HL1005 Singapore Literature and Culture I

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Lecture: Mondays 1030-1220 (SHHK Auditorium)

Singapura, which means "Lion City" in Sanskrit, is a misnomer. Lions are not native to the region, so Sang Nila Utama, if he was indeed the one who named the city after the magnificent beast, probably made a mistake when he thought he sighted one here. Or perhaps we were simply "Singgah," a Malay word which could mean "sojourn," as in "Would you like to stay and have a rest for a while?" and "stopping by," "I'll stop by there before I leave." Somewhere along the way, we lost a "g" and an "h," acquired a "pura," then a "pore." If this has all along been Singgah, if this is indeed a stopover, where do we go from here? How did this become an extended stay for some? How does a temporary place become a permanent home? When are we ever home? These are the questions we will explore through the texts in this course. Surveying literature of Singapore written in English between 1950 and the present, we will consider the meaning of nostalgia, of home and homelessness, of belonging and foreignness, and the individual's place, both real and imagined, in an increasingly diverse world.

Required Texts

Balli Kaur Jaswal's *Inheritance* (Epigram, 2016) ISBN: 9789814757362

Alfian Sa'at's *Corridor: 12 Short Stories* (Ethos Books, 2015) ISBN: 978-981-07-7993-1

Nuraliah Norasid's *The Gatekeeper* (Epigram, 2017) ISBN: 9789811700903

All other texts will be made available in NTULearn's Course Content Folder

Assessment

Presentation: 20%
Coursework Essay (1200 words) 30%
Final Exam 50%

AI-use policy in this course

AI generated essays may be grammatically sound and they may seem logical, but their arguments are often unsophisticated, general and/or wrong. It will evolve in time, but as of now, it is only helpful to a limited extent when it comes to developing students' critical thinking, close reading and writing skills. Therefore, I will permit the use of AI for the assignments but here's my policy:

1. Assignments entirely generated by AI will not receive a passing grade.
2. Assignments partially generated by AI must be accompanied by a separate 'Description of AI-use' form, which is available on the module's NTULearn 'Content' tab.
3. No more than 20% of the submitted assignments should be AI generated, i.e. no more than 240 words out of a 1200-word essay should be generated by AI.

Reading Schedule

Week 1 15 Jan	Introduction: Multiple Perspectives	"Three Faces of Night" by Wang Gungwu, from *Pulse* (1950) "Point of View" by Wong May, from *A Bad Girl's Book of Animals* (1969) "location" by Arthur Yap, from *only lines* (1971)
Week 2 22 Jan	Communal	"May 1954" by Edwin Thumboo, from *Ulysses by the Merlion* "Renovation" by Edwin Thumboo, from *A Third Map: New and Selected Poems* (1993)
Week 3 29 Jan	Alienation	Kuo Pao Kun's *Mama looking for her cat* from *The Complete Works of Kuo Pao Kun* (1988)
Week 4 5 Feb	Marginality	"Video" and "Orphans" from Alfian Sa'at's *Corridor: 12 Short Stories* (1999)
Week 5 12 Feb	Public Holiday (No Tutorials)	
Week 6 19 Feb	Gender and Sexuality [Essay questions released]	Balli Kaur Jaswal's *Inheritance* (2013)
Week 7 26 Feb	Mental Health	Balli Kaur Jaswal's *Inheritance* (2013)
4 Mar	Recess	
Week 8 11 Mar	Nostalgia I [Essay due]	Mohamed Latiff Mohamed's "Lost", from *Living in Babel* (2017), translated by Nur-El-Hudaa Binte Jaffar Mohamed Latiff Mohamed's "Vanished", from *Lost Nostalgia: Stories* (2017), translated by Nazry Bahrawi
Week 9 18 Mar	Nostalgia II	Boey Kim Cheng's "Clear Brightness" from *Clear Brightness: New Poems* (2012) "There is no future in Nostalgia" by Arthur Yap, from *The Collected Poems of Arthur Yap* (2013)
Week 10 25 Mar	Reimagining a world I	Nuraliah Norasid's *The Gatekeeper*
Week 11 1 Apr	Reimagining a world II	Nuraliah Norasid's *The Gatekeeper*

Week 12 8 Apr	**Reimagining a world III**	Yeo Siew Hua's *A Land Imagined* (2018) (Non-examinable)
Week 13 15 Apr	**Review and Exam Preparations** Return of essays during tutorials.	