

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
**DEPARTMENT REPORT: 2018-19**

**Department profile:**

Dr (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal (Head till March 2019)  
Jihasa Vachharajani (Head from April 2019 onwards)  
Samrita Sinha  
Nishtha Dev  
Dr Elwin Susan John  
Vani Zaveri

**Innovative Teaching Methods/best practices:**

Poetry reading sessions, workshops and other activities:

Samrita Sinha:

“Tea, Coffee and Literature”: Every year, the SYBA students are invited to a tea party where, along with refreshments, discussions on the background concepts from the syllabus are held. Students are expected to come prepared with their thoughts on the texts and concepts.

“Literature beyond the Classroom”: Two poetry reading sessions were organised with the SYBA English Divisions A and B students. Students were also encouraged to bring their own poems to the reading. At the end of these sessions, students were served tea/coffee and samosas.

The students of Communication Skills were asked to write letters to each other in class in order to facilitate learning via their peer group.

Nishtha Dev:

For the unit on report writing on Communication Skills, Ms Dev asked her students to write reports based on the crimes and the ensuing investigation depicted in an episode from *Castle*, for a fictional newspaper. The class was divided into groups for the class presentation and feedback was provided to them.

She also organised a dance workshop in her Communication Skills class as an activity for report writing (activity reports). .

Debates and creative writing sessions were organised in the Communication Skills class to celebrate National Integration Day and Constitution Day.

Dr Elwin Susan John:

The students of Communication Skills were asked to write letters to each other in class in order to facilitate learning via their peer group.

A/V aids, ICT, film screenings:

Ms Sinha screened documentaries and television series in her Communication Skills classes to help students critically analyse gender issues including representations of gender in media. She screened episodes from the television series, *Castle*, and designed a class assignment for eye-witness accounts based on the episodes. Films like *Jane Eyre* and *A Separation* were screened to sensitise students to issues like gender and censorship. The film *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was screened to help students link it with the play *Death of a Salesman*. She also screened films in her Mass Communication classes.

Ms Dev screened the following films/documentaries in her Communication Skills classes to make students think about the ideas discussed in the comprehension passages given to them: *Modern Family*, *Sita Sings the Blues*, *The Beauty and the Beast*. She screened old advertisements and scenes from *Hum Log* in her Mass Communication class. She screened the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Bridget Jones's Diary* and the BBC documentary *Having a Ball* for her Paper XIII classes on *Pride and Prejudice*.

Dr Elwin Susan John made a detailed PPT on the history of English literature (which included the information on the important events of the era, the prominent writers of each period, their works and the popular genres of the times) for Paper IV.

Student presentations:

Ms Sinha encouraged the Mass Communication students to make presentations on the history of radio and Indian cinema. She asked the TYBA S/M students to make presentations on the theoretical aspects of Modernism and Postmodernism. The class presentations were duly evaluated and feedback was provided to students.

Ms Dev asked the students of Mass Communication to present their views on television advertisements and popular Hindi songs.

Handouts:

Handouts were prepared by members of the department to aid their teaching in the following papers:

Mass Communication (Nishtha Dev): handouts containing readings for various topics in the syllabus

Paper II (Dr John): handout on background readings on Indian Writing in English

Paper II (Vani Zaveri): a PDF was prepared for the IA Assignment (five poems each by three poets and three plays); students were asked to analyse any of the recommended texts in two to three thousand words

Paper III (Samrita Sinha): theoretical essays as background reading material and handout on American poetry

Paper IV (Dr John): poetry handout containing poems from the syllabus and texts from outside the syllabus

#### Debates:

Ms Zaveri conducted debates in her Mass Communication class to help students understand the concepts like freedom of expression and censorship

#### Contact groups:

The TYBA English S/M students met their mentors once a week to review their academic progress and to ask them questions related to the syllabus, the writing of answers, reference work etc.

