

HL0201: Images of Singapore: Literature, Film and Culture

Academic Year: 2021/ 2022 (Semester 1)

Lecture Day: Thursdays, 2:30-5:30pm (Lectures to be uploaded beforehand; Asynchronous learning)

Academic Unit: 3 AU

Pre-requisite: NIL

Lecturer: Candice Balete (balete@ntu.edu.sg)

Course Description:

In large part, images – either textual or visual – inform how we perceive the world around us. Especially in today's digital world, images proliferate our screens and our lives, undoubtedly influencing how we comprehend the societal events that happen around us.

The question that then follows is, to what extent do representations of Singapore (be they textual or visual) inform one's understanding of the workings of Singapore society? In the same vein, to what extent can one's current notions of contemporary Singapore add value to their appreciation of how Singapore is depicted in literature and film – and by extension, the (trans)national, socio-political, and historical contexts in which they are produced?

Based on these lines of inquiry, this course explores the various depictions of Singapore through the reading of literary and filmic texts, with the view of investigating how these representations either inform or challenge our understanding of the predominant narratives of Singapore's culture and identity.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be expected to:

1. Identify and engage with representations of Singapore in literary and filmic texts.
2. Produce informed critical responses through close-reading and analysis, as well as application of secondary research, to their chosen text(s).

Course Assessment:

1. Midterm essay (1300 words, $\pm 15\%$ upper and lower limit): **50% (due Week 10, Oct 21 11:59PM Singapore time)**
2. Final Examination: **50% (Online Exam; Nov 24, 5-7PM Singapore time)**

Required Texts (for purchasing):

1. *Hook and Eye: Stories from the Margins* (2018), Philip Holden (ed.) (<https://www.ethosbooks.com.sg/products/hook-and-eye-stories-from-the-margins>)
2. *Sugarbread* (2016) by Balli Kaur Jaswal (<https://shop.epigrambooks.sg/products/sugarbread>)
3. *Those Who Can't, Teach* (2010) by Haresh Sharma (<https://shop.epigrambooks.sg/products/those-who-cant-teach>)

Texts may be purchased from Booklink at NTU or from the publisher's website (either hardcopy or e-book). Poetry readings will be uploaded on NTULearn.

Films: You may watch the films in your own time, and the films will also be screened online during the scheduled film weeks – in case you could not find the film or wish to watch it together with others in the class. More film screening details will be shared in Week 1's lecture slides.

Course Schedule:

Week	Reading	
Week 1 (Aug 12)	Introduction	
Week 2 (Aug 19)	Selected Poetry Readings (To be uploaded on NTULearn)	
Week 3 (Aug 26)	Selected Poetry Readings (To be uploaded on NTULearn)	
Week 4 (Sept 2)	Selected Short Stories from <i>Hook and Eye: Stories from the Margins</i> (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Everest" by Balli Kaur Jaswal • "The Borrowed Boy" by Alfian Sa'at
Week 5 (Sept 9)	Film: <i>Singapore Dreaming</i> (2006)	Available on Youtube and Netflix. Film screening TBA.
Week 6 (Sept 16)	Novel: <i>Sugarbread</i> (2016) by Balli Kaur Jaswal	
Week 7 (Sept 23)	Novel: <i>Sugarbread</i> (2016) by Balli Kaur Jaswal	
<i>Recess Week (Sept 27 – Oct 1)</i>		
Week 8 (Oct 7)	Film: <i>7 Letters</i> (2015)	Available on Netflix. Film screening TBA.
Week 9 (Oct 14)	Selected Short Stories from <i>Hook and Eye: Stories from the Margins</i> (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Boy with the Missing Thumb" by Felix Cheong • "Cave Man" by Clara Chow
Week 10 (Oct 21)	Selected Short Stories from <i>Hook and Eye: Stories from the Margins</i> (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Identity" by Latha • "Rich Man Country" by Leonora Liow <p>Midterm Essay due</p>
Week 11 (Oct 28)	Film: <i>Unlucky Plaza</i> (2017)	Film screening TBA.
Week 12 (Nov 4)	Play: <i>Those Who Can't, Teach</i> (2010) by Haresh Sharma	*Deepavali Public Holiday – lecture will be uploaded beforehand, as usual
Week 13 (Nov 11)	Conclusion and Revision	