

HL0201/ HL5002: Images of Singapore: Literature, Film and Culture

Academic Year: 2022/2023 (Semester 2)

Lecture Day: Thursdays, 2:30-5:30pm, LT18

Academic Units: 3AU

Pre-requisite: NIL

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

Course Description:

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

The question that then follows is, to what extent do representations of Singapore inform our understanding of the workings of Singapore society? In the same vein, to what extent can one's current notions of contemporary Singapore help them appreciate depictions of Singapore 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 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 applications of secondary research, to their chosen text(s).

Course Assessment:

1. Midterm essay (**1300 words**, ±15% upper/lower limit): **50%**
 - a. Due **Week 10**: March 23, 2023 (Thurs), 11:59PM Singapore time (GMT+8)
2. Final Examination: **50%**
 - a. Online Examination, April 24, 2023, 5pm

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>)

Texts may be purchased from Booklink at NTU or from the publisher's website (either hardcopy or e-book). Poetry readings and other secondary material will be accessible from NTULearn.

Films: You may watch the films in your own time. I will also screen the films online on the weeks they are scheduled – in case you couldn't find the film yourself or wish to watch it with others in the class. More details on this in Week 1's lecture slides.

Course Schedule

Week	Reading	
Week 1 (Jan 12)	Introduction	
Week 2 (Jan 19)	Selected Poetry Readings (To be Uploaded on NTULearn)	
Week 3 (Jan 26)	Selected Poetry Readings (To be Uploaded on NTULearn)	
Week 4 (Feb 2)	Selected Short Stories from Hook and Eye: Stories from the Margins (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Everest" by Balli Kaur Jaswal • "The Borrowed Boy" by Alfian Sa'at
Week 5 (Feb 9)	Film: <i>Singapore Dreaming</i> (2006)	Film screening in LT18 at 2:30pm, followed by content lecture
Week 6 (Feb 16)	Novel: <i>Sugarbread</i> (2016) by Balli Kaur Jaswal	
Week 7 (Feb 23)	Novel: <i>Sugarbread</i> (2016) by Balli Kaur Jaswal	
<i>Recess Week</i>		
Week 8 (Mar 9)	Essay Consultation/ Writing Skills Week	Online – Zoom
Week 9 (Mar 16)	Film: <i>7 Letters</i> (2015)	Film screening in LT18 at 2:30pm, followed by content lecture
Week 10 (Mar 23)	Play: <i>Those Who Can't, Teach</i> by Haresh Sharma (2010) (out of print – uploaded on NTULearn)	**Midterm Essay due 11:59PM on NTULearn
Week 11 (Mar 30)	Selected Short Stories from Hook and Eye: Stories from the Margins (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Identity" by Latha • "Rich Man Country" by Leonora Liow
Week 12 (Apr 6)	Film: <i>Unlucky Plaza</i> (2017)	Film screening in LT18 at 2:30pm, followed by content lecture
Week 13 (Apr 13)	Conclusion and Revision	