IIT Mandi
Proposal for a New Course

Course number   **:** HS 547
Course Name   **:** Philosophy of Texts and Narratives
Credit Distribution **:** 3-0-0-3
Intended for   **:** Ph.D., Masters, Advanced B.Tech. students
Prerequisite   **:** None
Mutual Exclusion **:** None

1. Preamble:

This course introduces students to a set of philosophical approaches to the study of texts and narratives. They will learn how texts and narrative forms can be studied by placing them in the network of intentionalities within which they are produced and consumed. More precisely, texts will be seen as artefacts, i.e. being constituted within specific traditions, interacting with and reacting to other texts, and enabled and constrained by certain structures and patterns. Given the ubiquity of texts, intellectual or otherwise, in our lives, and in different societies, a need is felt to understand what a text is in the first place, and how, depending on different contexts, lends itself to various transformations and performance modes. This course is designed to clearly articulate and address this need as an exigent, recognising that a naïve approach to texts not only does not yield much in terms of signification, it in fact hampers their proper appreciation. The course also looks at various narrative forms, from literature to myth to history, as embodying particular textual configurations and offers insights on how the same can be investigated. From more recognised concerns like those of genre, utterances, intertextuality, intermediality etc., the course ventures to introduce students to more contemporary approaches of broaching the textual condition. By raising questions on the self-evident universality of literature, to articulating the same in systemic terms, the course also explores the possibility of understanding texts beyond the contours set by the usually understood norms of textuality. Finally, the students of this course will come to see how a philosophical approach to texts and narratives goes further and deeper than the allied discipline of literary theory, which is often only concerned with methods of reading and analysis. The

course will be beneficial for research scholars, post-graduates and advanced undergraduates across various streams, and will enable them to pose pertinent questions to texts and narratives they encounter as well as use in the process of their studies and research.

2. **Course Modules with quantitative lecture hours:**

Unit 1: Philosophical Underpinnings and Key Concepts (12 hours)

- What is a Text?
- Text and Signs
- Text and Genre
- Intertextuality
- Intermediality
- Translation

Unit 2: Narrative Forms, Structures and Time (10 hours)

- Text and Narrative
- Narrative forms
- Order in Narrative
- Time and Narrative
- Historical Narration

Unit 3: Literary Narratives and the Question of Realism (10 hours)

- Fiction
- The Limits of Fictionality
- Epic and Novel
- Realism and Irrealism
- Is Literature a Universal?

Unit 4: Beyond Text? (10 hours)

- Literary System
- World Literature
- Planetary Textuality
- Science Fiction
- Beyond Text?

Laboratory/practical/tutorial Modules: NA

3. Text books:

1. **Duff, D (Ed.). 2014.** *Modern Genre Theory.* **London: Routledge.**

2. **McQuillan, M (Ed.). 2000.** *The Narrative Reader.* **London: Routledge.**

4. References:

1. Bakhtin, M. 1986. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
2. Barber, K. 2007. *Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Barthes, R. 1967. *Elements of Semiology*. New York: Hill and Wang.
4. Barthes, R. 1974. *S/Z*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.
5. Benjamin, W. 2019. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Edited by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zohn. Boston: Mariner Books.
6. Bohannan, L. 1966. 'Shakespeare in the Bush'. Available at: https://www.naturalhistorymag.com/editors_pick/1966_08-09_pick.html
7. Danto, AC. 1985. *Narration and Knowledge*. New York: Columbia University Press.
8. Even-Zohar, I. 1990. 'The Literary System' *Poetics Today*, Vol. 11 (1): 27-44.
9. Genette, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, New York. Cornell University Press.
10. Ghosh, A. 2016. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House India.
11. Goodman, N. 1977. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing.
12. Jameson, F. 2013. *Antinomies of Realism*. London: Verso.
13. Kristeva, J. 1980. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Edited by Leon S. Roudiez. Translated by Thomas Gore, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez.
14. Lamarque, P. 1990. 'Narrative and Invention: The Limits of Fictionality', in Christopher Nash (ed.) *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*. London: Routledge, 133-156.
15. Le Guin, UK. 1980. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. New York: Harper and Row.
16. Lévi-Strauss, C. 1973. 'Structure and Form: Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp', in *Structural Anthropology 2*. Translated by Monique Layton. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 115-145.
17. Lévi-Strauss, C. 1986. *The Raw and the Cooked*. Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Harper and Row.
18. Moretti, F. 2005. *Graphs Maps Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary Theory*. London: Verso.
19. Mbembe, A. 2001. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
20. Propp, V. 2009. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Translated by Laurence Scott. Edited by Louis A. Wagner. Texas: University of Texas Press.
21. Ricoeur, P. 1984. *Time and Narrative, Vol. 1*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
22. Wolf, W. 2018. *Selected Studies on Intermediality by Werner Wolf (1992-2014)*. Edited by Walter Bernhart. Leiden: Brill Rodopi.
23. Ong, W. J. 2002. *Orality and Literacy*. London. Routledge.

5. **Similarity with the existing courses:**
   (Similarity content is declared as per the number of lecture hours on similar topics)

S. No.		Course Code	Similarity Content	Approx. % of Content
1.				

6. **Justification of new course proposal if cumulative similarity content is >30%:**