



HL1005 AY25/26

Introduction to Singapore Literature

Illustrations by Priscilla Tey



Course Description

This course aims to acquaint you with a range of modern Singapore literature including poetry, prose, drama, and film. As we will be studying these texts in relation to their socio-historical contexts, you will learn about the history and the culture of Singapore. Recurring themes include the formation of Singapore as a nation state, the development of a national identity, tensions in the usage of “standard” and colloquial English, multiculturalism, and the negotiation of social constraints within different communities. In addition, you will be equipped with the necessary vocabulary to respond to a range of artistic medium and be given opportunities to develop research and writing skills.





Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- Anon., “The Travels of Chang Ching Chong”

Week 2: Language and Voice

- Wang Gungwu, “Three Faces of Night”; Arthur Yap, “2 mothers in a hdb playground”; Joshua Ip, “overheard at al-azhar”

Week 3: Literature and Nation-building

- Edwin Thumboo, “Ulysses by the Merlion”; Mok Zining, excerpts from *The Orchid Folios*

Week 4: Transitions—Tradition and Modernity

- Kuo Pao Kun, “Mama Looking for her Cat”

Week 5: Nostalgia

- Arthur Yap, “there's no future in nostalgia”; Boey Kim Cheng, “Clear Brightness”; Inez Tan, “Tyranny”; Theophilus Kwek, “The Chariot”

Week 6: No class (Chinese New Year)

Week 7: Nostalgia and Place

- Mohammed Latiff Mohammed, “Vanished”; Alfian Sa’at, “Corridor”





Schedule (cont'd)

Weeks 8-9: Writing from the Margins I

- Balli Kaur Jaswal, *Inheritance*

Week 10: Writing from the Margins II

- Yeo Siew Hua, *A Land Imagined*

Week 11: Singapore—City of the Future I

- Clara Chow, “Welcome, 265 Aggregate Scorers!”; Victor Ocampo, “i m d 1 in 10”

Week 12: Singapore—City of the Future II

- Victor Fernando R. Ocampo, “As If We Could Dream Too Long” and ila, “Mother Techno”

Week 13: Conclusion and Exam Review

* Please purchase Balli Kaur Jaswal’s *Inheritance*. Yeo Siew Hua’s *A Land Imagined* is available at the library and on streaming services. All other texts will be provided on NTULearn.





Assessments

15% - Short Essay

35% - Term Essay

50% - Final Exam (Closed book)

Please refer to Week 1 slides for deadlines and more details on the assessments.

AI Policy:

Please note that the use of generative artificial intelligence programmes, large language models, and editing software including but not limited to ChatGPT, Grammarly and Quillbot is not permitted for this module.

