

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Cross-cultural Studies of Literature
Course Code	: ENG3375
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 Literary Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

Investigating texts from two cultural traditions, this course introduces students to the academic field of cross-cultural research. Readings will be selected from prose narrative, drama, and poetry of the Western and Chinese canons with a view to better understanding literature as a “universal” category of human civilization. The texts selected are organized around either a thematic topic such as romantic love, war and peace, relationship between humans and nature or a generic “constant” such as satire, allegory, and fantasy. We will explore how these texts construct and inspire lived experience in similar as well as different ways.

Aims

This course aims to achieve the following:

1. To introduce students to key texts of the Western and Chinese traditions;
2. To develop an understanding of the genre in which each work was written;
3. To explore the commonalities and differences between genres in different traditions;
4. To enhance the understanding of each text (and the tradition from which it emerges) by contrasting it with a different, yet homologous text;
5. To enhance the students appreciation for the literature in English and in Chinese;
6. To heighten the sensitivity to language by studying the inadequacy of translations (all the texts will be read either in the English original or in English translations of the Chinese original): Chinese originals will be studied whenever possible and appropriate.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should:

1. be able to comprehend the chosen texts from both the Chinese and Western literary traditions;
2. be able to conduct practical criticism over a wide range of literary types and understand the differences between literary genres;
3. able to relate the chosen literary texts to their specific cultural contexts;
4. be able to see similarities as well as differences between Chinese and Western

- literary traditions;
5. be able to write well-argued comparative essays.

Indicative Contents

Drama:

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare;
The Romance of the Western Chamber by Wang Shifu
(topic: love)

Poetry:

a) Nature poems by William Wordsworth
b) Farmstead poems by Wang Wei
(topic: nature and landscape)

Prose Narrative:

a) *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka
b) *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* by Pu Songling
(topic: fantasy)

Other possibilities include the following “clusters”

Drama:

Our Town by Thornton Wilder
Teahouse by Lao She
(topic: local color)

Poetry:

a) Shakespeare’s sonnets
b) Lyrics of Li Qingzhao
(topic: love poems)

Prose Narrative:

Dream of the Red Chamber by Cao Xueqing
Pilgrim’s Progress by John Bunyan
(topic: Allegory)

Teaching Method

This course consists of three interactive components: lectures, student presentations, and group discussions. During the lectures, the instructor will provide an overview of each pair of texts to be explored, not only outlining the major features of the texts, but also alerting students to the opportunities of discovery afforded by the comparison. Students will be required to research the background of each text in order to acquire a historical as well as a cross-cultural perspective to be demonstrated in their presentations. Students will also be asked to analyze each text in their tutorial groups.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

The progress and achievements in learning will be measured through class discussions, presentations, essays and a test at the end of the term.

No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcome
1.	Task 1	1-4
2.	Task 2	1-4
3.	Task 3	1-4
4.	Task 4	1-4

Assessment

Continuous Assessment: 100%

Assessment Task #1:

Write a brief essay to identify similarities, differences and connections in terms of narrative mode between the selected texts covered in Unit One (30 points).

Assessment Task #2:

Write a brief essay to compare and contrast the cultural and historical factors pertaining to the texts covered in Unit Two (30 points).

Assessment Task #3:

Give a group presentation on assigned texts (10 points). The final marks for this category will take into consideration students' attendance record for the whole semester, their contribution to the classroom discussions, and the team spirit they display in group activities.

Assessment Task #4:

1. Read a Chinese poem alongside a Western poem on the same subject matter and comment on their similarities and differences. (15 points)
2. Read the given excerpts and comment on their thematic or stylistic significance to the respective plays from which they are taken. (15 points)

Alignment of Intended Learning Outcomes and Assessment Tasks (ENG375)

Intended Learning Outcomes	Assessment Tasks
ILO1 (be able to comprehend the chosen texts from both the Chinese and Western literary traditions)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4
ILO2 (be able to conduct practical criticism over a wide range of literary types and understand the differences between literary genres)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4
ILO3 (able to relate the chosen literary texts to their specific cultural contexts)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4
ILO4 (be able to see similarities as well as differences between Chinese and Western literary traditions)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4
ILO5 (be able to write well-argued comparative essays)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4

Required Readings

- Kafka, Franz. (Stanley Corngold Trans.) 1972. *The Metamorphosis*. New York: Bantam.
- Pu, Songling. (Lu Yunzhong et al Trans.) 1988. *Strange Tales of Liao-zhai*. Hong Kong: The Commercial Press (H.K.) Ltd.
- Shakespeare, William. 1994. *Romeo and Juliet*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Wang, Shifu. (T. C. Lai et al Adap.) 1973. *The Romance of the Western Chamber*. Hong Kong: Heinemann Educational.
- Wang, Wei. (Tony Barnstone et al Trans.) 1991. *Laughing Lost in the Mountains: Poems of Wang Wei*. Hanover: University of New England.
- Wordsworth, William. 1999. *The Complete Poetical Works*. London: McMillan; New York: bartleby.com.

Complementary Readings

- Asker, David Barry Desmond. 2001. *Aspects of Metamorphosis: fictional representations of the becoming human*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Cao, Zuoya. 1998. *The Internal and the External: A Comparison of the Artistic Use of Natural Imagery in English Romantic and Chinese Classic Poetry*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Hill, Alan G. 1984. *Letters of William Wordsworth: a new selection*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kow, Mei-Kao. 1998. *Ghosts and foxes in the world of Liao-zhai zhiyi*. London: Minerva Press.
- Warner, Marina. 2004. *Fantastic metamorphoses, other worlds: ways of telling the self*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Yang, Vincent. 1989. *Nature and self: a study of the poetry of Su Dongpo, with comparisons to the poetry of William Wordsworth*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ye, Tan. 1997. *Common dramatic codes in Yüan and Elizabethan theaters: characterization in Western chamber and Romeo and Juliet*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Zhang, Hsiao Yang. 1996. *Shakespeare in China: a comparative study of two traditions and cultures*. Newark: University of Delaware 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 stipulated course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students should 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. For example, presentation of another person's work (including the borrowing of exact phrases, summarized ideas or even footnotes/citations) without proper acknowledgement of the source is not allowed. 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/>.