

MA in Literary and Cultural Studies (MALCS) CLIT 7003 Narrative and Cultural Identity

CLIT 7003 Semester II 2008

Lecturer: Dr. Sebastian Veg (sveg@cefc.com.hk, tel.: 28151890)

Administrative and teaching assistant: Ms. Winnie Yee (fnwinnie@yahoo.com)

Time: Wednesdays 6:30 pm to 9:30pm

Venue: M 205

Course description: Modernism and its critique

In the second semester, the course will look at the different ways in which modernism was defined, from the late 19th to the mid 20th century, in Europe, China and Japan. The purpose of the course is to reflect on the fact that modernism, as defined by its leading proponents, was quite often less an assertive, iconoclastic, avant-garde attack on tradition, than an ambiguous reflection on the place of literature in a more democratic, disenchanted age. Drawing on theoretical texts by Benjamin, Lukacs, and Foucault which highlight the ambiguity or dialectics of modernity, it will nonetheless mainly seek to engage with the configuration of modernity in individual fictional works. How is modernism related to the autonomy of literature and the emancipation of the individual? Does modernity signify a utopian liberation from all norms or does it recreate new forms of submission and hierarchy?

At the same time as it seeks to deconstruct the simple opposition between tradition and modernity, the course will also question the meaning of modernism in the Chinese and Japanese context as an “iconoclastic” break with tradition in favor of “Westernization.” Asian modernists demonstrate a similarly complex understanding of literature’s role in modern times. The difficulties in defining a “modernist canon” may in this sense reflect inseparable aspirations to the new and nostalgia for the old.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the semester, students will be expected to achieve the following:

1. to articulate the main definitions of modernity and modernism, and to relate them to each other;
2. to situate the works studied within their historical and cultural context and to be familiar with the historical events portrayed in or alluded to in the readings;
3. to analyze and discuss aspects of modernity in the texts and films studied in class, and to extend the discussion to other texts and narratives, in particular to understand how to use textual examples in an argumentative discussion.

Schedule

(prior announcement will be made if there are minor changes to the following schedule)

1. Modernism and anti-romanticism (14/1)

Readings:

Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Part II, chaps. 8 and 9 [ed. and trans. by Paul de Man, New York : W. W. Norton, 1965, pp. 94-118]

Jacques Rancière, “Why Emma Bovary had to be killed”, *Critical Inquiry*, Volume 34, Number 2, Winter 2008.

Gustave Flaubert, *Sentimental Education*, Part III, chaps. 5-7 [translated with an introduction by Robert Baldick. Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin Books, 1964, pp. 397-419].

G. Lukacs, extract from *Theory of the novel*, translated from the German by Anna Bostock.

London : Merlin Press, 1971: Part II, chap. 2, “The Romanticism of disillusion”, pp. 112-131.

2. Baudelaire and Benjamin (21/1)

Readings:

Charles Baudelaire, *Flowers of evil* (selected poems), “Au lecteur”, “Réversibilité” (44) “Spleen” (78); *Tableaux parisiens*: “Les sept vieillards” (90); “Les petites vieilles” (91), “A une passante” (93), “Danse Macabre” (97) and “L'amour du mensonge” (98). From: *Baudelaire*, edited, introduced and translated by Francis Scarfe, London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1986.

—, “The Painter of Modern Life”, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne, London : Phaidon Press, 1995, p. 5-15.

Walter Benjamin, “The Flâneur” in “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire.” in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael Jennings, Cambridge; Belknap Press, 2003; vol. 4, p. 18-39.

Further reading:

Hans Robert Jauss, “Modernity and Literary Tradition”, *Critical Inquiry* 31 (Winter 2005), pp. 329-364. [available as e-resource from HKUL].

28/1: New Year Holiday

3. “Overcoming modernity” in Japan (4/2)

Readings:

Natsume Soseki, *And Then*, translated by Norma Moore Field, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978. Chap. 3 (p. 21-36); chap 6 extract (p. 65-76); chap. 9 (p. 104-113).

