

## **B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies**

<b>Course Title</b>	:	Asian Voices in English
<b>Course Code</b>	:	ENG264
<b>Recommended Study Year</b>	:	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year
<b>No. of Credits/Term</b>	:	3
<b>Mode of Tuition</b>	:	Lecture and Tutorial
<b>Class Contact Hours</b>	:	2 hours Lecture/week 1 hour Tutorial/week
<b>Category in Major Programme</b>	:	Required Course
<b>Prerequisite(s)</b>	:	N/A
<b>Co-requisite(s)</b>	:	N/A
<b>Exclusion(s)</b>	:	N/A
<b>Exemption Requirement(s)</b>	:	N/A

### **Brief Course Description**

This course is designed to present a number of printed fiction or non-fiction texts and films written in English by Asian writers and to encourage cross-media and cross-cultural analysis of the two genres. The aim is to provide a stimulating and innovative approach to the voices of Asians and Asia expressed through the English language. The course exposes students to selected novels and films, but does not deal specifically with filmic or fictional adaptation.

### **Aims**

The course aims to acquaint students with representative contemporary fiction and non-fiction texts in printed and film form written by Asian writers in English. The general intention of the course is to inculcate empathy in students towards the aims and purposes of the text producers, whether individual, in the case of printed fiction and non-fiction, or collaborative, in the case of film texts. It also encourages them to consider aspects of various Asian diaspora experiences and issues surrounding multi-culturalism, as well as problems of colonialism, post-colonialism, gender etc.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The course learning outcomes are based on the expectation that participating students will:

1. Become aware of and sensitive to the different characteristics of fiction and film as distinct genres with narrative features, and explore how they may represent issues of contemporary interest in the Asian world and beyond;
2. Show clear understanding of the roles of fiction and film in accessing social and cultural issues associated with being Asian in a new, global world order;

3. Display sensitivity to the socio-cultural themes and concerns of individual texts or films and to relate these to other texts or films;
4. Demonstrate skills of analysis required to make meaningful comparisons between film and fiction;
5. Demonstrate the skills of writing critically about texts and films.

### **Indicative Content**

1. Theories of fiction and film and their inter-relationship as narrative
2. Asian voices in fiction: an historical overview
3. Asia in film and Asian film: an historical overview
4. Presentation of *M. Butterfly* (for example) and assigning tasks to students
5. Presentation of *The Wedding Banquet* (for example) and assigning tasks
6. Themes and issues that link or differentiate book and film (student presentations)
7. Presentation of *Freedom From Fear* (for example) and assigning tasks
8. Presentation of *Monsoon Wedding* (for example) and assigning tasks
9. Themes and issues that link or differentiate book and film (student presentations)

### **Teaching Method**

An introductory lecture(s) will provide a framework in which specific analyses of novels or films will be set in the tutorials. During the initial two weeks of the course, students will be assigned the reading and screening of the chosen texts and films. Students will be assigned particular tasks in preparation for the tutorials. Students will be required to 'lead' the tutorials and to explore and present their views to the group, based on the tasks that have been assigned; these tasks will require analysis of both book and film in a comparative way. Class time will not be used to screen films in their entirety, though it is expected that samples of relevance will be excerpted for discussion and commentary.

### **Measurement of Learning Outcomes**

Students' progress towards the learning outcomes outlined above will be measured by continuous assessment on the students' engagement with the lectures, tutorial discussions, readings, presentations and written assignments. Students' knowledge of the selected texts will be assessed by a final examination at the end of term.

### **Assessment**

Continuous Assessment: 60% (2 written papers and 1 oral presentation)

Final Examination: 40%

## Required Readings (Sample)

The course instructor will select 3 films and 3 printed texts for intensive study; other texts and films may be assigned for additional (non-examined) reference. There follows a sample list, from which texts have been and will be selected:

Non-Fiction: Arundhati Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*  
Hanif Kureishi, *My Beautiful Laundrette and Other Writings*  
Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom From Fear*

Fiction/ Poetry: R.K. Narayan, *The Painter of Signs*  
Drama Salman Rushdie, *East, West*  
David Henry Hwang, *M Butterfly*  
Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*  
Xu Xi, *History's Fiction; Overleaf Hong Kong*  
Agnes Lam, *Water Wood Pure Splendour*  
Vikram Seth, *Beastly Tales*  
Ha Jin, *In the Pond*  
Anita Desai, *Fasting, feasting*

Films: *Monsoon Wedding* (Mira Nair)  
*The Wedding Banquet* (Li Ang)  
*East is East* (Ayub Khan-Din; Damien O'Donnell)  
*Bend it Like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha)  
*To Liv(e)* (Evans Chan)  
*Heat and Dust* (Ruth Praver Jhabvala; Ismael Merchant)  
*Lagaan* (Ashutosh Gowariker)  
*The Joy Luck Club* (Amy Tan/ Wayne Wang)

## Supplementary Readings

- Berry, C., Ed., *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. London: British Film Institute/Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Bordwell, D., *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London: Routledge, 1985.
- Browne, N., et al., Eds., *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Chatman, S.B., *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, N.T.: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Cheshire, E., *Ang Lee*. Pocket Essentials. Harpenden, Herts, 2001.
- Selden, R. Widdowson, P. Brooker, P., *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Herts: Simon & Schuster, 1997.
- Lee, Josephine, *Performing Asian America: Race and ethnicity on the contemporary stage*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.
- Lu, Hsiao-peng., Ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

- Morgan, J., *The Film Researcher's Handbook*, London: Routledge, 1996.
- Semsel, G. S., et al., Eds., *Chinese Film Theory: A Guide to the New Era*, New York: Praeger, 1990.
- Sturges, P. J.M., *Narrativity: theory and practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Wayne, V. & Moore, C., Eds., *Translation/Transformation: Gender and Culture in Film and Literature*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii, East-West Center, 1993.
- Widmer, E. & Wang, D. W., Eds., *From May Fourth to June Fourth: Fiction & Film in 20<sup>th</sup> century China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Dissanayake, W., Ed., *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.