

# HL 4043 Postmodernism

(AY 2023/2024, Semester 2)

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**Class meets** Monday 2.30pm – 5.20pm SHHK Seminar Room 9  
**Office hours** – please make an appointment – (School of Humanities)  
each consultation slot is scheduled for 15 min.; please let me know in advance if you need more time  
Monday 5.30pm – 6.30pm SHHK 03-57

## Course Description and Objectives

HL 4043 examines the development of twentieth-century literary criticism by examining the work of postmodern writers and filmmakers from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. Drawing on the work of key postmodern theorists including Roland Barthes, Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, Fredric Jameson, and others, the course explores constructions of temporality and spatiality in postmodern literature, including topics such as representations of reality, form and fragmentation, multiplicity and ambiguity, metafictionality, and more.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the strategies demonstrated in major literary-critical forms related to the study of postmodernism, intertextuality, metafiction, and self-referentiality.
2. Explain how specific literary texts lend themselves to a demonstration of the key philosophical ideas inherent to postmodernism.
3. Evaluate literary and critical sources in a rigorous and sophisticated manner.
4. Raise critically informed questions that demonstrate original thinking.

**Final Examination** 40%

**Continuous Assessment** 60%

- Participation (15%)
- Annotated reading presentation (15%)
- Research essay (30%)

## Academic Integrity Policy

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 NTU's Academic Integrity policy

page on the Student Intranet

([https://entuedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Student/dept/ctlp/Shared%20Documents/Student%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20NTU%20rev\\_Nov\\_2021.pdf](https://entuedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Student/dept/ctlp/Shared%20Documents/Student%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20NTU%20rev_Nov_2021.pdf)) for more information.

Please be reminded that in line with clause 4.1:

- repeating the work submitted to another course (whether at NTU or another institution, in part or in whole);
- reusing material taught or submitted in another course ***without properly crediting source/s***; and/or
- collusion—copying the work of another student and/or having another person write one’s assignments—

all constitute a violation of NTU’s academic integrity policy and are subject to relevant penalties.

In line with NTU’s Academic Integrity Policy, please attach the “Declaration of Authorship” form when you submit written assignments (available on NTU Learn). Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course. Please also read the Technology Policy carefully before enrollment.

### Attendance Policy

Your prepared and active participation is crucial to your success in this course. Should you feel unwell, please *do not* attend class and seek medical attention. Instead, always follow up with the instructor via email. You may only drop a question/presentation/in-class writing assignment (where applicable) for reasons related to an approved absence, with proper documentation such as a medical certificate, which must be submitted to the English Undergraduate Office, with a copy of the email to the instructor. Please note that it is your responsibility to catch up on missed instruction within four days of the missed session in order to arrange a make-up question/presentation/in-class writing session.

### Late Work

All assignments are due in hard copy *and* soft copy (to be submitted electronically to NTU Learn through the Turnitin dropbox) by the start of class on the due dates. Late work will be accepted within twenty-four hours for a reduced grade. All papers submitted after the deadline will receive no instructor comments.

### Technology Policy

Given that this course emphasizes process-based critical thinking skills and originality of thought, the use of all generative AI technologies (including, but not limited to, large language models, chatbots such as ChatGPT, Bard AI, Bing AI, etc.) is strictly prohibited. While these technologies offer learning opportunities in relation to specific modes of assessment, they are antithetical to the learning outcomes of this course.

Students are otherwise welcome to use e-books, etc. to facilitate your learning in the classroom, so long as the devices are being used on task and with one other exception: no audio, video, and/or screen recording is allowed at any point during the lectures, seminars, and/or tutorials. This also applies to any/all online classes, where applicable. Please see the University Copyright Statement for more information. The classroom is meant to be a space where students feel comfortable to respectfully, critically, and constructively exchange ideas about the texts discussed.

All quizzes, tests, and exams (where applicable) are closed-book, unless otherwise stated; please ensure all electronic devices including cellphones, tablets, computers, smart watches, etc. are put away into your bags at that point.

### **University Copyright Statement**

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Appropriate action(s) will be taken against you (including and not limited to disciplinary proceedings and/or legal action) if you are found to have committed any of the above or infringed copyright.

*Note: This provisional syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.*

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### **Texts**

*Angels in America* (2003). 6 episodes. Written by Tony Kushner. Dir. Mike Nichols. 352 minutes.

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. 1972(1974). Trans. William Weaver. Vintage, 1997.

*Fight Club* (1999). Dir. David Fincher. 139 minutes.

García Márquez, Gabriel. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. 1967/1970. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. Penguin, 1972.

*Inception* (2010). Dir. Christopher Nolan. 148 minutes.

O'Brien, Flann. *The Third Policeman*. Dalkey Archive Press, 1967.

*Run Lola Run* (also known as *Lola Rennt* [1998]). Dir. Tom Tykwer. 80 minutes.

*Selection of theory, poetry, and short stories will be available on NTU Learn and NTU Libraries.*

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## Schedule

Week 01 – 15 Jan	Introduction to Postmodernism
Week 02 – 22 Jan	Circularity and the Assault on Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flann O’Brien, <i>The Third Policeman</i> (1939–40/1967) (up to end of chapter VII)</li> </ul>
Week 03 – 29 Jan	From the Epistemological to the Ontological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flann O’Brien, <i>The Third Policeman</i></li> </ul> <i>Assignment prompts</i>
Week 04 – 05 Feb	Spatiality and Intangible Realities Italo Calvino, <i>Invisible Cities</i> (1972)
Week 05 – 12 Feb	—PUBLIC HOLIDAY—
Week 06 – 19 Feb	Postmodern Poetry and Short Fiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of poetry and short stories (NTU L2)</li> </ul>
Week 07 – 26 Feb	Annotated reading of <i>Postmodernism</i> by Fred Moten <i>Assignment prompts</i>
	—R
Week 08 – 05 Mar	Postmodern Aesthetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabriel García Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> (1967/1970) (up to chapter that ends with Aureliano Segundo’s marriage)</li> </ul>
Week 09 – 12 Mar	Historiographic Metafiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabriel García Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i></li> </ul>
Week 10 – 25 Mar	Postmodern Drama and Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Kushner and Mike Nichols, <i>Angels in America</i> (2003)</li> </ul>
Week 11 – 01 Apr	Postmodern Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Kushner and Mike Nichols, <i>Angels in America</i> (2003)</li> <li>• <i>Run Lola Run</i> (1998)</li> </ul> <i>Research essays due</i>
Week 12 – 08 Apr	Postmodern Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fight Club</i> (1999)</li> <li>• <i>Inception</i> (2010)</li> </ul>
Week 13 – 15 Apr	Exam revision