Mori Ogai, “Play” (Asobi) in *Youth and other stories*, edited by J. Thomas Rimer, Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

Takeuchi Yoshimi “What is modernity? (The case of Japan and China)” in R. Calichman (ed), *What is modernity? Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 53-67 and 76-81. [Reading the whole chapter is recommended: it is available as an electronic resource from HKUL]

Kenzaburo Oe, “Speaking on Japanese Culture before a Scandinavian Audience” in *Japan, the Ambiguous and Myself*, Tokyo-NY-London, Kodansha International, 1995, p. 16-27.

4. Lu Xun: from iconoclasm to nostalgia (11/2)

Readings:

Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and other stories*, translated by William Lyell, Honolulu, Hawaii University Press, 1990. "Preface to *Outcry*" "A Madman's Diary", "The True Story of A Q" chap. 9 [It is recommended to read or reread the entire novella "The True story of A Q"].
Marston Anderson, *The Limits of Realism. Chinese fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, Berkeley, UC Press, 1990, p. 76-92.

Recommended readings:

Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational capitalism", *Social Text*, no. 15 (1986), p. 65-88;

Lu Xun, "A Folk tale" (Written in Deep night), in *Selected Writings*, Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 1960, vol. 4.

David Der-wei Wang, "Lu Xun, Shen Congwen, and Decapitation", in LIU Kang and TANG Xiaobing (eds), *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China : Theoretical Interventions and Cultural Critique*, Durham-London, Duke University Press, 1993. p. 174-187

David Der-Wei Wang, "Crime or punishment? On the forensic discourse of Modern Chinese Literature", in YEH, Wen-hsin (ed), *Becoming Chinese. Passages to modernity and beyond*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, p. 260-297.

Further reading:

Lu Xun, "The Loner", *Diary of a Madman and other stories*, translated by William Lyell, Honolulu, Hawaii University Press, 1990, p. 311-337.

Wang Hui 汪暉, *Wudi Panghuang 無地彷徨*, Hangzhou, Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1994, p. 280-357. (no English translation)

5. Kafka and the norms of modernity (18/2)

Readings:

Kafka, "In the Penal Settlement", "Before the law", in *In the penal settlement: tales and short prose works*, trans. by Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins. London: Secker and Warburg, 1973.

G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a minor literature*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986; chapter 5 ("Immanence and desire").

J. Derrida, "Before the law", in Alan Udoff (ed), *Kafka and the Contemporary Critical Performance: Centenary Readings*, 1987.

Ritchie Robertson, *Kafka. Judaism, Politics, and Literature*, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1985, p. 140-159.

Recommended reading:

Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka. On the tenth anniversary of his death" in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael Jennings, Cambridge; Belknap Press, 2003; vol. 2, p. 794 ff.

Film clips: Orson Welles, *The Trial* (1963 and 1984).

Further reading:

F. Kafka, *The Trial*.

Walter Benjamin: "The Storyteller" (On Leskov), in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael Jennings, Cambridge; Belknap Press, 2003; vol. 3, p. 143 ff.

Bill Dodd “The Case for a political reading”, in Julian Preece (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*, Cambridge, CUP, 2002, p. 131-149.

6. Modernism and the emancipation of the individual (25/2)

Readings:

Yu Dafu, “Sinking” in *Modern Chinese stories and novellas, 1919-1949*, edited by Joseph S.M. Lau [et al], New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

Eileen Chang [Zhang Ailing], “The Golden Cangue” in *Love in a Fallen City*, New York, NYRB Classics, 2007, p. 171-234.

Lu Xun, “Mourning the dead”, in *Diary of a Madman and other stories*, translated by William Lyell, Honolulu, Hawaii University Press, 1990, p. 338-362.

Recommended reading:

Kirk Denton, “The Distant Shore: Nationalism in Yu Dafu’s ‘Sinking’ ”, CLEAR, vol. 14 (Dec 1992), p. 107-123;

Edward Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking (1937-1945)*, NY: Columbia UP, 1980, p. 200-31;

Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Eileen Chang: Romances of a Fallen City” in *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999, p. 267-303.

Film clips: Ann Hui: *Love in a Fallen City* (1984).

Further reading:

Yu Dafu, “A Silver-grey Death” 銀灰色的死 and “Move South” 南遷 (no English translations)

Yi-Tsi Mei Feuerwerker. “Text, Intertext, and the Representation of the Writing Self in Lu Xun, Yu Dafu and Wang Meng” in Ellen Widmer, David Der-Wei Wang (eds.), *From May Fourth to June Fourth*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993.