#### Google groups:

Google groups were used to share academic material, announcements related to departmental and college activities, information on job and internship opportunities, and cultural events held in the city. Ms Vachharajani created an email chain titled “We Love Poetry” was created via Google groups to encourage students to share poems they liked with their classmates and teachers.

Unsupervised tests: Unsupervised tests were conducted for the TYBA English S/M class.

Texts for IAs (FYBA English, TYBA English etc.) are taken from outside the syllabus.

N-List: FYBA, SYBA and TYBA students were asked to activate their N-List accounts at the start of the academic year. They were encouraged to make use of the facility.

#### **Syllabus formulation:**

The college was granted autonomy in 2018-19 and departments laid the groundwork for the revision of their syllabi. The Department of English prepared the draft syllabi for the revised FYBA Communication Skills, FYBA English and the TYBA English courses.

#### **Paper-setting and Moderation:**

Members of the department were appointed as paper-setters and examiners under autonomy.

## **Department Activities:**

Matribhasha Diwas : The department celebrated Matribhasha Diwas in February 2019 by organising exercises and events in the Communication Skills classes.

Ananya: An interactive session with author Markus Zusak was organised on January 19, 2019 in AV (F). He spoke about his book *The Book Thief* .

### Interactive sessions with alumni:

A guest lecture by Dr Sharanya Murali on the works of Ismat Chughtai was held in September 2018 in Room 6. Ms Vachharajani was the event coordinator.

## **Committees:**

Jihasa Vachharajani:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English (first half of 2018-19)
- Chairperson, Board of Studies, Department of English (second half of 2018-19)
- Member, Academic Council
- Member, Grievance Redressal Committee
- Member, Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee
- Co-coordinator, EXAP
- Staff member-in-charge, College Magazine
- Staff member-in-charge, SCEDA
- Member, Organising Committee of the Degree Conferring Ceremony
- Staff member-in-charge, Literary Arts, Kaleidoscope

Samrita Sinha:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, EXAP Cultural Component
- Member, Ananya Committee
- Staff member-in-charge, Bhartiya Sanskriti Parishad
- Staff Coordinator, Sophia College Rotaract
- Member, Food Committee of the Degree Conferring Ceremony

Nishtha Dev:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, EXAP Seminar Component
- Member, Examination Committee
- Member, Attendance Committee
- Staff member-in-charge, English Literary Society

- Member, Organising Committee of the Degree Conferring Ceremony

Dr Elwin Susan John:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, EXAP Research Committee
- Member, Staff Action Committee
- Member, committee in charge of the J.N Heredia Counselling Centre

### **EXAP Projects Guided:**

Ms Sinha guided Aditi Paul, Ayushi Sharma and Rinu Prakash for their EXAP Research Component paper titled “Representation of WWI in 20th Century British Poetry: Special Focus on Poems Written by Women”.

Dr Elwin Susan John guided Sheetal Thomas and Siddhika Desai for their EXAP Research Component paper titled “Narrative Medicine: Reading Narratives of Cancer Patients”.

### **Orientation/Refresher Courses attended:**

Ms Sinha successfully completed a Refresher Course in English titled “Emerging Trends in Literature” organised by the University of Mumbai from December 3–22, 2018.

Ms Dev attended a Refresher Course on “New Trends in Literature” organised by the University of Mumbai from December 3-22, 2018.

Dr Elwin Susan John attended the Orientation Programme at the University of Mumbai from August to September 2018.

### **Papers presented:**

Ms Sinha presented a paper on “Negotiating Identity with Otherness: The Aesthetics of Postcolonial Narrative Strategies in Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam*” at the International Conference on Literature and Marginalization organised by the University of Mumbai. The paper has been accepted for publication by the University’s ISSN journal.

Ms Sinha presented a paper titled “Representation of Queer Politics in Suniti Namjoshi’s Oeuvre” at the 50th convention of State University New York, held at Washington D.C., from March 21-24, 2019.

