

HL1005 Singapore Literature and Culture I

Professor: Dr. Michelle Chiang (michellechiang@ntu.edu.sg)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 – 4:00 (SoH-03-69)

Lecture: Tuesdays 10:30-1230 (LT25)

Tutorials:

TuesdayS (TR + 114): T2 1330-1430 T3 1430-1530	Thursdays (TR + 113): T1 12:30-1330	Fridays (TR + 114): T4 9:30-10:30 T5 10:30-11:30 T6 11:30-12:30 T7 13:30-14:30
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Singapura, which means “Lion City” in Sanskrit, is a misnomer. Lions are not native to the region, so Sang Nila Utama, if he was indeed the one who named the city after the magnificent beast, probably made a mistake when he thought he sighted one here. Or perhaps we were simply “Singgah,” a Malay word which could mean ‘sojourn’, as in “Would you like to stay and have a rest for a while?” and ‘stopping by’, “I’ll stop by there before I leave.” Somewhere along the way, we lost a ‘g’ and a ‘h’, acquired a ‘pura’, then a ‘pore’. If this has all along been Singgah, if this is indeed a stopover, where do we go from here? How did this become an extended stay for some? How does a temporary place become a permanent home? *When are we ever home?* These are the questions we will explore through the texts in this course. Surveying literature of Singapore written in English between 1950 to the present achronologically, we will consider the meaning of nostalgia, of home and homelessness, of belonging and foreignness, and the individual’s place, both real and imagined, in an increasingly diverse world.

Required Texts

Balli Kaur Jaswal’s *Inheritance* (Epigram, 2016) ISBN: 9789814757362

The Complete Works of Kuo Pao Kun (Global Publishing, The Theatre Practice 2012) ISBN: 9789814139465

Alfian Sa’at’s *Corridor: 12 Short Stories* (Ethos Books, 2015) ISBN: 978-981-07-7993-1

All other texts will be made available in NTULearn’s Course Content Folder

Assessment

Participation: 20%

Coursework Essay (1200 words) 30%

Final Exam 50%

Tentative Reading Schedule

Week 1	Introduction	
Week 2	<p>“Three Faces of Night” by Wang Gungwu , from <i>Pulse</i> (1950)</p> <p>“Point of View” by Wong May, from <i>A Bad Girl’s Book of Animals</i> (1969)</p> <p>“location” by Arthur Yap, from <i>only lines</i> (1971)</p>	
Week 3	<p>Boey Kim Cheng’s “Clear Brightness” from <i>Clear Brightness: New Poems</i> (2012)</p> <p>“There is no future in Nostalgia” by Arthur Yap, from <i>The Collected Poems of Arthur Yap</i> (2013)</p>	
Week 4	Mohamed Latiff Mohamed’s “Lost”, from <i>Living in Babel</i> (2017), translated by Nur-El-Hudaa Binte Jaffar	
Week 5	Kuo Pao Kun’s <i>Mama Looking for her cat</i> from <i>The Complete Works of Kuo Pao Kun</i> (1988)	
Week 6	<p>“May 1954” by Edwin Thumboo, from <i>Ulysses by the Merlion</i></p> <p>“Renovation” by Edwin Thumboo, from <i>A Third Map: New and Selected Poems</i> (1993)</p>	
Week 7	<i>Shirkers</i> by Sandi Tan (2018)	
Week 8	Recess	
Week 9	Balli Kaur Jaswal’s <i>Inheritance</i> (2013)	
Week 10	Balli Kaur Jaswal’s <i>Inheritance</i> (2013)	
Week 11	Selected works from Alfian Sa’at’s <i>Corridor: 12 Short Stories</i> (1999)	Essay due
Week 12	Selected works from Alfian Sa’at’s <i>Corridor: 12 Short Stories</i> (1999)	
Week 13	Review and Exam Preparations	