

# Poetics – A Study in Literary Concepts

MA (Sanskrit - IKS)

**Course Category: Core**

**Schedule of Offering: Semester #2**

**Course Credit Structure: 3**

**Lecture: 3 hours**

**Tutorial: -**

**Practical: -**

**Contact Hours per week: 3 hours**

**Course Instructors:** Sri Naresh Keerthi & Dr Ramakrishna Pejathaya

## 1. Introduction

The objective of this course is to get a broad understanding of the principles of *sāhityaśāstra* (poetics) along with an eye for the historical shift in the conceptions of these principles within the discipline. In essence, the course will aim to answer the What, Why, and How of Sanskrit literary criticism; with the details of Who, When and Where being covered incidentally (*ānuṣaṅgika*).

The course should equip students with a fair knowledge of the discipline of poetics (*kāvyaśāstra*), and its symbiotic relation with literature (*kāvya*). It will cover the major themes, concepts and *sampradāya-s* 'schools of thought' in Sanskrit poetology; and also point to the connections between other *śāstra-s* and *alaṅkāra-śāstra*.

Three aspects in which this course attempts to be different – one, mapping the gradual change in the landscape of the discipline – from being a theory of performance, later developing into being a theory of psychological states and affect on one hand, and literary theory on the other. Two, the course will aim to explore the contemporary applicability of principles of *Alaṅkāra-śāstra*, and the resonances with prevalent models of literature, art and emotion. Three, each concept such as *kāvya-prayojana*, *rasa* etc. will be studied not from the perspective of any single text, but by comparing the views of several poeticsians.

## 2. Course Objectives

- Understand the important concepts such as *rasa*, *dhvani*, *alaṅkāra* etc.
- Help the student understand the purpose and nature of poetry (*kāvya-prayojanam*)
- Get an idea of the role and relation between the poet (*kavi*) and the connoisseur (*rasika*) as described in Sanskrit poetics
- Enable the student to explore the literary, histrionic and psychological implications of various source texts of *kāvya-śāstra*
- Discover the possibilities of using *kāvya-śāstra* as a lens for analysing and appreciate contemporary art, literature and cinema

## 3. Pre-requisites

- Familiarity with classical *kāvya* literature (any language) is desirable
- A healthy and positive attitude towards literature and poetics will help

## 4. Readings

A course packet will be put together, excerpting selections from primary sources, and also including English-language writings on relevant topics from the secondary literature on *Alaṅkāra-śāstra*. Select chapters from the below books will also be utilised. Further specific readings are indicated for each topic.

**Choudary, Satya Dev.** *Glimpses of Indian Poetics*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 2002.

**Deshpande, Ganesh Tryambak.** *Indian Poetics* (trans. Jayant Paranjpe) Bombay: Popular Prakashan. 2009.

**Ganesh.R.** *Alamkaarashastra*. (trans. M.C.Prakash) Bengaluru: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. 2010.

**Raghavan. V.** *Some Concepts of the Alankara Sastra*. Madras: Vasanta Press. 1941/2005.

**Sreekantaiyya, T.N.** *Indian Poetics*. (trans. N.Balasubrahmanya) Bangalore: Sahitya Akademi. 2001.

## 5. Module-wise topics

**Module 1 – What and why - *Kāvya -lakṣaṇam prayojanam hetuś'ca* [8 hours]**

- 1.1. What 1 – What is *kāvya* – the origins
- 1.2. What 2 – What are *sāhitya* and *alaṅkāra*.
- 1.3. What 3 – The alchemy of poetry - The *kāvya-śāstra* theories of meaning

- 1.4. What 4 – Kāvya and Nāṭaka – a typology, a genealogy and a history
- 1.5. Why 1 – The purpose and social function of literature
- 1.6. Why 2 - Kāvya, Dharma and Kāvya-dharma
- 1.7. Hetu 1 – Desiderata for a poet - Pratibhā, vyutpatti, abhyāsa
- 1.8. Hetu 2 - Desiderata for a saḥṛdaya

### Readings –

Agrawal, M. M. (1983). The Definition of Poetry (*Kāvya-lakṣaṇa*). *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 64(1/4), 221-225.

Christie, E. (1979). Indian philosophers on poetic imagination (pratibhā). *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 7(2), 153-207.

Krishnamoorthy, K. "The Meaning of 'Sahitya': A Study in Semantics." *Indian Literature* 28, no. 1 (105 (1985): 65-70.

Shulman, D. (2008). Illumination, imagination, creativity: Rājaśekhara, Kuntaka, and Jagannātha on pratibhā. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 36(4), 481-505.

