

## HL 4024    **Advanced Studies in Contemporary Literature** (AY 2020/2021, Semester 1)

*Assistant Professor Michelle Wang*

[michelle.wang@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:michelle.wang@ntu.edu.sg)

**Class meets**    **Wednesday**    **9.30am – 12.30pm**    **SHHK (HSS) Seminar Room 9**

**Office hours**    *by appointment*

### **Course Description and Objectives**

HL 4024: Advanced Studies in Contemporary Literature engages with issues of form, narration, artistic echoes, aesthetics, intermediality, and adaptation in contemporary long-form narratives including the novel, graphic novel, film, and drama to examine how the text's developing narrative progression foregrounds subjectivity, shifting notions of identity, ethical issues and so on. We engage with a range of contemporary issues including bioethics in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005); temporal, genre, and medium fluidities in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2001); and intertextual allusions in Marina Carr's *Ariel* (2002).

Given the lively and ever-shifting nature of concerns and texts that dominate contemporary literature, one of the dynamic components in HL 4024 includes familiarizing ourselves with the types of writing that currently capture the imaginations and critical attention of readers and literary critics alike, including works that have been translated into English. While the assigned core texts comprise of books written in English from dominantly British and American traditions, the book review presentation will engage with texts that have gained a wider readership in translation.

**Assessment**    100% continuous assessment

- a. ongoing participation and discussion, including assigned written material
- b. mid-semester research essay
- c. book review presentation
- d. final in-class test

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to

actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to [the academic integrity website](https://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/Pages/academic-integrity-policy.aspx) (<https://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/Pages/academic-integrity-policy.aspx>) for more information. Consult your instructor if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

### **Late Work Policy**

All graded assignments are due in hard copy and soft copy (to be submitted electronically on NTU Learn through the Turnitin dropbox) by the start of class on the due dates. Assignment prompts with information about deadlines will be distributed. Late work will be accepted within twenty-four hours for a reduced grade, but will receive no instructor comments. Subject to the instructor's approval, you may only do a make-up quiz/test/presentation (where applicable) for reasons that relate to an excused absence, with proper documentation (e.g. medical certificate, etc.). Please note that it is your responsibility to get in touch with the instructor within five days of the missed class in order to arrange for a make-up.

### **Attendance Policy**

Your prepared and active participation is crucial to your success in the course. Should you feel unwell, please ***do not*** attend class and seek medical advice instead, and follow up with me in an email. Three or more *unexcused* absences (excluding documented medical absences, etc.) are subject to an overall grade reduction at the instructor's discretion. In line with national and university public health policies, please note that this class may transition to online synchronous learning as and when necessary.

### **Technology Policy**

I welcome students to actively use technology to facilitate learning in the classroom, so long as it is being used on task and with one exception: no audio or video recording is allowed at any point during the lectures, seminars, and/or tutorials, with the exception of photographic documentation by the instructor for public health safety tracing purposes. All quizzes and exams are closed-book, unless otherwise stated; please ensure all electronic devices including cellphones, tablets, computers, etc. are put away into your bags at that point.

*Note: This preliminary syllabus is subject to change.*

**Reading List** TBD

1. Auster, Paul. *City of Glass: A Graphic Mystery*. Picador, 2004.  
ISBN13 978-0-312-42360-5 (136pp.)
2. Auster, Paul. *The New York Trilogy*. Penguin Books, 2006.  
ISBN10 0-14-303983-0 (308pp.)
3. Carr, Marina. *Plays 2: Ariel*. Faber & Faber, 2009.  
ISBN13 978-0-571-24803-2 (353pp.)
4. Egan, Jennifer. *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Corsair, 2017.  
ISBN13 9781780330969 (368pp.)
5. Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Vintage International, 2006.  
ISBN10 0-307-27647-3 (288pp.)
6. TBD (reading list is currently undergoing revision)
7. TBD (reading list is currently undergoing revision)
8. One additional text of your choice from the supplementary reading list  
(to be released when the semester begins)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	The Contemporary in Flux
2	Text as Assemblage: Place, Home, History
3	Contemporaneity: Diversity and ecocriticism
4	Form and bioethics
5	Life writing and fictional testimonies
6	Narrative reliability and consciousness
7	Other minds and competing narratives
	<i>RECESS</i>
8	Graphic narratives and the juxtaposed sequential art form
9	Intertextuality and self-referentiality
10	Polyphony and heterogeneous forms
11	Temporalities and resistance to the whole
12	Rewriting the classics
13	Final in-class test