

**HL 4024    Advanced Studies in Contemporary Literature**  
**(AY 2021/2022, Semester 1)**

*Assistant Professor Michelle Wang*

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**Class meets    Wednesday    9.30am – 12.20pm                    LHS-TR+55**

**Office hours**    *by appointment only; in person or online*

Monday            5.30pm – 6.30pm                    SHHK 03-57

Wednesday      12.30pm – 1.30pm                   SHHK 03-57

**Course Description and Objectives**

HL 4024: Advanced Studies in Contemporary Literature engages with issues of form, narration, artistic echoes, aesthetics, intermediality, and adaptation in contemporary long-form narratives including the novel, graphic novel, film, and drama to examine how the text's developing narrative progression foregrounds subjectivity, shifting notions of identity, ethical issues and so on. We engage with a range of contemporary issues including bioethics in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005); temporal, genre, and media fluidities in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2001); and more.

Given the lively and ever-shifting nature of concerns and texts that dominate contemporary literature, one of the dynamic components in HL 4024 includes familiarizing ourselves with the types of writing that so greatly capture the imaginations and critical attention of readers and literary critics alike, including works that have been translated into English. While the assigned core texts comprise of books written in English from dominantly British and American traditions, the book review presentation will engage with texts that have gained a wider readership in translation.

*Content advisory: Reading material in this course includes texts that address rape, self-harm, and other emotionally challenging material. You may wish to factor this into your decision during Add/Drop.*

**Assessment**    65%    Continuous Assessment  
                         35%    Final Exam

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

### **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 [the academic integrity website \(https://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/Pages/academic-integrity-policy.aspx\)](https://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/Pages/academic-integrity-policy.aspx) for more information. Consult your instructor if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

### **Late Work Policy**

All graded assignments are due in hard copy *and* soft copy (to be submitted electronically on 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, but will receive no instructor comments.

### **Attendance Policy**

Your prepared and active participation is crucial to your success in the course.

Should you feel unwell, please ***do not*** attend class and ***seek medical advice*** instead, and follow up with me in an email. If a member of your household or family has acute respiratory illness, you should stay home to reduce the risk of community transmission; the School will accept the medical certificate of your family/household member as valid documentation for missing the class. Documentation (e.g. medical certificate) should be submitted to the School, with a copy via email to the instructor within five days of the missed class.

In line with university and national public health policies, this class may transition to online synchronous learning as and when necessary.

### **Technology Policy**

I welcome students to actively use technology to facilitate learning in the classroom, so long as it is being used on task and with one exception: no audio or video recording is allowed at any point during the lectures, seminars, and/or tutorials, with the exception of photographic documentation by the instructor for public health safety tracing purposes. All quizzes 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.

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

## Reading List

1. Auster, Paul, Paul Karasik, and David Mazzucchelli. *City of Glass: A Graphic Mystery*. 1994. Picador, 2004.  
ISBN 9780312423605 (136pp.)
2. Auster, Paul. *The New York Trilogy*. 1985. Penguin Books, 2006.  
ISBN 9780143039839 (308pp.)
3. Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. 1979. Beacon Press, 2003.  
ISBN 9780807083697 (264pp.)
4. Egan, Jennifer. *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Corsair, 2017.  
ISBN 9781780330969 (351pp.)
5. Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Vintage International, 2006.  
ISBN 9780307276476 (288pp.)
6. TBA
7. TBA
8. One additional text of your choice from the supplementary reading list

## Films (available in NTU Libraries)

1. *Never Let Me Go* PR6059.S5N513 2010
2. TBA

## Reading and Assignment Schedule

Week	Topic
1 – 11 Aug	Introductory lecture
2 – 18 Aug	Octavia Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (1979) (end of subsection 5 of “The Fight”)
3 – 25 Aug	Octavia Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (end of book) <i>Distribution of assignment prompts and sign-up sheets</i>
4 – 1 Sept	Paul Auster, <i>City of Glass</i> (1985) Paul Auster, Paul Karasik, and David Mazzucchelli. <i>City of Glass</i> (1994)
5 – 8 Sept	Paul Auster, <i>Ghosts</i> (1986)
6 – 15 Sept	<i>TBA</i>
7 – 22 Sept	<i>TBA</i> <i>Written book review due</i>
	<i>RECESS</i>
8 – 6 Oct	<i>TBA</i>
9 – 13 Oct	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (2005) (end of chapter 14)
10 – 20 Oct	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (end of book) <i>Never Let Me Go</i> [film] <i>Research essay due</i>
11 – 27 Oct	Jennifer Egan, <i>A Visit from the Goon Squad</i> (2011) (end of chapter 6)
12 – 3 Nov	Jennifer Egan, <i>A Visit from the Goon Squad</i> (end of book)
13 – 10 Nov	<i>Final in-class test</i>