This course aims to make you conversant with the language of mathematics. This means being able to read and write proofs, which are simply careful expressions of reasoning. You will learn how to do so while learning actual mathematics, of course, and the areas we will cover are Introductory Real Analysis and Number Theory.

Who should sign up? Open to all. If you are considering a Major or Minor in Mathematics, we require that you take this course, if you haven't already. If you don't have +2 math but wish to enroll, speak with the instructor.

5. *Media Studies: Globalized News and Beyond*

Faculty: Vaiju Navarane

Course Description: Why is it that almost every news media in our globalised world sounds the same? With a growing crisis in the media industry, newspapers and broadcast media are curtailing their budgets, relying increasingly on national and international agencies to provide news coverage. As a result, in-depth reporting, once the mainstay of many publications, has been reduced to a trickle. This seminar will examine the changing concepts of news and attempt to go beyond the common news story to build deeper, more meaningful reports from multiple sources.

Note: the CTS in Media Studies counts toward the Minor and toward the Interdisciplinary Major in English and Journalism.

6. *Philosophy: A Journey Through the Senses*

Faculty: Kranti Saran

Course Description: Perception through the senses provides our most basic mode of awareness of the world. In this course we will consider how the senses differ from each other, consider whether phenomena

like synaesthesia force us to revise our understanding of the senses, and finally, consider the social significance of touch, smell, and sight.

7. *Psychology: Thinking Scientifically*

Faculty: Annette Taylor

Course Description: In this course students consider readings in contemporary psychological science in order to understand that psychology must be approached as a science. The focus will be on an evaluation of research claims in this field. Students will strengthen their critical thinking skills through both oral and written expression. Three important, recent books in psychology will anchor this writing-intensive class.

8. *Sociology/Anthropology: Material Culture*

Faculty: Ravi Sriramachandran

Course Description: This class is intended to help us understand how culture inflects the material world and, in reverse, how the material world shapes culture and our experience of the world. We will ask and try to answer the following questions: How are our thoughts and ideas shaped? How does the material world determine our ways of looking at the world? What specific interests—economic, political, ideological—are involved in maintaining our trust in this world view? We will look at everyday objects like Cars, Railways, Electricity, Light Bulbs, Typewriters etc and explore how each of these have shaped our ways of looking at and understanding the world.