

### Inter-disciplinary Refresher Courses

The following Inter-disciplinary Refresher Courses have been assigned by the UGC to UGC-HRDC, JU, for the academic session 2018-19:

| Sl. No. | Title                                                   | Course Date                                                                       |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.      | ICT                                                     | TBA                                                                               |
| 2.      | Modern Methods in Earth System Science                  | 18 <sup>th</sup> September-11 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018                         |
| 3.      | Disaster Management: Water and Environmental Sanitation | 7 <sup>th</sup> January-30 <sup>th</sup> January, 2019                            |
| 4.      | The U.N. and the Global Perspectives of Human Rights    | 1 <sup>st</sup> November-26 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018                          |
| 5.      | Winter School in Engineering & Technology               | <i>Expected date:</i><br>1 <sup>st</sup> December-21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2018 |

## **Concept Note**

### **Modern Methods in Earth System Science**

Earth System Science is the science that studies the whole Earth as a system of many interacting parts e.g. geosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere, and focuses on the changes within and between these parts and thereby differs fundamentally from traditional studies of the Earth. The study of Earth System Science requires combination of many specialized subjects such as geology, geophysics, environmental sciences, atmosphere and climate sciences, oceanography, exploration of Earth's resources, geography, characterization of materials, bio-geosciences etc. For the past few decades there have been a huge development in methodology of learning and dissipating the knowledge gathered by the scientists in the above-mentioned fields. The proposed UGC-sponsored Refresher Course on "Modern Methods in Earth System Science" will address many of such modern and fundamental interdisciplinary aspects through the presentation of several expert-speakers from different academic and research institutes. The main goal of this course is to dissipate the updated knowledge on the various methods in Earth System Science to the academic community, in general and teaching community, in particular.

## Concept Note

### **The U.N. and the Global Perspectives of Human Rights**

Human rights are universal moral precepts that are indispensable to lead a life of dignity that entails a set of legal guarantees to all individuals, regardless of nationality, sexuality, gender, race, religion or age. Yet, despite this overarching moral consensus, the justification of a particular list of human rights requires a prior agreement on what human rights are. Human rights are institutionalized safeguards to a coercively imposed order, be it national or international. Human rights are derivative as they provide secure access to a set of legal guarantees or uphold moral standards to all. This is the universality of human rights sharable across cultures that unite the votaries of all kinds of rights. While the idea of human rights can be traced back to all foundational faiths and in the philosophical treatise of writers like Locke, Rousseau and Kant, among others, the modern idea took shape through the aegis of the United Nations, when the General Assembly adopted the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. Over time, these normative commitments such as human dignity, fairness, equality, and non-discrimination have been absorbed in national laws and international instruments.

However, rights are not only about universality. The claims of diversity rights in multicultural societies and the demands of women's groups and marginal communities for immunities cannot be ignored any longer. The increasing complexity of religious identities and the growing violence related to identity claims pose unprecedented challenges to human rights. The ethical basis of rights remains fraught and contested and the earlier consensus on universal moral standards seems to be under threat. This Refresher Course will, therefore, devote sufficient attention to the moral, philosophical, and conceptual issues of human rights in order to pave the way for a more granular reading of the operational and policy aspects of such rights.

A further element of complication has been introduced by globalization and information technology that have made rights vulnerable to changes that are little understood and poorly coordinated. The dual faces of science and technology as facilitators and inhibitors of rights, therefore, require sustained scrutiny. Be it bio-ethics or passive euthanasia, the claims of science need ethical buffers as never before. From genetic engineering that impacts agriculture in various ways to cloning that contains serious practical and ethical considerations, the advancements in the frontiers of science and technology have greatly extended the canvas of human rights. This also dovetails well with challenges of economic development across the world, with less developed countries finding it difficult to realize constitutional guarantees of developmental rights to their people. In other words, human rights are international and national, universal yet respectful of diversity, economic and cultural, and must be realized by ordinary human beings in specific contexts. This paves the way to discuss a variety of human rights challenges at global, regional and national contexts. Rights, finally, are matters of legality, politics and sociology. A refresher course on human rights, therefore, demands a comprehensive approach that would do justice to the manifold complexities, levels, and institutional setting of rights.