



Photo by Finbarr Fallon, from "[Changi Airport](#)"

HL3041: Global Cities in World-Literature

Dr Ada Cheong
AY 2024-2025, Semester 1
Fridays 1430h-1730h

Globalisation has been the driving force of cultural and economic flows for decades, if not centuries; yet, we now stand at an historical moment where globalisation is undergoing rigorous interrogation all over the world. This module examines cultural products that represent and respond to *global cities* (cities that are particularly open to global flows of culture, labour, and resources) in a time of climate change and global unrest. By examining a diversity of aesthetic forms and genres, from photography to music and fiction, you will explore and critique representations of cities like Singapore, London, Abu Dhabi and New York. Students with an interest in globalisation, world-literature and literary theory more broadly will thrive on this module and gain strong theoretical foundations to take into future studies, while also gaining a renewed appreciation of global cultural and economic dynamics.

Core Texts

Primary texts

Deepak Annikrishnan, *Temporary People*, Penguin Random House India PL, 2017.

Jay Bernard, *Surge*, Random House UK, 2019.

Juan Pablo Villalobos, *Quesadillas*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.

The Big Short, Paramount Pictures, 2015.

Mohsin Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, 2014.

Secondary Texts

WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*, 2015.

Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*, 2013 (2nd ed.).

Selected readings will be made available online.

Course Structure

Please note that the reading list is provisional and subject to change.

**Weeks 5 (Finance) and 8 (Consultations) will be conducted over zoom.*

1. Narratives of Globalisation (16 Aug)

Allan Sekula and Noël Burch, "[The Forgotten Space: Notes for a film](#)", *A Film About The Sea*, p. 17-19.

Raymond Williams, "[Cities and Countries](#)", *The Country and The City*, 1973, p. 288-306.

2. World-systems, World-literature (23 Aug)

Excerpts from Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, 2006.

WReC, "World-Literature in the Context of Combined and Uneven Development", *Combined and Uneven Development*, 2015, p. 1-48.

3. Global Cities (30 Aug)

Saskia Sassen, "Overview" and "Preface to the New Edition", *The Global City*, 2nd ed., 2001, p. xviii-xxii and p. 3-15.

4. Images of the City (6 Sep)

Michele Nastasi, "A Gulf of Images: Photography and the Circulation of Spectacular Architecture", *The New Arab Urban*, 2019, p. 99-129.

Nguan, "[Singapore](#)", 2017.

Geraldine Kang, "[Live-in \(Mattress Provided\)](#)", 2018-2023.

Finbarr Fallon, "[Capitaspring](#)" and "[Thompson East Coast Line \(TEL\)](#)"

5. Labour and migration (13 Sep*)

Selected short stories from Deepak Unnikrishnan's *Temporary People* (2017).
WReC, "The Question of Peripheral Realism", *Combined and Uneven Development*, p. 49-80.

6. Finance (20 Sep)

The Big Short, 2015.

Saskia Sassen, Interviewed by Elitza Stanoeva, "[The Global City: A Structural Hole in the National Territorial Issue](#)", 2012.

7. Race, rage, and resilience (27 Sep)

Selection of poetry by Ben Okri, Jay Bernard, and Roger Robinson, 2017-9.

Artists for Grenfell, "[Bridge over troubled water](#)", 2017.

Christina Sharpe, "The Wake" and "Black Annotation, Black Redaction", *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, p. 1-22 and p. 113-120

Recess Week (4 Oct)

8. Consultations (7-8 Oct*)

Consultations at the start of the week, slot timings TBA

Term paper due on Friday 11 Oct, 2359h

9. Cities and Countries: or, world-ecology (18 Oct)

Jason Moore, "[The End of Cheap Nature](#)", *Structures of the World Political Economy and the Future Global Conflict and Cooperation*, 2014, p. 285-314.

Michael Niblett, "World-Economy, World-Ecology, World Literature", 2012, p. 15-30.

10. Urban ecologies (25 Oct)

Deepak Unnikrishnan, "Chapter Three: Blatella Germaina", *Temporary People*, 2017, p. 119-135.

Linda Collins and Noelle Q. de Jesus, "[By the Canal](#)", 2024.

11. Materiality, magic, and food (1 Nov)

Juan Pablo Villalobos, *Quesadillas: A Novel*, 2013.

12. Water and toxicity (8 Nov)

Mohsin Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, 2014.

13. Conclusion (15 Nov)

Assessments

Final Exam	50%	(Saturday, 23 Nov, 1300-1530h)
Term Paper	35%	(due Friday, 11 Oct, 2359h)
Prep, Participation, and Presentation	15%	

In the **final exam**, you will write two essays, under examination conditions, in response to any two of ten questions relating to themes central to the module. The questions will be general, and will offer you the chance to choose the texts with which to advance an argument. You will be expected to engage with *three or more texts* over the course of the exam. These can be primary texts or more theoretical ones. You will be assessed according to your ability to formulate a clear, organised argument and your adherence to scholarly conventions concerning presentation and grammar. There is no need to be able to produce in-text citations and a bibliography, but references to specific essays or articles must be clear.

For the **term paper**, you will write an original thesis about one or more of the works read in class - and do so by reading relevant passages in the work - and by reflecting on secondary material about the text and its cultural and historical context. You must engage with *three or more relevant secondary sources*. You will be assessed according to your ability to formulate a clear, organised argument, your engagement with critical discussion and/or issues of historical and cultural context, and your adherence to scholarly conventions concerning presentation, citation, and grammar.

Lastly, you will be evaluated on your class **preparation, participation and presentations**. You will be assessed according to your responses to weekly discussion questions before class, as well as the effort and curiosity you bring to class (10%). There will also be small research tasks which your group will need to prepare and present on during the seminar (5%). Your groups will be assessed on the quality of the preliminary research and your ability to share them with other peers during the allocated presentation times and class discussions. Discussion questions and research tasks will be indicated on a weekly handout, made available at the latest on the weekend before.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation: The success of any seminar depends on the active participation of all its members. Barring illness or emergencies, you must attend every seminar. You must arrive on time, having done the required readings and any assigned work, and be ready to participate in the class discussion. Failure to do so will reduce your participation grade significantly. If you need to miss a class you must get in touch with me before that week's meeting.

Late Work and Extensions: if your essay is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for each day that it is overdue (i.e. a paper that would have received a B will receive a B-). No work will be accepted more than seven days late. Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, including documented illness or genuine emergency.

Seeking Help Outside Class: you are encouraged to use any form of legitimate aid to help you write papers and research topics that interest you. Obvious sources of legitimate assistance include office hours, the coaches at the LCC Communication Cube, and the subject librarians at the library.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Don't do it! If I find that you have misrepresented someone else's work as your own you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. If you are unsure of how or when to cite a source, please ask me or refer to the university's academic integrity resources online.

Use of AI: This module does not allow the use of AI. You will be assessed on your ability to think critically about the texts and theories involved; as well as the ways you articulate these ideas. AI is neither required nor allowed.