

## **Minutes of the meeting of Board of Studies in Philosophy held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2023.**

The Board of Studies meeting began with a formal address and introduction of members by the HOD Dr. Himani Chaukar.

Agenda No. 1: To seek approval for the syllabi of VSC- Vocational Skill – enhancement Courses for FYBA – Psychology (Semester I, II)

Dr. Himani Chaukar briefed the members about what will be the benefits of having a VSC paper as a part of the curriculum with the help of the presentation shared on the screen. Each of the two units of the proposed paper were explained in detail to the members by her and she further elaborated on how the two papers on Listening skills and Interviewing skills (one in each semester) is going to be of great contribution to build up some foundational but important skills required for a future psychologist. The marks distribution, syllabus and the temporary mode of assessment were discussed. A Suggestion regarding a philosophy-psychology theoretical perspective was made by Dr. Priya Vaidya, Dr. Himani Chaukar humbly explained how this paper is vocational and covering a lot of theory is not the aim that has to be achieved through it because these skills have to be used on practical grounds. All the members unanimously accredited the planned structure for the VSC for FYBA Psychology.

Agenda No. 2: To seek approval for the syllabi of VSC- Vocational Skill- enhancement Courses for FYBA- Philosophy (Semester I, II)

Dr. Himani Chaukar introduced the VSC papers planned for the FYBA philosophy. She further explained why Critical thinking 1 and critical thinking 2 as designed papers will be beneficial to the students who pursue a non- philosophy career too. She elaborated on what the components of these papers will be. Dr. Himani first introduced the Critical thinking 1. A suggestion for changing the name of the paper was given by Mr. Milind Agarwal. Dr. Radhika Jadhav suggested another name for the unit – ‘arguments as the building blocks of critical thinking’ and she also suggested the addition of a small component explaining how philosophy-logic-critical thinking are interwoven in the introductory unit of the paper Critical Thinking 1.

A few suggestions regarding what can be expected from critical thinking as a skill from the industrial perspective and business environment were given by Mr. Milind Agarwal. Those are as follows:

- Can critical thinking incorporate the skill of defending your idea and how to argue and pitch it in a scientific manner with credibility?
- Would it be possible to include a section that explains how to use the right references and sources to support your claim?
- Mr. Aaditya Jadhav asked Mr. Milind Agarwal if a creative thinking component should be added, if that would enhance the business culture, to which Mr. Milind Agarwal said that it will definitely upgrade rigid and practical business minds to bend a little to explore business from a creative perspective which may be a fruitful addition to their skillset. Dr. Himani Chaukar propounded that this could be considered for the VSC papers for the SYBA which haven't been proposed or designed yet.

Dr. Priya Vaidya suggested the scope of integrating the concept of critical thinking with Indian Philosophy at a very subtle and introductory level.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Himani Chaukar".

Dr. Himani Chaukar told the members that the final assessment pattern for these papers will be with the academic council and will be approved with the BOS soon after.

Dr. Priya Vaidya suggested to go for a methodology of assessment that is convenient for both, the students to work on and for the professors to evaluate.

Agenda No. 3: To seek approval for the syllabi of GE- Generic Elective Course to be offered to FYBSc students.

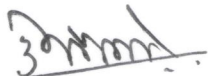
Dr. Himani introduced the GE to the members- Critical Thinking (same as the above). All the members validated that it was a good decision to keep the same syllabi for this course as the VSC for philosophy. Dr. Radhika Jadhav suggested the professors to teach it along with building a conception of philosophy to the science students. Dr. Radhika Jadhav suggested the following alternatives for GE:

- Perspective on good life
- Applied ethics
- Relations of various domains of Philosophy and science
- Professional ethics (by Dr. Priya Vaidya)

Mr. Aaditya Jadhav suggested that the above mentioned topics will work better for second year students from the perspective of difference in expansive thinking between science and arts students.

Mr. Milind Agarwal suggested inclusion of a component teaching techniques on formal and civil arguments. This suggestion was backed by Dr. Radhika who suggested that mock parliaments or debates can be given as assignments.

The meeting was concluded with the formal vote of thanks to all the esteemed members of the BOS by Dr. Himani Chaukar.



Dr. Himani Chaukar



Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Studies in Philosophy.

**Date:** 29th February, 2024

**Time:** 7pm - 8pm

**Members:**

1. Dr. Himani Chaukar – Head of the Department and Chairperson
2. Ms. Jyoti Waghmare – Faculty
3. Ms. Charuta Kulkarni – Faculty
4. Prof. Priya Vaidya – V.C. Nominee (Dept. of Philosophy, University of Mumbai)
5. Prof. Mukul Raj Mehta – Subject Expert (Dept. of Philosophy, BHU)
6. Dr. Radhika Jadhav – Subject Expert (HOD, Philosophy, Fergusson College)
7. Dr. Milind Agarwal – Industry Expert (Founder & CEO, Quickwork)
8. Mr. Yogeshwar Joshi – Alumnus (M.Phil.)

