Courses descriptions for MPhil and PhD candidates

RPG courses

ENGL6001   Research Seminar

This course will take place in the first semester of the candidate's programme. The students and supervisors will draw up a programme of reading aimed to meet particular needs in terms of the acquisition of background knowledge, understanding of different theoretical approaches, etc. Mode of assessment: production of a substantial annotated bibliography.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

ENGL6003   Guided Reading Course

A course of individual study with a syllabus drawn up and agreed by the student and the supervisor. Student and supervisor will meet regularly for discussion of the readings.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

ENGL6053   Special Topics in English Studies

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the topics which are of relevance to their research study but have not been taken previously. Students will be instructed to attend one undergraduate course or a combination of undergraduate courses from the school as prescribed by the supervisor(s) and/or the Chairman of the Departmental Research Postgraduate Committee. Students will also be required to do further guided readings and/or attend extra tutorials. Assessment will be in the form of written assignments at postgraduate level.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

ENGL6070   Introduction to Thesis Writing in English Studies (6 credits)

This course offers students a framework within which they discuss the genre of thesis writing, in particular the various stages of a research thesis, with reference to the thesis format required by the University.

** This course can be taken in lieu of the Graduate School Module 3a: GRSC6120 Introduction to Thesis Writing (Humanities)) **but not** as a School elective course.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6070

ENGL7011   Research Methods

This course offers an introduction to research methods in English literary and language studies. It will be conducted on a one-on-one basis with the student's supervisor. Topics to be followed include: development of theoretical framework, identification of research questions, use of primary and secondary materials, and thesis writing. Each student, with their supervisor's guidance, will first draw up an individual programme of reading appropriate to the student's research project. This reading schedule may focus on acquiring background knowledge or exploring a variety of theoretical approaches to a topic. The student should then produce a substantial essay drawing on the reading done, demonstrating writing skills and the ability to think critically. The course structure should allow for the correction of a draft before the final submission of the term paper.

***This course can be taken in lieu of the Graduate School Module 2a: GRSC6106 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (Humanities), or Module 2b: GRSC6104 Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods (Humanities) **but not** as a School elective course.

Assessment: term paper of 5-6000 words (pass/fail)

ENGL7114   How To Write

How does one write coherent, authoritative academic texts? This course is intended for students in the process of writing their PhD theses, while advanced MPhil students, in their second year, are also welcome. We read drafts of each other's work and engage in constructive criticism, focussing on clarity of writing, structure, and persuasiveness. The course also provides concrete advice on how to determine one's audience, how to overcome writer's block, choose examples, shorten texts, incorporate theory and deal with word limits. Each week, two students will present their work and have it discussed by the group. Small group size means that each student will present several times during the course of the term. Books on how to write academic texts, such as work by Michael Billig and Kirin Narayan, will be read as background literature, but the focus will be on the production and constructive criticism of texts produced by students enrolled in the course.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

Pre-requisites:

(i)   MPhil and PhD students can take this course as an elective from their second year onwards, not before.

(ii)   Students who take this course will need to have passed all courses required by the Graduate School (including equivalent ENGL replacement courses "ENGL7011 Research Methods" and "ENGL6070 Introduction to Thesis Writing in English Studies", and other GRSC courses) and 50% of the course offered by the School of English (i.e. "ENGL6001 Research Seminar").

MAES courses

ENGL6056   Cultural Semiotics

This course will examine culture as a complex web of signifying systems and practices. It will look at different concepts of culture and consider their accessibility to semiotic theory and analysis. After an introduction to semiotic terminology, time will be given to the investigation of different spheres of cultural activity, analysing the meanings of images, bodies, objects, spaces, sounds, etc., and the configurations and practices that underpin them. The interdisciplinary nature of cultural semiotics, its relevance to society and its limitations will also be addressed. The course will focus mostly on aspects of contemporary urban culture as it exists in places like Hong Kong, but attention will also be given to cross-cultural comparisons and intercultural relations.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6056