Chapters 1 and 3 in Choudary 2002 'A survey of Sanskrit poetics' and 'The definition of poetry'

Chapter 4 in Choudury 2002. 'The aim and purpose of poetry'

### Module 2 – Who and when? *Kāvya-śāstrasya itihāsaḥ* [5 hours]

- 2.1. Who 1– A brief history of alaṅkāra śāstra – texts and authors
- 2.2. Who 2 - The major *sampradaya*-s of poetics
- 2.3. The interaction of kāvya-śāstra with other disciplines – *nyāya*, *mīmāṃsā*, *vedānta*

### Readings –

Chapter 2 in Ganesh 2010 – The historical evolution of Poetics

Arjunwadkar, K. S. (1984). The Rasa Theory and the Darśanas. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 65(1/4), 81-100.

### Module 3 - The sap of poetry – *rasa* [7 hours]

- 3.1. Kāvya 1 – Rasa and bhāva
- 3.2. The *rasa sūtra* and its entailments
- 3.3. The number and nature of rasa-s, *rasābhāsa*
- 3.4. Distant cousins of the rasa family– *śānta*, *bhakti*, *preyas*

### Readings –

Chapter 7 'Rasapraakriyā' in Deshpande 2009.

Chapter 6 'The nature of rasa' in Choudary 2002.

Kulkarni, V. M. (1994). The Alaukika Nature of Rasa. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 75(1/4), 281-290.

#### **Module 4 – Other Poetic schools- alaṅkāra, aucitya and vakrokti [7 hours]**

- 4.1. What is Alaṅkāra
- 4.2. Classification of alaṅkāra-s in different schools
- 4.3. Discussion of important śabdalaṅkāra-s and arthālaṅkāra-s
- 4.4. Propriety as a poetic principle
- 4.5. Obliqueness as a poetic device

#### **Readings –**

Bronner, Y. (2009). Change in disguise: The early discourse on Vyajastuti. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 129(2), 179-198.

Chari, V. K. (1967). Decorum as a critical concept in Indian and Western poetics. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 26(1), 53-63.

McCrea, L. (2004). Mahimabhaṭṭa's Analysis of Poetic Flaws. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 77-94.

Chapter 7 'Aucitya' in Raghavan 1941.

#### **Module 5 - Poetic style and idiom - Guṇa, Rīti and Vṛtti [6 hours]**

- 5.1. *Kāvya guṇa* and *pāka*
- 5.2. *Rīti* as regional archetype and stereotype
- 5.3. *Rīti* reinterpreted in Kuntaka
- 5.4. *Vṛtti*-s in Bharata
- 5.5. *Vṛtti* and *guṇa*, the conflation of *vṛtti* and *rīti*

#### **Readings –**

Chapters 5 'Rīti' and 6 'Vṛtti' in Raghavan 1941.

Wright, J. C. (1963). Vṛtti in the Dasa-rupaka-vidhanadhyaya of the Abhinavabharati: a Study in the History of the Text of the Natyasatra. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 26, 92-117.

#### **Module 6 - Dhvani and vyañjanā– a model of poetic suggestion [7 hours]**

- 6.1. Vyañjanā as a new semantic power
- 6.2. Ānandavardhana's theory of Dhvani and a typology
- 6.3. Detractors of Dhvani - Mahimabhaṭṭa

#### **Readings -**

Chari, V. K. (1977). The Indian theory of suggestion (dhvani). *Philosophy East and West*, 27(4), 391-399.

Krishnamoorthy, K. (1985). 'Dhvani' or Suggestion: A Study in Perspective. *Indian Literature*, 28(4 (108), 113-122.

Krishnamoorthy, K. (1968). *The Dhvanyāloka and its critics*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers.

Rajendran, C. (1991). *A Study of Mahimabhaṭṭa's Vyaktiviveka*. Calicut University.

## Module 7 - Applying rasa theory – a rasika's handbook

[5 hours]

- 7.1. The ideal connoisseur - *rasika, sahrdaya, sāmājika*
- 7.2. Poetic blemishes – *kāvya-doṣa-s*
- 7.3. *Kāvya-guṇa-doṣa-vivecana* – appraising poetry
- 7.4. A typology of nāyaka-s and nāyikā-s
- 7.5. Applying Kāvya-śāstra and Nāṭya-śāstra to contemporary media

### Readings –

Bhānudatta, & Pollock, S. (2009). *Bouquet of Rasa and River of Rasa: by Bhānudatta, transl. by Sheldon Pollock*. New York University Press-JJC Foundation.

Bose, M. (2000). Uparūpaka: A hybrid genre of drama in the Sanskritic tradition. *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 4(3), 289-312.

Hogan, P. (2003). Rasa Theory and Dharma Theory: from the home and the world to Bandit Queen. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 20(1), 37-52.

## 6. Pedagogy

The course will use lectures combined with guided readings of primary material. It will also use audio-visual material from popular media to explore the resonances of *kāvya-śāstra* with contemporary media. Students will be expected to make short presentations on select topics connected to the latter.

## 7. Evaluation Pattern

- Class Participation & Presentation – 10%
- Assignments – 10%
- Term Paper – 15%
- Mid-semester examination – 25%
- End-semester examination – 40%