The Board of Studies meeting began with a formal address and introduction of the attending members by HOD Dr. Himani Chaukar. Dr. Chaukar mentioned that Dr. Milind Agarwal could not be present for the meeting.

**Agenda 1:** To seek approval for the changes in the syllabi as per NEP2020 structure for SYBA (Semester III & IV for academic year 2024-25) and MA (Part II for the year 2024-25).

Dr. Himani Chaukar briefed the members about the current structure of the syllabus in question, and then put forth the suggestions or the ideas for the changes which they had thought about. The units of the two papers namely: Philosophy of Religion, and Indian and Western Philosophy, were looked upon individually. Dr. Chaukar explained that, according to the new structure of NEP2020, the students will have to choose their major and minor subjects in the second year. Students having Philosophy as their minor subject would have one paper of



philosophy. According to the proposal by the college and the teachers of the department, the Philosophy of Religion paper will be the major paper, and the paper - Indian and Western Philosophy, will be the second major paper, and would also be offered as minor, to the students who have taken Philosophy-minor. Also, it was decided that the nomenclature of the latter could be changed to “History of Indian Philosophy” and “History of Western Philosophy”. There was no major change in the syllabi of both the papers. Suggestions for any changes in the existing syllabus were welcomed. Further, the topics for the 20 marks Internals were put forth by Ms. Jyoti Waghmare. Dr. Chaukar also put forth that, due to the increase in the number of credits i.e. from 3 to 4, and in the no. of lectures i.e. 4 instead of 3, the content of the syllabus was deemed sufficient, according to its distribution between the number of lectures.

Dr. Radhika Jadhav put forth a question regarding the Philosophy of religion paper, and whether it was thought about to open it for the students who have taken Philosophy-minor, and could be more interested in the concerned paper. Dr. Chaukar explained that the same had been pondered upon, but in internal discussion it was brought up that, Indian & Western Philosophy being the basis or the core of Philosophy, it is necessary that students getting a minor degree in Philosophy know and have knowledge about it.

Moving towards the discussion of the syllabus of MA, Dr. Chaukar proposed that the concerned syllabus being vast, a document containing the portion of MA would be shared later, so that the members could go through it and then put up any suggestions which they deemed as needful.



**Agenda 2:** To seek suggestions on Field Projects/ CEP (Community Engagement Program) to be conducted in Semester III and IV (2024-25).

As the most important agenda, Dr. Himani Chaukar said that suggestions would be well appreciated. Dr. Radhika Jadhav suggested that IIT Bombay has a good programme for Community engagement which has been designed by them, particularly for college students. She further said that the institute has a scheme where they will train the students and help them find projects; and currently IIT Bombay is signing MOUs with various colleges. Dr. Jadhav said that it would be a good thing at the college level, as they have a variety of subjects to offer; and IIT Bombay would be able to come to the college to introduce what they have to offer. Dr. Chaukar appreciated the suggestion, and said that the department will get further details about the same. Further, she said that a few years back the college had introduced the concept of CEP because some of the students are really inclined to community based programs. The students used to maintain and fill a diary when they worked for an organization. One such organization was Samaritans, which dealt with suicide prevention. Dr. Chaukar mentioned that there was no MOU signed at that time, but the students used to voluntarily work towards its cause. She further mentioned that this vision was on the lines that organizations around the college could be contacted, and the college could get in an MOU with them, as it has become a formal part of the syllabus. She also agreed with the point that Mehta sir had put forth, which was - due to the large number of students it becomes quite challenging to organize and manage field projects.

Another alternative which Dr. Radhika Jadhav suggested that a person, with whom she is in contact with, is into online content development for platforms like Wiki source. And they would require help from students to digitize and proofread data related to the subject. Dr. Jadhav also suggested that Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute is looking forward to working with students on projects related to manuscript management. Dr. Chaukar also put forth that the department is also in contact with K.R. Cama Oriental Institute. And the institute was looking



*[Handwritten signature]*

forward to working with students on digitization of data for their library. With this, there was a notion that the department can enter into an MOU with the institute, which could provide students with a learning opportunity.

Dr. Jadhav also suggested that with Aaditya Jadhav sir's help, and with whoever is associated with 'P for C', students can have the opportunity of volunteering and working on field with children. Dr. Chaukar put forth that there could be an overlap between CEP and FP, in such a program. To this, Dr. Jadhav said that a link can be established between the two, when whatever students undertake as CEP can be converted to FP.

