

## HL 2015 War in Literature and Film (AY 2020/2021, Semester 2)

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**Class meets**    **Wednesday**    **9.30am – 12.30pm**    **LHS – LT**    **(Hive)**

**Office hours**    Monday        5.30pm – 6.30pm    SHHK 03-57 (School of Humanities)  
                          Wednesday    12.30pm – 1.30pm    SHHK 03-57

### Course Description and Objectives

HL 2015 examines representations of war in literature and film, with a focus on twentieth and twenty-first century literary texts. Kate McLoughlin (2012) notes that “[t]here is something counterintuitive about ‘the literature of war’” in that even as it foregrounds the devastating consequences of “pursuing armed conflict, exposes its atrocities, and argues for peace,” war literature is a double-edged sword that might simultaneously “perpetuate war, glorify violence, and obscure suffering” (*The Literature of War* xi). Such paradoxes are at the heart of the texts we examine in this course as we begin with the Greek tragedies, and analyze how contemporary playwright and poet have refashioned such classical texts for audiences around the world.

The first half of the semester focuses on texts from a variety of mediums, including poetry, prose, plays, and films to examine a range of issues relating to genre, fictionality, aesthetics, ethics, ecocriticism, and representations of women, amongst others. In the second half of the semester, we focus on the Second World War and examine diverse representations of this historical catastrophe from a range of identity positions, with an eye to formal and thematic issues, including ways in which humor, romance, and trauma shape such representations. We will also consider issues of historical transposition and adaptation to understand how literature and film shape our understanding of war.

*Note: Given the nature of the subject matter, the reading material assigned in this class is visceral and emotionally difficult, including extensive passages that detail rape, corporeal desecration, and other forms of abuse and extreme violence. You may wish to factor this into your decision during the Add/Drop period.*

### Assessment

<i>Continuous Assessment</i>	65%
<i>Final Exam</i>	35%

### **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(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

### **Late Work Policy**

All graded assignments are due in hard and soft copy by the start of class on the due dates. Late work will be accepted within twenty-four hours for a reduced grade, but will receive no instructor comments.

### **Attendance Policy**

Your prepared and active participation is crucial to your success in the course. Should you feel unwell, please not attend class and seek medical advice instead, and follow up with me in an email. If a member of your household or family has acute respiratory illness, you should stay home to reduce the risk of community transmission; the School will accept the medical certificate of your family/household member as valid documentation for missing the class/assessment/test. You may only do a make-up quiz/test/presentation (where applicable) for reasons that relate to an excused absence, with proper documentation such as a 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. 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' active use of 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. The classroom is meant to be a space where students feel comfortable to respectfully, critically, and constructively exchange ideas about the texts discussed. 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 at the instructor's discretion.*

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**Texts**

Bracht, Mary Lynn. *White Chrysanthemum*. Vintage Publishing, 2018.

Carr, Marina. *Plays 3* (including *Hecuba*). Faber & Faber, 2015.

Euripides. *Hecuba*. [available online]

McEwan, Ian. *Atonement*. 2001. Anchor, 2003.

Winterson, Jeanette. *The Passion*. 1987. Vintage, 2014.

[Poetry selection will be made available online and on NTU Learn.]

**Films** [on hold at the Library Outpost]

*Atonement* (2007). Dir. Joe Wright.

*Grave of the Fireflies* (1988). Dir. Isao Takahata.

*Life is Beautiful* (1997). Dir. Roberto Benigni.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001). Dir. Peter Jackson.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002). Dir. Peter Jackson.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003). Dir. Peter Jackson.

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**Schedule**

Week 01 – 13 Jan Introduction

Week 02 – 20 Jan Women and Greek tragedy (I)

- Poetry selection
- Euripides' *Hecuba* (circa 24 BCE)

<http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/hecuba.pl.txt>

Week 03 – 27 Jan Women and Greek tragedy (II)

- Marina Carr, *Hecuba* (2015)

Week 04 – 03 Feb War and Fantasy (I)

- (Film) *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001)
- (Film) *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002)

Week 05 – 10 Feb War and Fantasy (II)

- (Film) *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003)

Week 06 – 17 Feb History through art's prisms (I)

- Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* (1987) (up to end of part 2)

Week 07 – 24 Feb History through art's prisms (II)

- Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* (1987)
- Assignment prompt: final essay

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—03 Mar—RECESS—

- Week 08 – 10 Mar Historical Transpositions and Un/Reliability (I)
- Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (2001) (up to end of Part II)
- Week 09 – 17 Mar Historical Transpositions and Un/Reliability (II)
- Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (2001)
  - (Film) *Atonement* (2007)
- Week 10 – 24 Mar Focalizing WWII through Asia (I)
- Mary Lynn Bracht, *White Chrysanthemum* (2018) (up to p.155)
- Week 11 – 31 Mar Focalizing WWII through Asia (II)
- Mary Lynn Bracht, *White Chrysanthemum* (2018)
  - Final essays due
- Week 12 – 07 Apr Childhood and Trauma
- (Film) *Life is Beautiful* (1997)
  - (Film) *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988)
- Week 13 – 14 Apr Exam Review

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