ENGL6073   Introduction to Literature and Cross-cultural Theory

The theme of cross-cultural study is implicit in all of the courses in the MA in the field of English Studies. This foundation course prepares students by introducing them to the historical development of literature by studying different authors and genres within diverse cultural contexts. Traditional, western literature will be read alongside other 'national' and world literatures from post-colonial and global contexts to examine the sense of interconnectedness between various genres, movements and time periods. The primary texts will be supported by the work of critics who have tried to formalize cross-cultural relations through particular historical, ethnographic, literary and linguistic studies of cultural interaction. This might include work by Benedict Anderson, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Mary Louise Pratt, Edward Said, and others.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6073

ENGL6075   The Politics of English

This course examines the contemporary politics of English, looking at debates over local and regional cultural identities, English as the language of modernity and social mobility, English as a "killer language" within linguistic imperialism, cross-cultural discourse and globalization. The historical roots of the rise of English will be traced, and its current world-wide profile analyzed, with special reference to the sharply divergent attitudes found in socio-political debate. Special reference will be made to English in Hong Kong.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6075

ENGL6079   World Modernisms

'Modernism', as a movement in literature and the other arts, is traditionally studied in national or regional contexts, predominantly from a Eurocontric perspective. This course will pursue the idea of a "world modernism", by looking at selected works of fiction and visual culture from around the world, between (roughly) 1900 and 1950, written in English or translated into English. How differently do these works respond to modernity, and how do they relate to each other -- by influence, and shared or contrasted preoccupations or procedures -- in the network of "world modernisms"?

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6079

ENGL6080   Travel Writing and Culture

Cross-cultural or intercultural issues are necessarily central to most travel writing. This course explores such issues in a wide range of travel narratives by writers from the medieval period to the present day. The approach is more thematic than historical and themes covered will include travel and imperialism, East-West meetings, mapping self and nation, mobilization of knowledge, postcolonial journeys and travels in globality.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6080A

ENGL6081   Global Fictions

Since its inception, the novel has maintained a close relationship with nation. A cohesive time-space can be identified where the narrator's point of view and that of an implied reader coincide with the interests of an identifiable country or region. But after cross-cultural journeys and globalization, how strong is the idea of the nation in the public imagination? To what extent is the idea of national belonging weakened, and what kind of transnational affinities are being engendered? Where are the power lines of this transnationalism? Should we be worried about losing the protection of the nation state? What new possibilities arise for cultural production?

This course explores some of these questions through fictions that emphasise the transnational, moving beyond socio-geographical boundaries of nation. While we will consider how postcolonial, postmodern and world literatures might give rise to global fictions, we will also see if there is evidence of a newly emerging cultural form.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL6081

ENGL6083   Post-Colonial Representations

This course will examine a fundamental issue in post-colonial studies: Representation. This issue will be examined through its various forms, including Gender, Race, Culture, from the perspective of critical, fictional and visual texts.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details:

ENGL7101   Introduction to Language and Communication

This course introduces students to core research areas within the field of language and communication, with a focus on theories, approaches and applications drawn from sociolinguistics. Contemporary issues such as globalisation, language spread, and bi/multilingualism will be discussed. Key themes addressed in the course include: culture, ideology, identity, language policy, varieties of English, World Englishes and global Englishes. To facilitate introduction to these themes, the course will present students with basic knowledge in linguistics and sociolinguistic theory and approaches, as well as empirical examples drawn from the literature. Based on these insights, students will regularly be encouraged to bring along their own examples of linguistic data, to discuss and interpret in class.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details:

ENGL7102   Global Englishes

At the turn of the century, the globalisation of world trade and culture has led to the global spread of English. While the social, political and economic complexities brought about by globalisation have established the contemporary place of English as the world's primary international language, there are some crucial and controversial issues that need critical analysis, particularly as regards the persistent exonormative model of Standard English, non-standard variations in New Englishes or postcolonial Englishes, the emergent variant forms of 'glocal' Englishes in the so-called Expanding Circle, i.e. what is commonly referred to as English as a Lingua Franca (EFL), and 'Translingua Franca English' (TFE) as the fluid social processes that includes all global uses of English. Students in this course will critically examine this polycentric development of English today and the current academic debate on the ideology of Standard English, the discourses of postcolonialism, the relationship between language and power, the attitudes to and the linguistic rights of non-native speakers of English, and the future of English.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details:

ENGL7103   New Media and Discourse

This course offers a contemporary approach to key concepts in mediated communication within the field of language and new media, with a focus on media as language use. With a strong emphasis on the anthropological and social dimensions of mass communication, the course encourages students to consider the ways in which media discourse is different from everyday face-to-face interactions and critically reflect upon the ways in which media technologies extend human language capabilities. Key themes addressed in the course include: the discursive practices and performances that are taking place within the new media environments, the uneven distribution of technology across the globe, ideologies and semiotic resources deployed in (re)producing certain discourses by different social groups, the exploration of the ways in

which new media are localised into everyday practices and performances of social actors in their diverse geographical localities. To facilitate introduction to these themes, the course will present students with a series of theories and approaches drawn from language and media studies. So as to also develop their analytical skills, students will be encouraged to carry out their own investigations, i.e. to complete a personal media and communications audit, then to reflect on what new media mean for them and for accomplishing artful/playful discursive practices and performances.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7103

ENGL7104　　Global Shakespeare

The course seeks to introduce students to Shakespeare's plays and their many afterlives across the globe. It examines how and why Shakespeare has become a global phenomenon, performed and studied from Asia to Africa, the Pacific to the Balkans. What is it about the plays that inspires such global interest? What aspects of Shakespeare have been emphasised in different times and contexts? And how have the language and emotions of early modern England been translated into distant cultures?

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7104

ENGL7105　　Intercultural Communication

The forces of globalization have impacted the social, cultural, political and linguistic aspects of communities around the world. Their effects can be seen in the complexity of communications taking place between speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This course presents an overview of relevant concepts, theories and approaches to intercultural communication. We will survey the interdisciplinary sources of inquiry into culture and cultural difference, compare models and approaches to the study of intercultural encounters, and analyze specific examples of intercultural communication using research from diverse, multilingual contexts. The course draws on concepts from a range of disciplines, including communications, sociolinguistics, anthropology, social psychology and organizational communication.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7105

ENGL7106　　The Global History of English

The English language began as a set of obscure dialects on an island at the edge of the world. Today, it is spoken by almost two billion people, and functions as the lingua franca of a vast global network. But the history of English before the twentieth century is also a global story: one involving international politics, power, religion, technology, commerce, music and literature, the oppressor and the oppressed. This course examines the history of the English from its Proto-Indo-European roots to the nineteenth century as a language shaped and changed by global forces. The course begins at the end, with early nineteenth-century English, and traces

the language back through the centuries, and through a range of textual forms and formats. It has a particular focus on the external forces of politics, religion, war and language interaction that influenced English, and on the role played by the imported technologies of writing and printing. How has English changed over the centuries—and what international influences have governed this change?

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7106

ENGL7107   Race in America: The Novels of William Faulkner and Toni Morrison

In this course, we will examine the works of two Nobel Prize-winning American authors and examine their explorations of American identity, American culture, in particular racial conflict in America. Reading several novels by William Faulkner and Toni Morrison, we will attempt to construct a conversation between the works of these very different authors, who nonetheless share many of the same concerns and narrative strategies. Active class participation, close readings of the primary texts and various critical readings, an oral presentation, and a final research essay will be required.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7107

ENGL7108   Imagining Asia

This course will explore the way several different British and American writers have imagined Asia in their literary texts. We will examine both the similarities and the differences in the way Asia and Asians are represented in texts that span the twentieth century, span the continent, and challenge one another in their various perspectives. In addition, we will read several post-colonial theorists as a tool for understanding with more nuance and depth the contested notions of what constitutes the East and the West and the dynamic relationships between them that are presented in these texts.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7108

ENGL7109   Language Variation across Society and Speakers

This course will explore how language use varies within and between societies and speakers. We will examine the effect of social factors, such as social class, age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity, on individual speakers, and on how these speakers cohere into a variety of speech communities, social networks and communities of practice. Our investigation will embrace both the micro-interactional dynamics of speech, including an account of how individuals themselves speak differently according to addressee, setting and purpose, as well as macro-social approaches, such as when governments attempt to plan language use for the countries and speakers they govern. While the focus will be on the English language and English-speaking societies, the course will also consider language contact between English and other languages.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7109

