

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Critical Literacies
Course Code	: ENG3206
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th 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	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Language Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

This course examines literacies with a critical lens in the context of 21st century education mediated by new technologies in the globalized world. Going beyond simply training students to read, write and make meanings from texts, the course aims to facilitate students' development of critical literacies and a cultural toolkit to understand the different concepts *of* and *about* texts produced by the different discourses and cultural practices through service-learning. The course also aims to foster students' critical perspective to question the textual realities produced by some literacy practices in everyday texts such as mass media involving the workings of power at personal, institutional, and societal levels. Another aim of the course is to raise students' awareness of the importance of critical reflection upon textual inclusion and exclusion, and how texts influence and position us as members of society, which in turn affect who have access to opportunities and resources for a better life. In so doing, the course will draw upon some important concepts in language, linguistics and literacies, to examine the consumption and production of a variety of texts. The course engages students actively in critical literacy practices in the development of their critical literacy stance and identities as a life perspective in their reading, seeing and acting in the world for the purpose of making a difference to the local community and contributing to a more just society through service-learning.

Aims

The course aims to enable students to:

1. Analyse and challenge texts critically through utilizing critical literacy concepts and analytical skills;
2. Reflect critically in response to a variety of texts in the engagement with critical literacy practices;
3. Utilize conventions of academic writing such as quotation, citation, referencing and paraphrase to position themselves in relation to the different voices within and between texts;
4. Develop their own stance as informed and critically literate citizens in the 21st century through service-learning.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate a variety of texts using the critical literacy skills;
2. Critically identify and analyse the linguistic devices and discursive strategies used to integrate and disguise ideologies and social realities in discourse (e.g., word choice, grammar, subject-positioning, the use of visuals, etc.);
3. Creatively adapt and redesign texts for socially positive purposes to reveal the hidden ideology and power relations that frame inequality and injustice in areas such as gender, race, ethnicity, the environment, and so forth through service-learning to enhance knowledge transfer;
4. Effectively apply the academic conventions for using others' texts and voices, and for distinguishing these texts and voices from their own; and
5. Critically reflect upon and evaluate their own stance as informed and critically literate citizens of global society in the 21st century through service-learning.

Indicative Contents

- Introduction to critical literacies
- Language and position: Texts are partial (re)-presentations of the world
- Language of identities and diversity
- Language and language varieties
- Word choice, grammar and critical literacies
- Critical visual literacy
- Time, space and bodies
- Critical literacies in everyday texts and various settings
- Digital manipulation and digital identities
- Critical literacies and beyond

Teaching Method

Besides lectures, tutorials and discussion-leading activities, various other approaches such as service-learning, case studies, multimodal reflections, observations and role simulations are used to enable students to have a better understanding of the subject and engage actively in critical reflections, both individually and collaboratively, across formal and non-formal settings, in and out of the classroom, as enhanced by the use of multimedia technologies and online social networks.

Students are required to create and participate actively in service-learning to enhance a productive balance between academic learning goals and community service outcomes as critically literate and responsible global citizens.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

This course consists of 39 hours of university-based interactive seminars as well as study, preparation and assessment time. The learning outcomes will be measured based on the following:

1. Build knowledge and understanding of topics of interest through in-depth examination, critical reflections and collaborative dialogues in a group setting in class, and via online social network (outcomes 1-5);
2. Draw on existing concepts and research on the selected topic, supported by the student's critical reflections on relevant analysis, experiences and observations (outcomes 1-5);
3. A redesign project to transform (print and non-print) texts that the students will encounter in service-learning with an academic analysis of the linguistic and other means used for expressing or disguising dominant ideological underpinnings into more socially just texts to be presented through e-portfolio. The students will share project findings with the stakeholders of the community to enhance knowledge transfer and get feedback from the group for revision of their e-portfolios before submission at the end of the term (outcomes 1-5);
4. The written exam will take place in a computer lab and will cover various topics taught in class (outcomes 1-5).

Assessment

(All items are related to service-learning)

- Attendance and participation (face-to-face and online) (10%).
- Discussion-leading and multimodal reflections (20%).
- A group project presented through written e-portfolio (20%, approximately 1,300-1,500 words for each group) with oral presentation assessed individually (20%, 5 min for each presenter; 40% in total).
- Written examination (30%).

Required Readings

Janks, H., Dixon, K., Ferreira, A., Granville, S., Newfield, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Doing critical literacy: Texts and activities for students and teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Supplementary Readings

Alvermann, D. E., Hinchman, K. A. (Eds.). (2012). *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives: Bridging the everyday/academic divide*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bazerman, C. (1994). *The Informed writer: using sources in the disciplines*. Retrieved from <http://writing.colostate.edu/textbooks/informedwriter>.

Comber, B., & Simpson, A. (2001). *Negotiating critical literacies in classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, England: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2006). *Language and globalization*. London, England: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2014). *How to do discourse analysis: A tool kit* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Griffiths, P., Merrison, A. J. M., & Bloomer, A. (2010). *Language in use: A reader*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.

- Hall, S. (2001). Foucault: Power, knowledge and discourse. In W. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. J. Yates (Eds.), *Discourse theory and practice* (pp. 72-81). London, England: Sage.
- Harré, R., Brockheimer, J., & Mühlhäuser, P. (1998). *Greenspeak: A study of environmental discourse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Knobel, M., & Healy, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Critical literacies in the primary classroom*. Newtown, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Knobel, M. (1999). *Every literacies: Students, discourse and social justice*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Mooney, A., Peccei, J. S., LaBelle, S., Henrikson, B., Eppler, E., Irwin, A., Pichler, P., Preece, S., Soden, S. (2010). *Language, society and power: An introduction* (3rd ed.). London, England: Routledge.
- Mooney, A., Peccei, J. S., LaBelle, S., Henrikson, B., Eppler, E., Soden, S., Pichler, P., Irwin A. (2011). *The Language, society and power reader*. London, England: Routledge.
- Simpson, P., & Mayr, A. (2010). *Language and power: A resource book for students*. London, England: Routledge.
- Pandya, J. A., & Avila, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Moving critical literacies forward: A new look at praxis across contexts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rogers, R. (2004). *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rogers, R., Kramer, M. A., & Mosley, M. (2009). *Designing socially just learning communities: Critical literacy education across the lifespan*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Stevens, L. P., & Bean, T. W. (2007). *Critical literacy: Context, research, and practice in the K-12 classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Vasquez, V. M. (2004). *Negotiating critical literacies with young children*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Whorf, B. J. (2012). *Language, thought and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, MA: MIT 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. 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/>.