4/3: Reading week

7. Brecht, kitsch and politics (11/3)

Readings:

Bertolt Brecht, *The Rise and Fall of the city of Mahagonny*, trans. by WH Auden and Chester Kallman, London, Methuen, 1979 (*Collected Plays*, vol. 2, part 3): scenes 3-5 (p. 7-14); scenes 10-12 (p. 24-32); scenes 18-19 (p. 51-62); “Notes to the Opera *The Rise and Fall of the city of Mahagonny*”, p. 87-91.

Bertolt Brecht, “Theatre for pleasure or theatre for instruction” in *Brecht on Theatre: 1933-1947: the development of an aesthetic*, trans. by John Willett, New York : Hill & Wang, 1964, p. 69-77.

Recommended reading:

Hermann Broch, “Notes on the Problem of Kitsch” in G. Dorfles (ed.) *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste*, New York: Universe Books, 1969, pp. 49-67.

Hannah Arendt, “Brecht” in *Men in dark times*.

Clips: *The Rise and Fall of the city of Mahagonny*, dir. P. Zadek, Salzburg Festival, 1998.

Paper #1 due for March 18

8. Dystopic modernism and moral dilemma: Döblin (18/3)

Readings:

Alfred Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, trans. by Eugene Jolas, London: Martin Secker, 1931.

Book 1 (p. 11-14); Book 4 (p. 105-126 and p. 135-139).

Walter Benjamin, "The Crisis of the novel" (On *Berlin Alexanderplatz*), in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael Jennings, Cambridge; Belknap Press, 2003; vol. 2, p. 299-304.

Recommended readings:

Kathleen Komar, "Technique and Structure in Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*", *German Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 3, May 1981, pp. 318-34.

Breon Mitchell, "Joyce and Döblin: At the Crossroads of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*", *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 12, no. 2, Spring 1971, pp. 173-87.

Clips: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980).

9. Escaping from dystopic modernity: Céline in America (25/3)

Readings:

Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the end of the night*, trans. John Marks, London: Chatto and Windus, 1934, . 204-214 [Public toilet] and pp. 236-250 [Ford factory].

Recommended reading:

Alice Kaplan and Philippe Roussin (eds), *Celine, USA*, special issue *South Atlantic quarterly*, vol. 93, no. 2 (1994): Andrea Loselle, "Bardamu's American Dream", pp. 225-242; Philippe Roussin: "Getting back from the other world: from Doctor to Author", pp. 243-264; Alice Kaplan and Philippe Roussin, "Céline's Modernity", pp. 421-443.

10. Science-fiction and dystopic modernity (1/4)

Readings:

Yevgeny Zamiatin, *We* [1921], trans. Natasha Randall, NY, Modern Library, 2006. Record 4 (pp. 16-19), record 10 (pp. 45-52), record 16 (pp. 76-81).

—, "On Literature, Revolution, Entropy, and Other Matters", in *A Soviet heretic*, edited and translated by Mirra Ginsburg, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970

Lao She, *Cat Country* [1933], trans. by William A. Lyell, Columbus : Ohio State University Press, 1970, chap. 6 and chaps. 20-21.

George Orwell, "The prevention of literature" (1946) and "Politics vs. Literature: An examination of *Gulliver's travels*" (1946) in *Inside the whale*, London, Penguin.

Recommended readings:

David Der-wei Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen*, NY, Columbia University Press, 1991.

Koon-ki Tommy Ho, "Cat Country: A Dystopian Satire," *Modern Chinese Literature* 3. (1987): pp. 71-90.

Gorman Beauchamp, "Zamiatin's *We*" in *No Place else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, Carbondale, Ill. Southern Illinois University Press, 1983. p. 56-77.

Clips: Terry Gilliam, Brazil (1986)

11. Modernity and the experience of the absurd: Beckett and Gao Xingjian (8/4)

Readings:

Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, act I (extract), act II (end).

Gao Xingjian, *Bus Stop*, extracts trans. by Geremie Barmé, in *Renditions* no. 19 & 20 (1983), p. 372-392.

Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted", *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 152-174.

Recommended reading:

Terry Eagleton "Political Beckett?", *New Left Review*, No. 40, July-August 2006, pp. 67-74.

