

HONOURS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME PROPOSAL
AY 2022-2023

General Information of the Activity		
1.	Department and Hub	English – Lingua-Humanities
2.	Title of the Activity	Strolling/Scrolling: The Flâneur across Media
3.	Name of the Professor taking the course and Email address	Sruthi Venkateswaran sruthivenkateswaran@gmail.com
4.	Name/s of the Resource person/s	Sruthi Venkateswaran
5.	Name of the Dept Coordinator and Email address	Dr. Rashmi Lee George rashmilee.george@xaviers.edu
6.	Name of the Hub Coordinator and Email address	Dr. Suvaiba Pirani
7	Number of credits for the activity and number of hours	One credit – 15 hours
8	Fees	Rupees Six Hundred
9	Eligibility	Open to all students from all departments
10	Number of students	30
11	Duration and Time	September 12 – 17 th , 2022

Details of the Activity	
1	Title: Strolling/Scrolling: The Flâneur across Media
2	<p>Learning Objectives: To understand the idea of the flâneur through space, time, and medium, and to study how the figure has changed over time. To also be able to think and talk about associated ideas, including but not limited to: varied access to public spaces, privacy and anonymity in cyberspace, and the intersection between the humanities and technology</p>
3	<p>Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course, the student would be able to speak at length about the figure of the flâneur, and would have also understood how ideas relating to flânerie are relevant to and applicable in other contexts. The student will understand the importance and relevance of ideas like “flânerie,” not just as self-contained ideas in themselves, but as concepts that help one think coherently about relevant and associated topics.</p>
4	<p>Description Do you like walking the streets of Bombay (or your favourite city), without a purpose in mind, people watching? Or is lazing on the couch, doing nothing but scrolling through your phone, more up your “street”? If either of this sounds like you, you might be a flâneur!</p> <p>In this course on flânerie, we will look at the figure of the flâneur across media, and attempt to answer some fundamental questions: Does the flâneur really exist? Is it easy to be a flâneur? Can everyone flâneur, or are there obstacles to equitable access to flânerie? From there, we will saunter to other forms of media, specifically the internet. Can you be a (cyber)flâneur online? Ideas never exist in isolation, and via this course, we will also try to “walk” through and around associated ideas – like the walkability of cities, or privacy and anonymity online, or how tangential thinking in the humanities and social sciences can be useful, or even of how and where technology can intersect with the humanities.</p> <p>In so much of life, we are focused on getting ourselves to destinations, to reaching goals, to talking the shortest route possible from point A to point B, that we often undervalue activities that are seemingly purposeless, or that apparently add no utility to our lives. Here is an opportunity to learn about a practice that emerges out of purposelessness, that is essentially pointless, and is yet, paradoxically, so rich.</p>

Modules if any**1. Ta(I)king the Walk: Does the Flâneur exist?**

This module would like to open with a fundamental but overwhelming question – can the figure of the flâneur ever be truly defined? It would like to draw from the foundational works on flânerie, by Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, and Michel DeCerteau, as it strives to answer this question (or not). This module would then like to introduce some famous flâneurs from screen and text, and end with wondering if we can identify any Mumbai-based works of flânerie? (one potential answer: Arun Kolatkar in *Kala Ghoda* poems)

2. Mis-flânerie?: What is a flâneur not, and what should a flâneur not be?

The flâneur is so often regarded as an anonymous man-of-the-crowds (see Baudelaire and Benjamin) – but is that actually true? Does the flâneur necessarily have to be anonymous, a man, and exist only in crowds? This module would like to encourage debate about the popular conception of the flâneur (the one introduced in lecture 1) – and would like to simultaneously look at the various obstacles to flânerie – one’s gender, dis/ability, and so on, and will attempt to establish if walking the streets on Google Street View, say, is easier, which brings us to..

3. City of Bits: Walking in the Cyberspace.

After the pandemic, so much of life has shifted online – and it makes sense that flânerie will, too. What are the different pros and cons, ups and downs of online flânerie? The cyberspace, with its abundance of hyperlinks, truly gives so much opportunity for flânerie – but why does it matter? How can flânering the internet enable us to look at it with fresh eyes? (case study: Wikipedia). And surely social media is one of the best platforms to cyberflâneur on, or is it.....?

4. ...less than ideal: Flânerie and Social Media

What are the ethical limits to flânerie and looking? How does flânerie differ from sheer voyeurism? This module will open by attempting to be a cyberflâneur on Facebook, and the problems that lie herein. It will then attempt to look at social media pages that attempt to flâneur, in one way or the other (Mayank Austen Soofi as *Delhiwallah*, *Humans of Bombay*), and attempt to think about ethics and flânerie in conjunction with photography, writing, and looking.

5. The Game’s Afoot, Watson: Flânerie as Cluefinding

So many detective works emphasize on the act of flânerie – Arthur Conan Doyle’s Holmes stories, Poe’s *The Man in the Crowds* – but why? Is there an innate link between cluefinding and the act of flânerie? Perhaps then it will come as no surprise that flânerie can actually be regarded as method of research, of looking and finding, in the humanities. Can the figure of the (cyber)flâneur allow us to interject the humanities in discourses around technology? Flânerie is an intensely human activity – can it help us inject affect and emotion into the otherwise objective discourse surrounding technology?

