

## **Reflections on The First Week of Humanities**

Coming from a civil engineering background, transitioning into humanities has been quite challenging. The concepts and approaches differ greatly from engineering. However, **Shanmu Priya mam's** teaching in IDH has made the subject engaging and accessible for me.

The first week of class has opened my eyes to the world of humanities. Unlike engineering, which focuses on tangible structures and calculations, humanities explore human behaviour, experiences, and perspectives. This field encourages critical thinking—analysing complex information to understand relationships and patterns and forming thoughtful opinions.

One of our initial topics was annotation. I learned that annotation involves adding notes, comments, or explanations to texts, images, or other materials. This process provides additional context and insight, essential for a deeper understanding of the material.

**Bashir sir** also introduced us to GitHub, a platform familiar to me as a version control system (VCS) from engineering projects. In humanities, GitHub serves as a collaborative space for researchers to share ideas and manage projects, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the field.

Another concept introduced was the hypothesis. In engineering, a hypothesis is typically tested scientifically. In humanities, it involves proposing explanations for human behaviour or societal phenomena, which may or may not be tested.

We also learned about IIT (ISM)'s heritage building, known as the red building or main building. As someone from a civil engineering background, I've always viewed buildings through a technical lens—focusing on structure, materials, and functionality. Humanities, however, taught me to see this red building as a symbol of the institution's legacy and continuity of tradition within a modern educational context. This perspective was new to me.

Our discussions also covered humanities' significance in different languages and cultural contexts. For instance, in Hindi, humanities is described as "मानव जीवन के विभिन्न पहलुओं का विश्लेषण और मूल्यांकन करनेवाला अध्ययन," meaning the study of various aspects of human life, including literature, history, and philosophy. This multilingual approach helps bridge the gap between my technical background and the broader humanistic perspective.

A significant part of our discussions was on critical thinking, which involves analysing information free from bias or assumptions. In engineering, I'm accustomed to precise calculations and definitive answers, but critical thinking in humanities requires a more nuanced and reflective evaluation of evidence.

We also touched upon critical analysis, which involves systematically identifying themes and concepts within statements or arguments. Although this was a new way of thinking for me, it's becoming clearer as I apply it to our readings and discussions.

The critical method was another topic we explored. It emphasizes transparent and objective approaches to research and analysis, which, while different from engineering methods, is valuable for its focus on avoiding bias.

Finally, learning about the history of humanities, from ancient civilizations to modern times, has given me a new perspective. Humanities offers a broader view of human society compared to the rigid structures of engineering.

In short, while humanities initially felt like an uphill battle, **the way mam teaches has made it more approachable for me, especially in IDH.** The first week has provided a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of human life and thought, and I'm starting to see how these insights can enhance my engineering background. Although I'm enjoying learning all the subjects in humanities, as they are becoming increasingly interesting to me each day. Like **RM by Sagnay Tamang sir, SHSS by Sathya Narayan sir, CI by Rahul sir,**

**-Ravi Ranjan Kumar**  
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