

Academic Year	2018-19	Semester	2
Course Coordinator	Michelle Chiang		
Course Code	HL3039		
Course Title	Major Author Study: Samuel Beckett		
Pre-requisites	HL1001 Introduction to the Study of Literature		
No of AUs	3		
Contact Hours	39 (weekly seminars of 3 hours); Thursdays 10:30-13:30		

Course Aims

One of the most important twentieth century writers, Samuel Beckett's prose, plays and poems continue to influence writers, readers and audiences all over the world. Although he is well known for the play *Waiting for Godot*, most of his works remain cryptic to the uninitiated. This module is for those who would like to dive deeper into the Beckettian world. In it, you will discover a poetics of failure, an ethics of non-relation, and perhaps most importantly what it could mean to be at the limit of the human.

In this course, we will close read Beckett's selected novels, plays, short prose and poems. We will chronologically trace Beckett's development as a writer. By the end of the course, our focus on issues of form and content, reality and virtuality, as well as humanity and animality, should enable you to think critically about how his works continue to provoke readers and audiences to reconsider assumptions of lived reality.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you (as a student) would be able to:

1. Analyse and write critically about the key concerns in Beckett's works.
2. Discuss the significance of each work in relation to form and content, reality and virtuality, as well as humanity and animality.
3. Interpret the relevance of Beckett's works to the social, political and cultural present.

Course Content

Each week, we will close read one to two texts, and if a recording of a production or adaptation is available, we will view or listen to it in class to give you an idea of how each work was staged or adapted across media. You will also perform scenes from a text in class, and you are free to experiment with different media.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Examination (40%):

The examination will assess your ability to analyse and write critically about the key concerns in Beckett's works.

Essay (40%):

In your essay, you will engage critically with both primary and secondary sources. You will choose a topic and select one work to write on. Your essay must begin with a thesis statement, and all points must be structured coherently with clear topic sentences.

Performance (20%):

Beginning from week 3, at the end of lecture, you or your group will be given approximately ten minutes to act out a scene from the text of the week. A ten minutes presentation will follow this. No prior acting experience is required. You will not be graded on how well you acted. Instead your grade will be based on how well you interpreted the text through your creative staging of the selected scene.

Formative feedback

Written feedback will be given when I return your essays to you. Feedback from me and your peers generated during in-class discussions will also be helpful to check your understanding of Beckett's works.

Learning and Teaching approach

Approach	How does this approach support students in achieving the learning outcomes?
Lecture	The one to one and a half hour mini-lecture will introduce significant events in the author's life and the text(s) of the week. It will provide you with the social, historical and philosophical contexts from which to build your interpretations of each work.
Performance	The staging of one scene from a text will expose you to the experience of adapting and performing a Beckett work, which is almost always physically demanding on the actors and psychologically draining on the audience. Through this, you are expected to gain an appreciation for his work as a reflection of lived experiences, as well as join a community of artists who continue to adapt Beckett's works across media (including Virtual Reality).

Reading and References

The Complete Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett (Faber and Faber, 2006)
The Complete Short Prose, 1929-1989 (Grove Press / Atlantic Monthly Press, 2013)
Murphy (Grove Press, 2011)
Watt (Grove Press, 2009)
Company/ Ill Seen Ill Said/ Worstword Ho/ Stirrings Still (Faber and Faber 2009)

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and response papers. You will attend all seminar classes punctually. If you must miss a seminar session, you are responsible for following up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements. Since Engagement is one of the assessment components, you are expected to participate actively in all seminar discussions and activities.

(2) Absenteeism

Attendance will be taken each week. Absence from class without a valid reason can affect your course grade significantly. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. If you must miss a seminar, you must inform me (the course instructor) via email prior to the start of the class.

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Course Instructors

Instructor	Office Location	Phone	Email
Michelle Chiang	SOH-03-69	67906714	michellechiang@ntu.edu.sg

Planned Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings/ Activities
1	Introduction Why study Samuel Beckett?	Excerpts from James Knowlson's <i>Damned to Fame</i> and Jean-Michel Rabaté's <i>Think, Pig!</i>
2	Early Beckett Mind-Body Duality I	Whoroscope (1930)
3	Early Beckett Mind-Body Duality II	<i>Murphy</i> (1938)
4	Postwar Beckett Displacement I	"The Expelled" (1946)
5	Postwar Beckett Displacement II	<i>Watt</i> (1953)
6	Middle Beckett Time and Duration I	<i>Waiting for Godot</i> (1954)
7	Middle Beckett Time and Duration II	<i>All That Fall</i> (1957)
8	Experimentation with Technology	<i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> (1958) <i>Film</i> (1965)*
9	Late Beckett Humour	<i>Happy Days</i> (1961)
10	Minimalism I	<i>How It Is</i> (1964)
11	Minimalism II	<i>The Lost Ones</i> (1966,1970)
12	Language and the Limit of the Human	<i>Not I</i> (1972) <i>Ill Seen Ill Said</i> (1982)
13	Conclusion Language and the Limit of the Human	"What is the word" (1988)