

# 14<sup>th</sup> 3-Week Refresher Course in English

July 3—July 23, 2014

## Concept Note

### Thrust Area:

#### **Identity in Literature: Race, Gender, Margins**

The 14<sup>th</sup> 3-Week Refresher Course in English is being organized by the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia. The course commences on July 3 and ends on July 23. The main thrust area of the Course is—Identity in Literature: Race, Gender, Margins. This Refresher Course is sponsored by the UGC-Academic Staff College, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. The Course is organized by the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, which has received special assistance under the SAP-DRS from the UGC.

The study of literature is best taken up in the context of a social as well as a societal analysis. The study of Identity in Literature is important from the number of perspectives. Literature is nothing if not manifested as a series of identities. The issue of identity is such that that it leads us to issues of representation, of mimetic continuity and discontinuity of ideologies as also to issues of nation and nationhood.

The issue of identity in literature is as old as it can be. In fact, a number of Shakespearian plays can be seen as helping the formation and the establishment of a royalist identity. But the same could not be said in Christopher Marlowe's case. In Shakespeare, for instance, the identities of the Other, such as the Moor in *Othello*, or Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* or Caliban in *The Tempest* are also testimonies to how the English nation looked at these racial others. The fact that Shylock is meted out such cruel treatment in a dramatic text, which is known as a comedy is in itself evidence enough to show how the English nation of the time constructed the Jewish people.

So, in this sense, the issue of identity is inextricably bound up with the idea of literary discourse. In fact, a comprehensive study of identity in its various settings would only enhance a study of literary texts. The study becomes all the more pertinent in our age beset as it is by a plethora of issues related to identity formation.

The various issues and problems would be discussed threadbare by distinguished academics and scholars. This 14<sup>th</sup> 3-Week Refresher Course in English would seek to cover the following sub-themes:

*Formation of identities*—The concept of identity formation, social identity, identity as ascription, identity as birth, identity in a sociological sense, identity from a psychological perspective, formation of identity in mass media and mass culture.

*Identity in Literature*—Identities of different peoples and groups in literary texts, representing identity.

*Identity and Race*—Identity and racial difference, Identity and tribal memory, Identity and the Other, Identity and the postcolonial.

*Identity and Gender*—identity and women, construction of woman, prevalence of patriarchy through subjugation of female identity, re-invention of female identity, female identity and resurgence.

*Identity from the Margins*—the politics of identity, the politics of naming and becoming a marginal, the identity of a dalit, the identity of a muslim.

The 14<sup>th</sup> 3-Week Refresher Course in English aims to examine the issue of identity from a variety of perspectives so as to equip the participants with sufficient pedagogic and analytic tools. In addition to the lectures by distinguished academics and scholars, the participants would also be required to submit a book review, write a research proposal and make a seminar presentation. The topics for the seminar presentation should be submitted to the Course Coordinator in the first week and would be vetted by him. The topics for the seminar presentation should also be linked in some way to the main theme of the 14<sup>th</sup> 3-Week Refresher Course in English.

**Roomy Naqvy**

*Course Coordinator*

Department of English,

F/O Humanities and Languages

Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi