

M.A. (Health, Gender and Society) Student Handbook  
2022-2024  
Department of Liberal Arts  
Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad

### Introduction

The Department of Liberal Arts, IITH announces a unique MA program in Health, Gender and Society (HGS), designed to enable innovative and rigorous research to address social problems in the area of health and gender in contemporary India. With a directory of faculty from Sociology and Anthropology, Development Studies, Economics, Linguistics, Cognitive Science, Psychology, Literature and Cultural Studies, this program aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse health systems, infrastructures, and policies that impact gender and family in complex ways. With dedicated internship and dissertation components, this two-year full-time program offers students a formidable and challenging platform from which they can engage with contemporary research and professional practice in India and across the globe.

### Program Structure

The Masters program in Health, Gender and Society is a two-year full-time program with a total of 60 credits spread over four semesters and a two-month internship period. Each semester comprises 16 weeks, with one mid-term break week, and buffer days after segments 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6 respectively. Kindly consult IIT academic calendar for enquiries about mid-term break week and buffer days.

Coursework	33 Credits
Internship	6 Credits
Seminar Series	1 Credits
Dissertation	20 Credits
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 Credits</b>

A typical 3 credit course has 3 lectures a week leading to 42 lecture hours in a semester. Fractional credits can be 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0 having 7, 14, 21, 28, 35 and 42 lecture hours respectively.

Below is a table containing a semester-wise list of core and elective courses that will be taught in the course of the program:

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Semester	Courses	Core/Elective	Credits
1 (August - December 2022)	1. Health and Society	Core	3
Requirement: 5 core courses	2. Gender and Public Policy	Core	3
	3. Anthropology of Reproduction	Core	3
	4. Cross-cultural Approaches to Health	Core	3
	5. Quantitative Research Methods for Behavioural Sciences	Core	3
2 (Jan – April 2023)	1. Disability, Mental Health and Development	Core	3
Requirement: 3 core, 1 elective courses	2. Qualitative Research Methods	Core	3
	3. Medical Anthropology	Core	3
	4. Ageing, Health and Development	Elective	3
	5. Environment and Society	Elective	3
	6. Impact Evaluation	Elective	3
May – July 2023	Summer internship		6
3 (August – November 2023)	1. Health Economics and Policy	Core	3
Core: 1 Elective: 1 Phase 1 of dissertation: 8	2. Mental Health and Gender	Elective	3
	3. Chronic Disease Management	Elective	3
	4. Gendering (un)wellness narratives: A Literary-Cultural Perspective	Elective	3

	5. Phase 1 of Dissertation – Literature Review and Proposal Defense Presentation		8
Seminar Series (1 credit)	Seminars over the course by invited speakers		1
4 (Jan – April 2024)	Phase 2 of Dissertation: Dissertation Writing and Final Presentation		12

Timetable August-December 2022

	9:00 10:25	10:30 11:55	12:00 13:25	12:55 14:30	14:30 15:55	16:00 17:25	17:30 19:00	19:00 20:30
MON					LA6140 (C514)	LA5120 (C522)		
TUE	LA5220 (B114)		LA6700 (C514)	L  U  N  C  H				
WED					Department Seminar			
THU			LA6700 (C514)		LA5120 (C522)	LA6140 (C514)		
FRI	LA6250 (C514)							
SAT								

Course No.	Course Title	Instructor
LA 5120	Health and Society	Shubha Ranganathan
LA 6700	Gender and Public Policy	Aardra Surendran
LA 6250	Anthropology of Reproduction	Anindita Majumdar
LA 5220	Cross-cultural approaches to Health	Mahati Chittem
LA 6140	Quantitative Research Methods for Behavioural Sciences	Neeraj Kumar

### Grading System

Grade	A+	A	A-	B	B-	C	C-	D	AU	S	U	F
Points	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	0	0	0	0

Note: **A+** (Outstanding Performance in the Course, typically in the top 2% of the Class), **AU** (Audit), **S** (Satisfactory), **U** (Unsatisfactory), **F** [Fail].

### Assignments

The structure and nature of assignments will vary for each course and with each faculty. Students will be informed about this at the beginning of each course in a semester by respective faculty. However, students can expect intermittent presentations, written essays and a final examination/term paper as part of assignments over the period of a course.

### MA Dissertation Guidelines

Students will typically begin working on their dissertation in the second year of the program, although they can begin thinking about it from earlier as well. For an M.A. dissertation, it is generally expected that students would select a specific topic and engage with an extensive review of the literature on the topic, or analysis of related data (either primary or secondary). The thesis is typically prepared in consultation with the dissertation supervisor.

#### ***Choice of Guide***

The allotment of dissertation supervisor will be done in the second semester between 1 March and 30 April. Students have the freedom to request for a supervisor in accordance with their research interests. The selection of the supervisor must be done based on the topic of study, guide availability, and mutual consent between student and faculty advisor.

If the student is unable to decide her/his supervisor within the stipulated deadline then the Department Post-Graduate Committee (DPGC) in consultation with the MA HGS Faculty Advisor will allot the supervisor based on mutual discussion between the concerned student and plausible supervisor.

If a change of supervisor is required, this must be done by 30<sup>th</sup> November (semester III).

#### ***Minimum Requirement of Thesis***

Word count: The MA dissertation should not be less than 8000 words. There is no upper limit for the dissertation.

### ***Dissertation Proposal and Pre-submission Seminars***

A dissertation proposal seminar will be held in the third semester, where the student will make a presentation of their proposed research. Prior to submission of the dissertation, the student is required to make a pre-submission seminar in the department. This will be an open seminar presided by the MA HGS Dissertation Committee. The MA HGS Dissertation Committee comprises the dissertation supervisor and one internal faculty member. Comments and remarks coming from the Committee need to be incorporated into the thesis. The pre-submission seminar will be scheduled in the end of April—over the last two working days of the month.

### ***Final Submission of Dissertation***

The final submission of the dissertation must be done by 15th May. One hard copy and one soft copy in a document format must be submitted to the Committee.

### ***Dissertation Evaluation***

After submission, the dissertation is then sent for evaluation to one external examiner. The external examiner, along with the dissertation supervisor will grade the dissertation out of 100 marks. Marks given by both: the MA Dissertation Supervisor and the external examiner will constitute the final marks and grade of the student. The dissertation will be evaluated by June 15.

No post-submission defense is required.

## **Summer Internship**

The MA in Health, Gender and Society at the Department of Liberal Arts offer students an opportunity to intern and amass experience in the sector and organization of their choice anywhere within the country.

Internships will be of a duration of two months during the summer after the second semester (May-July). Students are required to identify and submit their area of interest and organization of their choice to the MA HGS Faculty Advisor and Internship Coordinator by the end of the first semester. This will give enough time to the Faculty Advisor and Internship Coordinator to initiate correspondence with the concerned organizations and make necessary arrangements. It would expedite the process if the student can identify a contact person within the organization. In case a student is unable to identify an organization that fits her/his area of interest, the Department of Liberal Arts will then assist the student to find one.

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Internships carry a worth of 6 credits. The concerned person within the organization, under whose supervision the student has interned, will grade the student, and communicate the same directly to the Faculty Advisor and Internship Coordinator.

**Seminar Series**

One important component of the MA HGS program is the Seminar Series. The Department conducts fortnightly seminars on a wide variety of topics. Students are expected to participate in these seminars. The weightage assigned to the Seminar Series is one credit. The minimum attendance requirement is 75 per cent.

**Important Contacts**

***Head, Department of Liberal Arts***

Shubha Ranganathan  
Academic Block C, Room 520  
head@la.iith.ac.in

***Dean, Academic Programmes***

Prof. Saptarshi Majumdar  
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***Academic Section***

acad@la.iith.ac.in, 040-2301-6065

***MA HGS Faculty Advisor and Internship Coordinator***

Neeraj Kumar  
Neeraj.kumar@la.iith.ac.in

***DPGC Members (Faculty only)***

Shubha Ranganathan, Head of the Department	head@la.iith.ac.in
Shuhita Bhattacharjee, Convener & PhD Coordinator	shuhita@la.iith.ac.in
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***Liberal Arts Department Office***

(Academic Block A, Room No - 701)  
Abani Kumar Das, Executive Assistant

040 - 23016500  
abani.das@admin.iith.ac.in

### 24-HOUR SECURITY HELPLINES

Security Office	040-23016812
Security Control Room	040-23016813
Academic Block A Main Entrance	040-23016817
Academic Block B Main Entrance	040-23016818
Academic Block C Main Entrance	040-23016819
Hostel Blocks (Boys)	040-23016820
Hostel Blocks (Girls)	040-23016821
Hostel (PSH - Girls)	040-23016822
Chief Security Officer	040-23016083
Security Officer	040-23016084
Institute Main Gate (IN)	040-23016815
Institute Main Gate (OUT)	040-23016816

### HOSTELS

Hostel office	040 - 23016833
HCU Chair	040 - 23016027

### MEDICAL HELP

Ambulance (24x7)	8331036100/ 040-23016827
Medical Dispensary (24x7)	040-23016826/ 8331036101
Apollo Pharmacy (24x7)	7995067409/ 040-23016830
Dr. Anil Kumar (on-campus medical advisor)	(040) 2301 6076/ 8331036077
Dr T. Raja Adharnath (on-campus medical advisor)	(040) 2301 6077/ 8331036076
Dr. Baishakhi (on campus lady medical officer)	(040) 2301 6078/ 8331036078

### PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLORS

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*All information in this document was last updated on 28 July 2022.*

**Annexure I – LIST OF COURSES FOR MASTERS IN HEALTH, GENDER AND SOCIETY PROGRAM  
2022-2024 (in alphabetical order )**

***Ageing, Health and Development***

The world's population of older people is growing, and population ageing is one of the most important determinants of global health. To understand global ageing and development, this course will draw perspectives from demographic, economic, sociological, and health aspects to equip students with the skills and competencies needed to work in ageing research. Additionally the course will provide you a thorough grasp of the effects of ageing on persons and populations, as well as the consequences for policy, practise, as well as the demands and challenges that this brings.

***Anthropology of Reproduction [LA6250]***

The course will be discussing population planning, infertility and assisted reproductive technologies, the sociological study of obstetrics and gynecology, the gendering of reproductive bodies, and birthing practices across cultures including midwifery and caesarean sections.

***Chronic Disease Management [LA6270]***

This course aims to introduce students to what are chronic diseases and the various factors involved in their management. The course consists of two modules: 1) a theoretical, taught module that includes topics ranging from patient education to supportive care systems, and 2) a practical module where students are expected to visit hospitals and conduct a study.

***Cross-cultural Approaches to Health***

With a focus on the definitive nineteenth century that laid the foundations of modernity, this course will examine the way in which literary representations portrayed wellness as a gendered reality and sickness as a sexual category. The aim will be to understand the crucial role played by literature historically in the emergence of modern gendered understandings of health which ultimately determine the socio-cultural medical support available to persons of non-dominant gender identities

***Disability, Mental Health, and Development [LA6520]***

This course foregrounds the need to incorporate the question of social justice, in research on mental health and disability. Drawing on recent work in the critical and discursive traditions in psychology and allied disciplines such as anthropology and disability studies, this course will train students to examine and analyze contemporary theory and research in disability and mental health from critical perspectives. In the course, students will read qualitative and ethnographic studies on people experiencing shared suffering in different domains including but not limited to disability, disasters, mental health, social suffering, political violence, trauma, etc. Questions of value and justice will form the bedrock of the course. Readings will illustrate the importance of taking into consideration local contexts and engaging with marginalized voices in order to address development issues in the Global South.



***Environment and Society [LA6530]***

Ecological crises have been a central aspect of social life for the past several decades. In the early 1990s, sociologist Ulrich Beck, in his “Risk Society” thesis, famously argued that risks are better understood as the primary product of industrial civilization rather than its unfortunate side-effects. Sociologist Charles Perrow has similarly argued that in tightly coupled complex industrial systems, accidents should be understood as “normal” rather than exceptional. Since then, both, the acuteness and visibility of environmental crises have become ever-more urgent: witnessed, for example, in growing levels of air, water, and plastic pollution and associated health and ecological effects as well as the increasing frequency of extreme weather events globally. Indeed, many have argued that the current geological era should be rightly understood as the Anthropocene, in recognition of the unprecedented impact of anthropogenic (i.e. human) activity on the earth’s environment. How can we understand the dynamics of the anthropocene? How are the risks and rewards of environmental harm distributed across and within various societies? How do we address the seeming tension between economic development and environmental sustainability that seem to be at the very heart of contemporary socio-political dynamics? What kinds of techno-social infrastructures can help address some of the challenges that the Anthropocene brings forth? This course surveys these and other questions, using Beck’s “risk society” thesis as a point of departure.

***Gender and Public Policy [LA6700]***

This course seeks to establish the value of a gender-relations approach to understanding the design and implementation of public policy. The course will introduce students to historical trajectories in the evolution of this approach, and their impacts on the Indian scenario. Although development has always been a gendered process, historical approaches to its imagination has not been adequately reflective of the impact of gendered structures on the experience of deprivation on multiple counts. The course seeks to address this gap by familiarising students with local and comparative experiences on this count. The main axes of the course will include a conceptual module on changing discourses around gender and development, and specific modules on public policy pertaining to poverty, labour and livelihoods, health, education, and environment. Pedagogy will be lecture and discussion based, with well-defined readings and other resources.

***Gendering (un)wellness narratives: A Literary- Cultural Perspective***

To be shared with students shortly.

***Health Economics and Policy [LA6540]***

This course starts with a discussion of the supply and demand for health and health care delivery. It then introduces the role of asymmetric information in the market for health insurance leading to adverse selection and moral hazard. It further introduces the concepts used to assess health technology. It then discusses the range of policies, such as nationalized health care and social health insurance, available to different countries to solve the problems that arise in both the health care and health insurance markets. In the end, it will focus on the economics of health externalities. The pedagogy will be through a combination of lecture sessions on conceptual areas, discussions of related research papers, and regular assignments/quizzes. The students are expected to complete the assigned readings to participate in the discussion sessions. The following list of topics should give an idea about

topics that we expect to cover in class. However, it may change depending on the students' progress, their ability to learn the subject, and if any specific needs required to be addressed.

***Health and Society [LA5150]***

This course aims to study the ways in which medicine, its practice, institutions and its principles are enmeshed in social relationships and structures. Drawing from an existing and emerging engagement in the field of science, technology and society studies, medical anthropology and psychology this course introduces students to the ways in which medicine and its practice comes to be marked by social negotiations. The course brings together disciplinary conversations in Psychology and Anthropology to reflect upon clinical practices surrounding health and other aspects of the body.

***Impact Evaluation [LA6620]***

The objective of this course is to introduce the applied econometric methods and research designs commonly used in empirical microeconomic research. This course starts with the assumptions of the classical linear regression model. It then discusses the basic properties of ordinary least squares estimator. It further discusses the implications of the relaxation of the various assumptions of the classical linear regression model. It moves on to the discussion of selection bias that typically arises in impact evaluation studies. It then discusses the role of Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) to address the issue of selection bias. In the end, it introduces the tools such as Instrumental Variable (IV) estimation, Differences-In-Difference (DID) and Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD).

***Literary and critical theory [LA6070]***

This course provides an overview of modern methodologies in literary criticism and theory. Readings include key texts of literary theory from Marxism, Feminism and Psychoanalysis, Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, Postmodernism and Cultural and Postcolonial studies. While this course analyzes various modes of interaction between cultural theories and society, it also provides a basic understanding of concepts, techniques, and vocabularies used in contemporary literary and critical analysis. In tandem with theoretical discourses covered in class, students will be required to examine and analyze select works of fiction according to established procedures of literary and cultural studies research.

***Medical Anthropology [LA6060]***

This course explores the ways in which social and cultural factors determine experiences of health and illness. A cross-cultural perspective of health issues at various levels- household, locality, nation-state and global, will be explored. Development of medical anthropology as a field, and various theoretical frameworks that have shaped research in the last few decades will be studied. Through ethnographic examples, the course will enable students to understand the debates and discussions within medical anthropology, and draw connections to the larger debates in anthropology itself. Topics covered will include medical pluralism, increasing medicalisation of health conditions, impact of gender on health, and new medical technologies.

***Mental health and Gender***

To be shared with students shortly

***Positive Psychology [LA6080]***

Positive Psychology is a relatively new approach that focuses on positive psychological aspects as opposed to the clinical/psychopathological perspective of traditional psychology. This course will provide an outline to the basic concepts of positive psychology emphasizing specifically on happiness and strengths. The focus will primarily be on one's understanding of well-being and journey towards it. Answers to the questions raised, will be discovered through an integration of theory and research findings in the area. Relevant concepts will be introduced and their relation to happiness will be examined. These include character strengths and virtues, post traumatic growth, resilience, and positive relationships. Strategies in achieving a state of subjective well being and meaningful life would be explored.

***Quantitative Research Methods for Behavioural Sciences [LA6140]***

One of the primary objectives of Behavioural Sciences is to understand behaviour in controlled situations. Behavioural sciences rely heavily on quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods are extensively used in studies in behavioural sciences. This course will help research scholars get an in-depth understanding of different quantitative research methods and the basic assumptions behind those methods. Topics covered: Introduction to Quantitative research methods, Different types of data, Ethical issues in behavioural research, Research process, Defining the research problem, Research and theory building, Experimental method, Survey method and questionnaire design, Research Designs, Determining the sample size, Sampling techniques, Measurement and scaling, Descriptive and univariate statistics, Multivariate analysis.

***Qualitative Research Methods (LA6010)***

This course will familiarize students with challenges and politics that ensue during the process of qualitative research. The first half of the semester will be dedicated to critically understanding the anthropological method of constructing the research problem, the field and its subjects. The second half will focus on certain specific concerns that the anthropological method grapples while encountering disasters and pandemics, caste, and its own turn towards activism.