

Course Title	: Introduction to Literature I
Course Code	: ENG2106
Recommended Study Year	: 1st Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per week 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Required Course
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

This is the first part of the year-long introduction to literature and serves a dual purpose as a methodological and historical introduction to the study of literature. On the one hand, students will be introduced to fundamental questions about literature—what counts as literature and why? What is unique about reading and evaluating literary texts? What is the relationship between literature and society? In order to explore such questions, students will be introduced to the basics of literary and genre theory and to a variety of interpretative techniques. On the other hand, we will explore representative examples from a variety of periods and genres in order to gain fuller understanding of the main developments in Western literary history prior to the 19th century. The information and skills provided in this course are essential to upper-level studies in English literature.

Aims

The course aims to achieve the following:

1. to develop an awareness of literature as a unique and vital form of human communication;
2. to develop the basic skills of reading and understanding a variety of literary genres
3. to enhance competence in speaking and writing about literature
4. Develop a command of basic critical terminology
5. Identify the major stages in the development of literature until the end of the 18th century

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should:

1. be able to comprehend the assigned texts;
2. be able to use relevant theoretical concepts that can facilitate a structured understanding of literary texts
3. be able to analyze the formal features of various literary genres
4. Distinguish between works belonging to different phases of literary history
5. Produce cogent and well-supported arguments about literary texts

Indicative Contents

This course will introduce students to the concept of literature, its various genres, stages of development, and the accompanying critical terminology. Topics to be covered will include: the notion of fictionality; the significance of literary form; the genres of fiction, drama, and poetry; the idea of tragedy; the notion of the epic; basic characteristics of medieval and renaissance literature; the rise of the novel.

Texts to be covered may include:

1. Examples of epic poetry (excerpts)
2. Excerpts from Aristotle's *Poetics*
3. Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*
4. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*
5. Shakespeare, *King Lear* or *Hamlet*
6. Poetry of John Donne
7. Defoe, *Moll Flanders*

Teaching Method

The course meets for 3 hours per week and consists of a mixture of lectures and tutorials. In the lectures, the instructor will present the features of prose fiction and tools of analysis with reference to specific texts. As many, if not all, of the students have had little previous exposure to the literature of the English-speaking world, the lecture mode will offer an efficient way of providing the required layer of cultural and historical knowledge. The tutorials will encourage an exploration of what has been presented in the lectures and provide the opportunity to practice and rehearse the skills of analysis. There will be a gradual shift in the course from teacher-led instruction to student-centered activities that encourage student independence and self-confidence in discussing and writing about prose fiction.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

The progress of learning will be measured through class discussions, short essays, and a final examination.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Method			
	Participation	Response Paper	Short Paper	Final Exam
Can comprehend the assigned texts	x	x	x	x
Can use relevant theoretical concepts	x	x	x	x
Can analyze the formal features of various genres	x	x	x	x
Can distinguish between works belonging to different phases of literary history	x		x	x
Can produce cogent and well-supported arguments about literary texts		x	x	x

Assessment

Participation – 20%

Students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussions.

Response Paper – 20%

Concepts and their applications – write a response paper in which you will analyze excerpts from texts by relying on relevant theoretical terms.

Short Paper – 25%

Write a brief essay, comparing two different works in terms of theme (content) or style (form).

Final Examination – 35%

1. Answer short questions related to the critical terms discussed in the course (15%)
2. Read an unseen shorter text or an extract of a long piece of literature and make an extensive critical response (20%)

Required Readings

Selections from epic poetry and Aristotle's *Poetics*; tragedies by Sophocles and William Shakespeare; prose texts Daniel Defoe; tales by Chaucer; poetry by John Donne.

All required readings will be made available.

Recommended Readings

- Bradford, Richard. 1996. *Introducing Literary Studies*. London: Harvester.
- Daiches, David. 1981. *Critical Approaches to Literature*. London: Longman.
- Eagleton, Terry. 2007. *How to Read a Poem*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Ferster, Judith. 2005. *Arguing through Literature: a thematic anthology and guide*. Boston: McFraw-Hill Higher Education.
- James, Brown & Yarbrough, Scott D. 2005. *A Practical Introduction to Literary Study*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Longman.
- Kennedy, X. J. & Gioia, Dana. 2005. *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry & Drama*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Klarer, Mario. 1999. *Introduction to Literary Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Lentricchia, Frank, & McLaughlin, Thomas. 1994. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marsh, Nicholas. 1995. *How to Begin Studying English Literature*. London: Macmillan.
- Ousby, Ian. 1991. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Pope, Rob. 1998. *The English Studies Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Richards, I. A. 1964. *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement*. London: Routledge.
- Roche, Mark. 2004. *Why Literature Matters in the 21st Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Schilb, John & Clifford John. 2000. *Making Literature Matter: an anthology for readers and writers*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Simpson, Paul. 1997. *Language through Literature: an introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Trilling, Lionel. 1967. *The Experience of Literature*. New York: Doubleday.
- Wolosky, Shira. 2001. *The Art of Poetry – How to Read A Poem*. Oxford University Press.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations and Course Work. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- (5) Students must adhere to the University’s guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents “Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University” and “Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments” can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificialintelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>.