

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Special Topics in English: Transpacific Literature
Course Code	: ENG3399b
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

This course introduces students to the emergent field of Transpacific literature, with a focus on the contemporary period (post-World War II). We will analyze literary works that criticize American assumptions of global supremacy, while advancing alternative political perspectives and defending marginalized cultures. However, we will also ask whether the political, economic, and cultural rise of East Asia complicates the notion of transpacific literary opposition. Do new transpacific success stories entail new global inequalities, and does the academic establishment of “Transpacific literature,” and of “Asian literatures in English,” rely upon the supposedly discredited concept of “race”?

Aims

This class aims to develop the skills of literary criticism, and to enhance student confidence in speaking and writing about fiction. The class will teach students to analyze literary features such as plot, character, and dialogue, as well as engage with more experimental narratives. The class will also teach students to relate literature to politics and history. The class is structured so that the reading assignments illuminate present-day “flashpoints” of conflict; for example, studying novels like *Dogeaters*, which is set in the Philippines, students will gain insight into contemporary news headlines.

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 prose fiction;
3. be able to identify and describe major generic and structural features of fiction;
4. be able to relate literature to its social and historical contexts;
5. be able to write well-argued critical essays.

Indicative Contents

1. Introduction to the study of Transpacific literature;
2. Presentation of texts chosen from various sources to provide extensive and intensive practice in responding to and analyzing literature;
3. Necessary background to the chosen texts;
4. Presentation of the common critical vocabulary and terms used in the discussion of Transpacific literature;
5. Strategies and techniques for speaking and writing about literature.

Teaching Method

This class will be interactive and student-driven. Although the instructor will provide important information in short lectures, students are expected to keep up with the reading and contribute to class discussions. Singly or in pairs, students will give presentations on the reading assignments.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

The progress and achievement in learning will be gauged through class discussions, presentations, essay writing and a final examination.

No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcome
1.	Participation	1-5
2.	Presentation	1-4
3.	Final Essay	1-5
4.	Final Examination	1-5

Assessment

Participation (15%)

Students are expected to pay attention in class and actively participate in discussions. Marks for this category will also take into account students' willingness to work with their group mates as a team. I may also give quizzes at various points throughout the semester, to make sure that everyone is keeping up with the reading.

Presentation (25%)

The presentation only needs to cover the assigned reading for that class (in other words, not the entire book). It may be given in tandem with a classmate. The presentation should give a brief outline of the reading; an analysis; and at least three discussion questions for the class.

Final Essay (30%)

Write an essay that discusses a work's theme (content) and style (form). In addition to the primary texts, secondary sources related to the writer (autobiography, personal letters, critical essays) should also be taken into consideration. An official prompt will be distributed in the second half of the semester.

Final Examination: 30%

Required/Essential Readings

Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *DICTEE*
Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Blu's Hanging*
Tao Lin, *Taipei*

In addition to the above literary works, we may also watch a small number of films that will add historical and cultural context.

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/>.