ENGL7110   Gender, Discourse and Society

The field of Language, Gender and Sexuality has seen dynamic changes since the publication of Robin Lakoff's seminal work, Language and Woman's Place, in 1975. In this course, we will focus on various discourse-based approaches to the study of language, gender, and sexuality, reviewing both qualitative and quantitative studies in the field. Discussions and course assessments will challenge students to apply concepts to their own experiences within their own sociocultural contexts. We will also consider gender as one of many social categories that interact with other categories such as age, race, class, ethnicity, profession, sexuality, and others.

In addition, we will explore how language and the way we talk about social categories shape the values we share as a society. What roles do language and discourse play in the empowerment or marginalization of certain groups in society? Our focus on how gender and sexuality both shape and reflect the ideologies of a society will encourage students to question the role of language in creating gender and sexual identities. We also examine the role of discourse in constructing gender and sexuality as relevant social categories and how we can move away from essentialist views of these categories. Readings from a wide range of research contexts and student reflections on their own societies will serve as integral aspects of the course.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7110

ENGL7111   Worlds of Discourse: Metaphor, Metonymy, and Interpretation

The course takes as its point of departure two analytical terms which are important both for literary studies and linguistics: metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor is defined by Lakoff and Johnson as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another", as when we use animal characteristics to characterise human beings ("pig-headed", "lion-hearted"). By contrast, metonymy is a relationship of substitution or association, where for example "the White House" is used to stand for the US presidency. In the first half of the course some fundamental analytical concepts are explained, in particular the distinction between literal and figurative meaning, and accounts of metaphor and metonymy from linguistics, literary theory, and philosophy are introduced. The second half of the course looks at specific domains in which important social, cultural (including cross-cultural), or political issues arise, and where interpretative controversies involve the rhetorical deployment of metaphor and metonymy. These domains may include: literary texts; religious language; ecology, including "Gaia theory"; cyberspace; politics; law; illness, disease and the body. Texts are drawn from global English-language literature, international media, popular culture (e.g. music lyrics), and social media.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7111

ENGL7112   Global Medieval Literatures

The focus of this course on global medieval literatures is how emotion (particularly love) is culturally constructed. We will focus on the literatures of medieval Japan, Persia and Europe. As we read the texts of the course, we will examine courtly love, erotic love and/as religious experience, the role of women as writers, the function of emotions (especially as a marker of nobility), ideals of masculinity, and the cultural construction of desire, including same-sex desire.

Japanese texts will include a range of women's writings: poems of waka poet Ono no Komachi (c.825-900) and Izumi Shikibu (b.c.976), the abridged version of Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* (early 1000s), and extracts from Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book* (c.990-1010). Persian texts will include extracts from the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam (1048–1131), Nizami Ganjavi's *Leyli o Majnun* (1141-1209) and poems by Rumi (1207-1273) and Hafez (1315-1390). European texts will include the *Lai de Lanval* of Marie de France (fl. c. 1160-1215), selections from Arthurian literature, and an extract from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (fl. c. 1380-1400). All readings will be in modern English translation.

As we read these literary works, we will contextualise them historically by reading short extracts from additional primary sources (such as love manuals and conduct books), and consider their critical reception by reading selections from secondary sources.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7112

ENGL7113   The Cosmopolitan Stage in the Eighteenth Century

This course will take students to the professional London theatres of the 18th century. The Eighteenth Century London theatres were dynamic and volatile spaces, especially interested in foreign locales, from the Inca Empire in Peru, to a Muslim-occupied Jerusalem, to Beijing under Manchurian rule. We will examine how popular drama from one of the largest cities in Europe recreated a global world for English consumption. We will focus our attention on the themes of Cosmopolitanism and Enlightenment, and look at how popular theatre in London circulated and interrogated arguments for cultural toleration, diversity, and universalism. Through close, dramaturgical readings of popular dramatic texts that feature cross cultural contact, we will study the ways in which popular entertainment used the exotic and the foreign to encourage its audiences to think differently and experimentally about issues to do with sexuality, religion, and politics. Deploying a History of Emotions approach to our analysis of the 18th century theatre, this course will encourage students to think about how theatre attempts to solicit and manipulate collective emotions, and the role these emotions play in public life.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7113

ENGL7115   Analysing Speech

This course investigates a range of theoretical and practical issues in phonetics, covering both the articulatory and acoustic aspects of segments (vowels and consonants) and prosody (stress, tone, voice quality, etc). Students will learn how to transcribe speech using the International Phonetic Alphabet, and analyse the physics of sound using a free computer program Praat.

