**Lingnan University**  
Department of Philosophy – MA in Practical Philosophy Programme

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Course Title</strong></th>
<th>Philosophy and Literature</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Code</strong></td>
<td>PHI508</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Study Year</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Credits/Term</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mode of Tuition</strong></td>
<td>Lecture and Tutorial</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Contact Hours</strong></td>
<td>2 hours lecture per week</td>
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<td>1 hour tutorial per week</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Category in Major Programme</strong></td>
<td>Value Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prerequisite(s)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>Co-requisite(s)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>Exclusion(s)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Exemption Requirement(s)</strong></td>
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**Brief Course Description**

This course will deal with the central questions concerning the nature and function of literature, the way in which it is created, appreciated, and evaluated. Among the topics to be discussed will be the relationships between the literary work and the author, the work and the reader and the work and the world to which it refers. The problems in the philosophy of literature will lead to a discussion of the relationship between philosophy and literature, i.e. the relationship between philosophical themes and literary themes, between moral philosophy (ethics) and literature, between the constraints placed on literary discourse and other types of discourse, among them philosophical discourse. Discussion of these general issues in philosophy and literature will be grounded with reference to specific examples from poetry and short fiction.

**Aims**

The aims of the course are fourfold: to make the students acquainted with the key concepts and the main themes and arguments in literary aesthetics; to make students reflect on the way in which they read and appreciate literature; to give the students some basis for passing considered judgements on a literary work of art; and to make students reflect on the value of literature as a cultural phenomenon.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course is designed to enhance basic intellectual skills as well as to promote an enhanced understanding of a number of philosophical issues raised by, and expressed in literature. Completion of the course should grant students:

**Basic Knowledge of relations between Philosophy and Literature**

This knowledge enables students to:
1. Respond critically to the philosophical dimensions of works of literature
2. Understand the basic issues involved in philosophical reflection on literature
3. Assess claims made about the philosophical, and in particular, ethical importance of literary works

**Ability to engage in further, independent learning and reflection**

This ability enables students to:
1. Find and assess intellectually stimulating works of literature
2. Find and engage with critical discourse on literature and related topics
3. Appreciate arguments on related issues
Better articulate responses to literary works, moving back and forth between attentive readings of the works and the task of expressing critical observations in verbal and written form

**Indicative Content**

1. What is literature?
   a. The tradition of literature
   b. Definitions of literature
   c. The concept of a literary work
   d. The notion of a literary practice
2. Literature and its near relations
   a. Literature and fiction
   b. Narrative and literature
3. The appreciation of literature
   a. The notion of reading a literary work
   b. Understanding, interpretation and appreciation
4. The author and his work
   a. The death of the author
   b. Authorial intention and interpretation
   c. Theories of authorial intention
5. Literature and emotion
   a. Romantic theories of literature
   b. Real emotions and fictional emotions
   c. The paradox of fiction: ‘How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina?’
6. Literature, knowledge and truth
   a. Constraints on literary discourse
   b. The cognitive status of a literary work
7. Literature and morality
   a. Literature and moralism
   b. Literature as a source of moral insight
   c. Literature and moral philosophy
8. Literature, criticism, and philosophy
   a. The ancient quarrel between literature and philosophy
   b. Criticism and philosophy
   c. Philosophy of criticism
9. The relationship between literature and philosophy

**Teaching Method**
The course will be taught partly as lectures, partly as a seminar with an introduction and discussions.

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes**
Student’s successful engagement with the lectures and readings, and corresponding progress towards the learning outcomes outlined above, will be measured by means of examinations comprising both short-answer and more substantive, reflective essay questions.

1. Students will engage in discussion on assigned topic in the tutorials. They are expected to be able to analyse and synthesize various points of view and evaluate them critically.
2. Students’ successful engagement with the films and readings will be measured by means of mid-term test comprising both short-answer and more substantive, reflective questions. Students should be able to show their understanding of issues involved in the subject.
3. Students will write a term paper. They are expected to consolidate the knowledge they have learned in this course. Besides, they should be able to draw on a range of sources appreciate the film and criticizing the philosophical theories.

**Assessment**
50% Continuous Assessment
50% Final Examination

**Required Readings**
A selection of articles on various topics in the philosophy of literature, and selected poems and short fiction.

**Supplementary Readings**