Mr. Mehta asked whether the department has a provision for internships. Dr. Chaukar explained that second year students do not have internship provisions, but the third year students do have that provision.

Mr. Yogeshwar Joshi said that there is a person named Shantum Sheth who is carrying out the work of Thích Nhất Hạnh (a Zen Master) in India. Joshi sir gave further details for the same, and said that Shantum Sheth has an NGO - Ahimsa Trust. They go on mindfulness retreats and are looking for young people to volunteer for programs. He suggested this as one of the programs that could help students by providing them with a learning opportunity. Mr. Joshi also suggested that there are educational tours in Karnataka. And there is a Tibetan monastic university in Karnataka where students can learn how monastic universities function and also about alternative education.

All the insightful suggestions were highly appreciated by Dr. Chaukar as she said that, this discussion will lead to a promising start for setting up meetings with various organizations and getting ready for an MOU, which would be beneficial for the students and the college as well.



*3am*

**Agenda 3:** To seek approval for the new certificate courses (for 2024-25).

Dr. Himani Chaukar said that this year the department has signed an MOU with Zefat College, Israel. And last year Prof. Ithamar Theodore, who is from Israel and is a scholar in Bhagavad Gita had come to Ruia college as a visiting fellow. That is when there was a collaborative thought on the lines there could be a course related to Bhagavad Gita on lines which states the relevance of the Gita in modern times, and which could be open to students who have different majoring subjects, including science students. With this, Prof. Theodore has proposed this certificate course – Insights from Bhagavad Gita for Daily Life. And the course has been proposed to be conducted in a hybrid mode. Mr. Mehta agreed that it is a really good idea as it would be a multidisciplinary course. Dr. Chaukar, further mentioned that Prof. Ithamar Theodore would be preparing a draft of the structured syllabus, and it would be shared with the members of the Board for approval.

Another course which Dr. Chaukar suggested that the department was proposing – ‘Basics of Logic-Based Therapy (LBT)’. Two years back, a similar course titled ‘Self-Enhancement through Logic-Based Therapy’ was introduced. She explained the details of the course and said that this particular course is open for all students. Dr. Chaukar mentioned that the certificate course of basics of LBT would be for philosophy and psychology students, and it would not be open for everyone. She explained that the reason for this being that other students do not have the background of the mentioned subjects and the course would be relating more to these two subjects. She clarified that the mentioned course has just been proposed, and once the syllabus has been prepared, it would be shared with the Board members. Dr. Radhika Jadhav asked whether the course on Basics of Logic-Based Therapy (LBT) be in an hybrid mode and open for other college students. Dr.. Himani Chaukar clarified with a positive response that Logic-Based Therapy being a specialized course, is not offered widely and so it would be in a completely online mode and would be open for students, from any college, who have a background of



philosophy & psychology. The certificate courses would be having a total duration of 45 hours and accrediting 3 credits.

Mr. Mukul Mehta inquired whether there is any provision for online or Svayam courses; to which Dr. Chaukar explained that currently there is no provision, but in near future there will be an opportunity to include online courses.

With this discussion of the main agenda points, Ms. Himani Chaukar urged the members to put forth their views or suggestions, if any. She also explained the point that the Masters' students who are currently doing their On-Job Training with Quickwork, are not doing the internship related to counselling only, even if the course is mainly for counselling. They wanted to keep the opportunities open for the students. So, this particular opportunity focuses more on technical content writing, but from the perspective of counselling & therapy; as Dr. Milind Agarwal's company primarily deals with technology and Chatbot. She further clarified that the company is able to bring in the perspective of humanities and social science, along with a knowledge base of philosophy. Though Mr. Agarwal was absent in the Board meeting, Ms. Himani Chaukar extends her sincere gratitude, towards him, for providing the students of the department with the opportunity.

Dr. Chaukar also suggested – with reference to the CEP organizations – Bhakti-Vedanta Research Centre, which is affiliated to University of Mumbai. This research centre has developed Govardhan EcoVillage near Vada, and is also an Eco-tourism spot. Dr. Chaukar gave further details of the institute, which included the provision for students to do Masters through research program; opportunities for students for internships.

Further suggestions regarding CEP were given by the members of the Board such as the teaching opportunity in Sahyadri school, which incorporates J. Krishnamruthy's ideologies and philosophy in their teaching. There was also a suggestion regarding the possibility of a collaboration with Vivekananda Kendra, Kaivalyadham, and Vipassana Gorai.



*John*

The meeting ended with a formal vote of thanks for the valuable time and priceless contribution given by the esteemed members of the BOS to the discussion, by Dr. Himani Chaukar.



Dr. HIMANI CHAUKAR

