

Fall 2016

HL2011 Representations of Asia in Theatre and Literature

Class Schedule: W 2:30-5:30

Class meets: LHS TR+38

Instructor: Hyunjung Lee

Office: HSS-03-70

Contact: hlee@ntu.edu.sg | Phone: 6513-8185

Office hours for Fall 2016: TBA

Course Description

What is to be done in order to situate and perform a dramatic literature in a certain public arena? This course examines how thematic variations in theatre and literature convey new meanings through different styles of performance. Specifically, we will look at the ways in which the image of Asia or the theme of "Asianness" have been manipulated and consumed through contemporary (Western/American) literature, plays, musicals, and other versions of popular culture. We will also discuss to what extent literature and theatrical performance can be a cross-cultural, ethnographic representation. And more broadly, through different genres of culture/art such as novels, essays, musical theatre, and film, we will explore how the notion of "Asia" and/or "Asian-America" has been received and consumed in American contemporary pop culture.

- **Some Titles are Subject to Change!**
- **Readings (All readings will be available @ NTULearn):**

1. Bertolt Brecht, "Interview with an Exile," [Brecht on Theatre](#)
2. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (selected readings)
3. Rodgers and Hammerstein, [South Pacific](#)
4. Bruce A. McConachie, "The 'Oriental' Musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the U.S. War in Southeast Asia"
5. R&H, [King and I](#)
6. Margaret Landon's [Anna and the King of Siam](#)
7. R&H, [Flower Drum Song](#)
8. C.Y. Lee, [The Flower Drum Song](#)
9. Christine Klein, "Asians in America" in [Cold War Orientalism](#)
10. Henry David Hwang, [M. Butterfly](#) (1988)
11. Puccini, [Madama Butterfly](#)
12. Boubil and Schonberg, [Miss Saigon](#) (1989)
13. Amy Tan, "Mother Tongue"
14. Min-zhan Lu, "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle"
15. Dorinne Kondo, [About Face](#)
16. Josephine Lee, [Performing Asian America](#)

Course Outline (Some of the following are subject to change)

Week	Topics	Reading Assignments
ONE	Introduction	
TWO	The Basics: Orientalism, performance as social movement	* Bertolt Brecht, "Interview with an Exile," <i>Brecht on Theatre</i> * Selected readings from Edward Said, <i>Orientalism</i>
THREE	Rodgers and Hammerstein Series: <i>South Pacific</i> (1949)	* Rodgers and Hammerstein, <i>South Pacific</i> [Optional critical reading] Bruce A. McConachie, "The 'Oriental' Musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the U.S. War in Southeast Asia"
FOUR	<i>King and I</i> (I)	* Rodgers and Hammerstein, <i>King and I</i> * Selected chapters from Margaret Landon, <i>Anna and the King of Siam</i>
FIVE	<i>King and I</i> (II)	* Andy Tennant, <i>Anna and the King</i> (1999) (Film screening in class, followed by in-class discussion)
SIX	<i>Flower Drum Song</i> (I)	* Rodgers and Hammerstein, <i>Flower Drum Song</i>
SEVEN	<i>Flower Drum Song</i> (II)	* Selected chapters from C.Y. Lee, <i>The Flower Drum Song</i> (a novel) [Optional critical reading] * Christine Klein, "Asians in America" in <i>Cold War Orientalism</i>
EIGHT	RECESS	
NINE	<i>M. Butterfly</i>	* Henry David Hwang, <i>M. Butterfly</i>
TEN	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	* Puccini, <i>Madama Butterfly</i> (opera)
ELEVEN	<i>Miss Saigon and Beyond</i>	* Boublil and Schonberg, <i>Miss Saigon</i> (musical)
TWELVE	Asians in America, On Multiculturalism (I)	* Amy Tan, "Mother Tongue" * Min-zhan Lu, "From silence to words: writing as struggle"
THIRTEEN	Asians in America, On Multiculturalism (II)	* Selected readings from Dorinne Kondo, <i>About Face</i> * Selected readings from Josephine Lee, <i>Performing Asian America</i> * Audio visual materials shown in class
FOURTEEN	Exam Preparation	* Review, Q&A

Student Assessment

Students will be assessed by:

1. **Participation, in-class activities** (details will be announced later): 10%
2. **Informal writing activities:** 10%
3. **Term paper:** 30%
4. **Final exam:** 50%

Note:

* Please don't ask for term paper extension! But if submitted late, there will be a penalty (to be fair for people who are on time)

* Please attend class regularly and be punctual!

* Enjoy the course!