

Contemporary Women's Writing (HL3024)

Lecturer: Dr. Sima Aghazadeh

Semester 2, Jan 2024

Time: Thursday 2:30-5:30

Venue: TBC

The goal of this course is to promote critical engagement with and appreciation of the works of women writers from the 1970s to the present; and therefore, to recognize the political and social contributions made in the field of literature by women from diverse cultures and backgrounds. As there is no such thing as a singular female self/identity, esp. in our ever-changing, ever-growing and multi-cultural global world, we will examine a diverse collection of female fiction writers who ask the question of womanhood in their writings. We will thus discuss the selected novels by paying close attention to important elements (like characters, setting/landscape, narrative perspective, language, literary devices) and themes (home, authority and power, gender/race/class intersections, post-modern subjectivity). Preparatory reading will be necessary before each class and a willingness to participate in class discussions, while also respectfully listening and responding to others, is encouraged.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (18 Jan): Introduction: Women's voice in literature since the 1970s

Week 2 (25 Jan): Fairy-tales revisited

- Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979)
http://www.angelfire.com/crazy4/lesadoreyl/carter_bloody_chambe_newuniversityinexileconsortium.org
- Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (1997)
<Download Kissing the Witch pdf by Emma Donoghue - KePDF.com>

Week 3 (1 Feb): Post-modern narrative: Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's tale* (1985)

Week 4 (8 Feb): Gender politics/dystopia/screen adaptation: Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's tale* (to be continued)

Week 5 (15 Feb): Globalization & fragmentary narrative: Ali Smith's *Hotel World* (2001)

Week 6 (22 Feb): Ali Smith's *Hotel World* (2001) (to be continued)

Week 7 (29 Feb): Transnationalism, race and identity: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009)

Recess Week

Week 8 (14 March): Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck* (to be continued)

Week 9 (21 March): Group Presentation

Week 10 (28 March): Isolated voices through diaspora & immigration: Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999)

Week 11 (4 April): A voice from Singapore: Amanda Lee Koe's *Ministry of Moral Panic* (2013)

Week 12 (11 April): Amanda Lee Koe's *Ministry of Moral Panic* to be continued

Week 13 (18 April): Revision & Assignment & Exam briefing

Week 14 (29 April): Final Exam

Student Assessment:

Class participation & presentation: 15%

- Students are advised to read all the selected works in advance and discuss and present their understanding/opinions during the class. The participation grade will reflect the commitment to the class as evidenced by attendance, preparation of readings, contribution to discussions, and productive and respectful responses to others' ideas. Students should note their questions and be ready to share them in class.
- There will be a group presentation in week 10, 15 minutes in length. The topics and groups will be discussed and finalised during the first class.

Essay: 35%

- You will be given a list of topics and authors to select for your analytic essay. Your essay (in 2800-3000 words) must be well-developed and coherent, showing a clear relationship between the selected topics/themes and the selected text. You will be evaluated based on the depth of your knowledge and understanding of the different thematic and theoretical concerns across the text. You will be also evaluated on the originality of the argument. Points and references should be fully developed and supported with specific evidences and citation. Please consult me regarding your topic, formation of the thesis and development of your essay.
- Dute date: latest 19th April

Final exam: 50%

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 assigned readings and works, 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 inform 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 three days late without prior permission. Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, including documented illness or genuine emergency.

Seeking Help Outside Class: you are allowed to use any form of legitimate assistance/support to help you write papers and research topics that interest you. Please consult with me on this. Feel free to come to me for any relevant questions and most importantly, if you feel that you're falling behind in the course for any reason. The sooner we discuss any obstacles to your success in this class, the more likely it is that we will be able to fix them.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: 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. You must cite sources and references (even online sources) when writing your essays. Failure to do so, even accidentally, is plagiarism.