Ms Dev presented a paper titled “Translating Texts, Translating Politics: A Study of William Jones’ 1789 translation of Kalidasa’s *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*” on October 4, 2019 at the international conference on “Translation across Cultures: Dissolving Boundaries - Creating Harmony” (ICTAC-2018) held at JIIT, Noida from October 4-6, 2018.

**Invited talks:**

Ms Sinha was invited as a resource person for a screening of and discussion on *Margarita with a Straw* at Wilson College as part of their add-on course on Disability Studies on February 11, 2019.

Ms Sinha was invited as a resource person to deliver a lecture on “Race, Gender and Disability” at Wilson College as a part of their Vision Centre’s add-on course on Disability Studies on February 23, 2019.

**Publications:**

Dr John’s article titled “Marks and Identity of the Disease: What the Skin Screams out Loud” was published in *Research and Criticism*.

Dr John’s article titled “Pilgrimages and Women: Reading Gender in Early Travel Narratives” was published in *Research Journey: International E-Research Journal*.

**Awards/recognition/grants/degrees:**

Ms Sinha was awarded the MRP grant for the year 2018-19 by the University of Mumbai.

Dr John successfully completed and defended her PhD thesis at University of Hyderabad and was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**Workshops attended:**

Jihasa Vachharajani:

participated in the one-day syllabus revision workshop for TYBA English at St. Andrew’s College, Mumbai on June 26, 2018

attended a workshop on strategic planning by Mr Johnson George on October 13, 2018 in the AV Hall

participated in the State Level Intensive Training Workshop on UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015 organised by R. A. Podar College of Commerce and Economics in collaboration with the Maharashtra State Commission for Women on March 2, 2019

Samrita Sinha:

participated in the one-day syllabus revision workshop for TYBA English at St. Andrew's College, Mumbai on June 26, 2018

attended the Faculty Development Programme organised by Sophia College on October 13, 2018

Nishtha Dev:

participated in the one-day syllabus revision workshop for TYBA English at St. Andrew's College, Mumbai on June 26, 2018

attended the Faculty Development Programme organised by Sophia College on October 13, 2018

Dr Elwin Susan John:

participated in the one-day syllabus revision workshop for TYBA English at St. Andrew's College, Mumbai on June 26, 2018

attended the Faculty Development Programme conducted by Mr Johnson George and organised by IQAC on October 13, 2018

**Talks/events attended:**

Jihasa Vachharajani:

attended the History of Food workshop conducted by Dr Kurush Dalal and organised by the Department of History on July 30 and 31, 2018

attended the digital launch of RUSA on February 3, 2019 in the Convention Centre

Samrita Sinha:

attended the Kashis film screening organised by the Department of Sociology on January 16, 2019

attended Prime Minister Modi's digital launch, an initiative towards a digital India, held on February 3, 2019

Nishtha Dev:

Ms Dev was one of the comperes for the Digital Launch of RUSA held on February 3, 2019.

Dr Elwin Susan John:

attended a talk by Prof Gauri Vishwanathan on “Translation and Mediation of Hinduism by Theosophy in Nineteenth Century Britain and India” at the Columbia Global Centre, Mumbai

Vani Zaveri:

attended a talk on ‘Medical Humanities,’ involving a discussion with Manjula Padmanabhan, writer of *Harvest*, at Columbia Global Centers

**Election duty:**

Ms Vachharajani was appointed as the Presiding Officer for the General Elections held on April 29, 2019 for the 181 - Mahim Assembly Constituency which is part of 30 - Mumbai South-Central Parliamentary Constituency.

**Other activities:**

Ms Vachharajani coordinated with Dr Shefali Shah, former Head, St Xavier’s College, Mumbai, and shared information regarding a short course on “Mythology in Visual and Popular Culture” by Dr Vidya Kamat with the students of English and put interested students in touch with the organisers

Ms Sinha and Ms Dev helped the college library organise a Book Reading Session. The book chosen for the event was *The Color Purple*. They were awarded certificates and Crosswords gift vouchers for their participation in the event.

Ms Sinha co-judged a book review competition organised by the college library and was awarded a certificate for the same.