Along the way, we will explore how knowledge of phonetics can be applied to various areas of inquiry such as speech perception, accent variation and bias, sociophonetics, and second language speech learning across a variety of contexts and cultures. Whilst this course will use Standard Southern British English (also called BBC English/Modern Received Pronunciation) as a reference point, other English varieties/languages will also be discussed whenever appropriate to offer students global and cross-cultural perspectives on the subject.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7115

ENGL7116   Planetary Futures and Imaginaries

This course introduces the planetary as a relatively new paradigm in literary and cultural studies. Emerging from, and in critical dialogue with, world literature, postcolonialism and globalization, the planetary invites scholars and students of literary studies to actively and responsibly reconfigure our understanding of, relationship with, influence onto the environment, nature, and the Earth, and to more aptly address and respond to such prevalent and urgent issues on the planetary scale such as climate change, global warming, pollution, energy crisis, biodiversity loss, the Anthropocene, the threat of nuclear power and weapons, environmental and humanitarian disaster, pandemic and world health, food waste and global hunger, massive displacements and refugee movements etc.

In this course, we will study a wide range of literary works, together with a few graphic novels and/or cinematic examples, that touch upon and call for attention and reflection on urgent matters of the planetary. A selection of texts will be future-oriented and/or address the Anthropocene, such as dystopian fiction, petrofiction (oil fiction) and cli-fi, (climate fiction) that imagine different versions of planetary crises and apocalypses. It will allow us to develop meaningful enquiries and discussions upon the speculative "what-if" and address issues such as exploitation and overconsumption, our collective inadequacies and unpreparedness, and what Garrett Hardin calls "the tragedy of the commons" (1968). Alongside these primary texts, students will encounter a range of critical and secondary materials that prepare us with vocabulary, theories and methods to discuss and approach urgent issues and ongoing debates regarding the planetary.

We will read the works of leading scholars from various disciplines in the humanities such as Amitav Ghosh, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ian Baucom, Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway and Kathryn Yusoff among others. We will explore questions such as follows: what entails the planetary as a new paradigm in literary and cultural studies? In what ways can literature and literary studies provide new insights and imaginations in the wake of climate change, energy crisis, and planetary challenges? Is the novel genre an impediment to our imaginations of planetary futures? How does the planetary respond to postcolonialism and globalization theories, and importantly, expose the inadequacies thereof? Is the Anthropocene singular (for Yusoff, it is plural as in the title of her 2016 monograph A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None)? What are the new challenges contemporary artists of storytelling (such as novelists and filmmakers) must confront at the time of climate crisis and the Anthropocene, in which the main actors and agents who bring forth changes and destructions are impersonal, such as nature, the environment and the Earth (Latour raises a similar question in his 2014 article "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene")? From a legal perspective, in dialogue with Christopher D. Stone's question "should trees have standing?" (1996), we explore the question of who should have legal standing in environmental matters.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7116

ENGL7117   Global Perspectives in (Auto)biographies

This course enables students to understand and critique impactful (auto)biographies from diverse cultural contexts, while also collecting, composing and performing biographical narratives from their communities. The global, published (auto)biographies will be examined through close readings and adaptations in other media forms, where relevant. The students' unpublished life writing pieces will be created and presented in a bilingual page-to-stage event at the end of the semester.

In addition to appreciating and writing biographical texts, this course will investigate concepts of memory and storytelling, questions of revelation, suppression and representation of identity. Overall, this course seeks to embed students within the process of contemplating, critiquing, and creating memoirs.

Assessment: 100% coursework (pass/fail)

For course details: https://english.hku.hk/course/ENGL7117