Syren Quah, *Gao Xingjian and transcultural Chinese theatre*, University of Hawaii Press, 2004, pp. 55-69.

Gao Xingjian, "Wilted Chrysanthemums", trans. by Mabel Lee, in *The Case for Literature*, New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 140-154.

12. Modern or post-modern? Wang Xiaobo and Gao Xingjian (15/4)

Wang Xiaobo, "The Golden Age" trans. by Hongling Zhang and Jason Sommer, in *Wang in Love and Bondage*, Albany, SUNY Press, 2007, pp. 61-117.

Gao Xingjian, *One man's Bible*, trans. Mabel Lee, New York : HarperCollins, 2002, chaps. 44-47 (pp. 337-362).

Gao Xingjian, "Literature as testimony", trans. by Mabel Lee, in *The Case for Literature*, New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 49-63.

Foucault, *A History of Sexuality* (selections).

Recommended reading:

Xu, Gang Gary, 2002. "My Writing, your Pain, and her Trauma: Pronouns and Gendered Subjectivity in Gao Xingjian's *Soul Mountain* and *One Man's Bible*", *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 99-129.

Wendy Larson, "Okay, Whatever: Intellectuals, Sex, and Time in Wang Xiaobo's *The Golden Years*," *The China Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 29-56.

13. Conclusions on modernism and discussion (22/4)

Further readings:

Matei Calinescu, *Five faces of modernity : modernism, avant-garde, decadence, kitsch, postmodernism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1987.

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, translated by Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1968.

Roland Barthes, "Leçon"

Michel Foucault, "Of Other spaces"

Jürgen Habermas, "Social structures of the public sphere", *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1989, pp. 27-56.

Paper #2 due for 30 April.

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend all class sessions and participate fully in class discussions. (If you miss a class due to illness or other emergency, please be certain to obtain notes from a fellow classmate and check in with the instructor with any questions you may have.) You must be prepared to discuss each reading assignment on the day indicated on the syllabus. All readings are available in your course packet (unless otherwise indicated on the syllabus). **Recommended readings are optional.**

Please come with a list of at least three questions or some brief comments (typed) for each class session. Your questions may arise from the readings or screenings you have done for the week, current events related to the topic for the week, or other issues related to the course. Be prepared to draw on these questions during class discussion. Winnie Yee will collect them at the end of each class.

Paper #1 (about 1500-2000 words) for **March 18, 2009**.

You are asked to write a paper closely analyzing one of the texts discussed in class (before the due date for the paper, i.e. sessions 1 to 7 included), or two shorter texts, or one text and one film. The emphasis in this paper should be on demonstrating your ability to carry out a close textual reading and commentary of a text, and to structure this commentary around one main question that will form the backbone of your paper.

Paper #2 (about 3000 words) for **April 30, 2009**.

You are required to write a paper on a topic related to modernity and modernism. You are allowed to choose literary and visual narratives on the required or recommended lists but are encouraged to use examples of your own to illustrate your arguments. Your topic **MUST** be approved by the instructor (by April 1st) before you begin to work on the paper. You are required to refer to at least three of the readings used in class in your paper.

For both papers, you must include a bibliography of works consulted, and all references must be properly footnoted. Marks will be deducted for failure to use Standard English. You will be evaluated on the quality of your research, your ability to analyze texts, and your skill in crafting a coherent and compelling argument. Outstanding papers demonstrate depth of understanding, original thought, and a fresh perspective on the topic. You are recommended to use the MLA style sheet for the format of documentation.

Grading

Paper #1	30%
Paper #2	50%
Discussion questions/participation	20%

Late Policy

Late papers will only be accepted under special circumstances, for example, health reasons or unforeseeable events.

Plagiarism

A writer who presents the ideas or words of another as if they were the writer's own (that is, without proper citation) commits plagiarism. Plagiarism is not tolerable in this course or at H.K.U. You should avoid making quotes or drawing on figures from nowhere - you must provide sources of reference for quotation and/or citations you use in the paper. This applies to images and media clips as well. Failure to observe this would risk being charged of plagiarism. In this University, plagiarism is a disciplinary offence. Any student who commits the offence is liable to disciplinary action.

Consult the websites: <http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism> and <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism> for further information.