

HL8001: Madness in Literature and Film

This course looks at the ways in which “madness” is presented and interpreted in selected literature and films from the late 19th century onwards. Through close reading of literary and visual narratives, students will consider how representations of mental illnesses are employed to critique aspects of society and challenge the audience member or reader’s habitual framework of understanding. The depicted mental illnesses in each work will be discussed in the contexts of existing constructs of reality, such as the representation of gender, societal expectations and sexual transgressions.

Core texts

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015

Ian McEwan, *Enduring Love* (1997), Vintage, 1998

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), Dover Publications, 2000

Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (1963), Faber & Faber, 2005

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Penguin Classics, 2000

Core films

Apocalypse Now, directed by Francis Ford Coppola (1979)

One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest, directed by Miloš Forman (1975)

The Piano Teacher, directed by Michael Haneke (2001)

Shutter Island, directed by Martin Scorsese (2010)

Assessment

Coursework essay: 50%

Examination: 50%

Lecturer

Dr Kate Wright; email: KEWright@ntu.edu.sg

Week	Topics	Readings/Films
1	Module introduction	
2	Madness: an overview in philosophy and literary theory	TBA
3	Confinement and hysteria	<i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i>
4	Hysteria and the gothic	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>
5	Heart of Darkness	<i>Apocalypse Now</i>

6	Madness and the Creole Other	<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>
7	Essay workshop	
	RECESS WEEK	
8	Institutionalisation and backlash	<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
9	Constructed reality and the institution	<i>Shutter Island</i>
10	Gender, madness and melancholy	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
11	Conflicting narratives, constructed realities	<i>Enduring Love</i>
12	Repression and sexual dysfunction	<i>The Piano Teacher</i>
13	Module conclusion; exam discussion	