

COURSE CONTENT

Course Code & Title	:	<u>HL4038 Advanced Studies in Postcolonial Literature</u> Category D (World Literature)
Academic Unit	:	4
Pre-requisite	:	HL101

Course Description

This course examines the concatenation between the designations “non-naturalistic” and “postcolonial.” How does non-naturalism (principally the gothic and related/cognate styles including indigenous horror and myth) dovetail with postcolonial concerns such as the imperative to contest Eurocentrism and affirm diversity/alterity or non-metropolitan lifeways? We begin with arguably the Ur-text of this area, Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which insists tellingly on a non-metropolitan provenance to metropolitan preeminence. We move on to four Southeast Asian texts that wrestle with concerns addressed in Rhys’s novel. We look at how the gothic (as a loose frame or term of convenience or in hybrid assemblage with other forms such as the adventure story and magic realism) animates the return of the repressed in the form of “History.” Among other things, we explore how writers invoke the polymorphism of the libido to question dominant scripts, to contest essentialism and to promote cultural plasticity. With Amanda Lee Koe’s *Ministry of Moral Panic*, which won the 2014 Singapore Literature Prize, we begin to move out of the purview proper of the course, reading a selection of both naturalistic and non-naturalistic stories, and thus gain an externalist perspective on the stylistic choices rehearsed in the other course texts.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will read important texts in the area and utilize close reading skills to discuss the issues raised.
2. Students will engage with and debate the following topics:
 - General features of postcolonial writing using non-naturalistic modes
 - Search for idiom and imagery appropriate to Southeast Asian locale
 - “Postcolonial gothic”
 - Self-exoticism and orientalism

Content

Course Outline

Weeks	Text/topic	Readings	Misc

01	Introduction		
02	Wide Sargasso Sea		
03	Wide Sargasso Sea		
04	The Harmony Silk Factory		
05	The Harmony Silk Factory		
06	Beauty is a Wound		
07	Beauty is a Wound		
	RECESS		
08	Ministry of Moral Panic: Stories	Selected stories	
09	Ministry of Moral Panic: Stories	Selected stories	
10	Spirits Abroad	Selected Stories	
11	Spirits Abroad	Selected Stories	
12	Essay Consultation (individual)		
13	Summary		

Learning Outcome

Students will obtain a grounding in the sub-field as well as knowledge of its recurrent concerns and debates.

Student Assessment

Students will be assessed by:

One essay assignment of 2,200 words –30%
Course presentation and participation – 20%
Exam ————— 50%

Textbooks/References

Primary readings:

1. Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
2. Tash Aw, *The Harmony Silk Factory*
3. Eka Kurniawan, *Beauty is a Wound* (originally published as *Cantik itu Luka*)
4. Amanda Lee Koe, *Ministry of Moral Panic: Stories*
5. Zen Cho, *Spirits Abroad*

Secondary texts:

These will be confirmed later.