

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SOPHIA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF STUDIES MEETING HELD ON 27th AUGUST 2019

The third meeting of the Board of Studies of the Department of English was held on 27th August 2019 and it was attended by the following members:

1. Ms Jihasa Vachharajani: Chairperson, and Head, Department of English, Sophia College (Autonomous)
2. Prof Mala Pandurang: **Subject Expert** – Principal, Dr BMN College of Home Science (Autonomous), (SNDT University, Mumbai)
3. Mr Jeronimo Pinto: **Representative from the Industry or the Corporate Sector/ Allied Area** – Writer
4. Ms Samira Nadkarni: **Alumnus, Sophia College** – Member, Department of English, St Andrew’s College, Mumbai
5. Dr (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal: Principal, Sophia College, and Member, Department of English, Sophia College (Autonomous)
6. Ms Nishtha Dev: Member, Department of English, Sophia College (Autonomous)
7. Ms Samrita Sinha: Member, Department of English, Sophia College (Autonomous)
8. Dr Elwin Susan John: Member, Department of English, Sophia College (Autonomous)

The following members were absent:

1. Dr Marie Fernandes: **VC’s Nominee** – Principal, St Andrew’s College, Mumbai
2. Dr Asha Achuthan: **Subject Expert** – Advanced Centre for Women’s Studies, School of Development Studies (TISS)

The minutes of the second meeting of the Board of Studies of the English Department of Sophia College (Autonomous), held on 5th April 2019 were read and passed unanimously.

The proposed revised syllabi (under autonomy) to be scrutinized at the meeting had been emailed to the members in advance. The revised syllabi were briefly presented again, and this was followed by some discussion.

The proposed syllabus for the First Year Bachelor of Arts (FYBA) Introduction to Literature, was briefly revisited to examine the revisions made in line with the suggestions that had been made at the last meeting. Some suggestions were made with regard to inclusion of other works – both primary texts and critical readings. It was also suggested that contextualizing of the text be integral to the teaching-learning process. Again, in recommending texts for the IA assignments, different realities and perspectives needed to be included. Perhaps, visual texts and arts could be included as well.

Members of the Board pointed out that, again, most of the tools used for the Second Year Bachelor of Arts (SYBA) papers were Eurocentric, and reflected a white male perspective. There did not seem to be adequate representation to ensure that the subject could be studied through the lenses of race, caste, class, and gender. Other texts were recommended for

consideration and possible inclusion. The suggestions about IA assignments made earlier were applicable here as well. It was also emphasized that a balance between primary texts and critical work needed to be maintained.

The syllabi for the papers on Literary Theory and Criticism and on Popular Fiction were discussed at some length. With regard to the paper on Literary Theory and Criticism, suggestions were made with reference to terminology to be used, ways of arranging the syllabus, and strategies to expand the scope of study in terms of application (especially through the IA) as well as offer more advanced students the possibility of pushing back the boundaries of the syllabus by introducing them to more challenging texts. It was recommended that more recent writings in critical thought and theory be included. At the same time, it was suggested that the number of primary texts to be discussed in class be reduced, and the rest be included in the list of additional/recommended readings in the syllabus. Further, perhaps selections from the primary texts could be presented in class, so as to make the work more accessible to the students. It was noted that there was a tendency to focus on Eurocentric theorists, the department was invited to include Indian Marxist theorists as well as texts from the Subaltern Studies movement. Finally it was suggested that perhaps each unit could be specifically linked to the stated objectives, and could be explicit in including categories like race, caste, class, religion and gender.

This was reiterated with reference to the paper of Popular Fiction, where it was important that the texts mentioned offer students the opportunity of examining these categories. Ways of expanding the scope of the paper were discussed. A number of texts were suggested and noted for use in discussion and as recommendations for the IA component in assessment.

The possibility of including a theory component in every paper was mooted, and it was felt that this would be a good way of introducing students to theory, and encouraging them to approach every text from a theoretical perspective. Different perspectives could be introduced, depending on the texts and the papers in question.

A list of the moderators was presented and accepted by the Board, and a resolution to that effect was passed unanimously. Resolutions regarding the acceptance of the following syllabi were also passed unanimously:

- FYBA English Course of studies, for implementation in Semester II of the Academic Year 2019-2020.
- FYBA Communication Skills in English, for implementation in Semester II of the Academic Year 2019-2020
- SYBA English Courses of studies, for implementation in Semesters III and IV of the Academic Year 2020-2021
- TYBA English Courses of studies, for implementation in Semester VI of the Academic Year 2019-2020

The meeting then ended with the Chairperson extending warm thanks, on behalf of the Department, to the external members of the Board of Studies for their generous expenditure of time, energy and thought.