

Nanyang Technological University
Division of English
HL 1005 Singapore Literature & Culture I
Course Blog: <https://hl1005singlit.wordpress.com>
Semester 2 (Academic Year 2015-2016)
Wednesdays, HSS Auditorium 9:30am – 11:30am

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Course Description

This course examines the development of Singapore as a nation state through literature. We will consider a range of poems, novels, memoirs, films, and plays. In our study of these works, we will examine the use of language and form in the representation of Singapore history and culture, and more importantly, the limits of representation. Time permitting, we will also be consulting various secondary sources to supplement our readings of the primary texts assigned for the course.

Course Objective

This course introduces students to studies in English by exploring developments in language, literature, and culture. Students will have opportunities to study particular themes and compare different genres in and across a broad array of texts, placed in their historical and cultural contexts. 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. The course will examine the conditions under which texts were originally produced and may consider the reception and reshaping of texts over time.

Course Assessment

Presentations (including participation): 20%
 Coursework Essay: 30% (about 1200 words)
 Final Exam: 50%

Required Texts:

- Sharma, Haresh. *Model Citizen* (2012). ISBN: 9810714610
- Sa’at, Alfian. *Cooling Off Day* (2012). ISBN: 978-981-07-1406-2
- Loh, Vyvyane. *Breaking the Tongue* (2005). ISBN-13: 978-0393326543
- Goh, Poh Seng. *Tall Tales and MisAdventures of a Young Westernized Oriental Gentleman* (2015). ISBN: 978-9971-69-634-4
- Boey Kim Cheng’s *Between Stations* (2009). ISBN 1920882502

Online Texts (from course blog):

Poems—Selected Poets (For week 2 and 3)
 Kuo Pao Kun’s dramatic monologues
 Afian Saat’s *Homesick*
 Chong Tze Chien’s *Charged*

Tentative Reading Schedule

	Week	Readings
	Week 1	Introduction
Poems	Week 2	<p>Edwin Thumboo: “May 1954” “The Exile” “Ulysses by the Merlion”</p> <p>Lee Tzu Pheng: “My Country and My People” “Mad Woman Story”</p> <p>Robert Yeo: “Survival: Singapore” “Turn of the Decade 1969-70”</p> <p>Leong Liew Geok: “Exiles Return” “Forever Singlish”</p> <p>Goh Poh Seng: “Singapore” “Exile in a Cold Land”</p>
Poems	Week 3	<p>Arthur Yap: “Old House at Ang Siang Hill” “There is no future in Nostalgia” “2 Mothers in a HDB Playground”</p> <p>Alvin Pang: “Upgrading” “Following a Train of Thought on the MRT”</p> <p>Cyril Wong: “Close all the Windows” “Flight Dreams” “The Men We Loved”</p>
Novel	Week 4	Vyvyane Loh: <i>Breaking the Tongue</i>
	Week 5	Vyvyane Loh: <i>Breaking the Tongue</i>
Dramatic Monologue	Week 6	<p>Kuo Pao Kun: <i>The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole</i> <i>No Parking on Odd Days</i></p> <p>Alfian Sa’at: <i>Cooling Off Day</i></p>
		Week 7

	Week 8	Recess
Memoirs & Plays	Week 9	Selected readings from Boey Kim Cheng's <i>Between Stations</i>
	Week 10	Goh Poh Seng's <i>Tall Tales and MisAdventures of a Young Westernized Oriental Gentleman</i>
	Week 11	Selections from Alfian Sa'at's <i>Collected Plays One: Homesick</i>
	Week 12	Sharma, Haresh. <i>Model Citizen</i>
	Week 13	Chong Tze Chien: <i>Charged</i>
Review	Week 14	Review and Exam Preparations