



Course Outline Template

Introduction

1–3. Course code, English title and Chinese title

Key points: Literature and Politics

Course Code:

Title in English: Literature and Politics

Title in Chinese (optional):

Course overview:

This course will cover key texts that deal with the relationship between literature and political theory. The course examines how major writers have dealt with such topics as nationalism, self-determination, political independence, totalitarianism, terrorism and animal rights. The course will introduce students to the political and historical context of each piece of writing and then examine the text in light of the relevant political theory. It will examine how political ideologies such as Marxism, socialism and conservatism have been important as motivating factors both for artists and critics. The course will examine political writings from a range of genres and from a range of literary periods. We will also have interviews and videos with international writers and critics.

5. Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes:

Students will examine various descriptions of political life

Students will be given the time and space to evaluate various political theories.

Students will be given the time and space to enumerate, describe, list, clarify, and even do algorithms on (should they choose to do so) different political ideologies described in and through literature and literary criticism.

Students will be given the time and space to explain the motivations for various canonical responses to political events by canonical writers

Students will be given the time and space to compare and contrast various claims made on behalf of forms of political ideology in literature and in literary criticism

Students will evaluate how appropriate different literary genres are for mediating political ideas related to distinct political ideologies

Students will analyse/assess/critique/re-imagine various institutional approaches to the censorship of politically sensitive subjects in canonical literature

Students will not be given the ability to predict their own marks for this course

Students will be given the time and space to create/design/reflect on 5-page essays on the relationships between literature and politics.

An unanticipated or anticipated extension (depending on the perspective of the teacher and student) of this course will be the learned ability to hypothesize about the nature of the relationship between political theories and literature.



6. List of topics

Topic	Contents/ fundamental concepts
1. Do we need literature in political life? Plato & Fredric Jameson – extracts from Plato’s <i>Republic</i> and Jameson’s <i>Political Unconscious</i> . Literary work 1: <i>Dictator</i> by Richard Harris	Literature and Politics, Plato’s <i>Republic</i> , Fredric Jameson <i>The Political Unconscious</i>
2. Literature and the University: The Politics of Education. Michel Houellebecq <i>Submission</i> and Extracts from David Foster Wallace, Roberto Bolaño, and Student “Port Huron Statement” of Civil Rights Era	Literature and the representation of the University: credentialization, meritocracy, educational inequality in literature. Politics or Human Rights? Civil Rights or Human Rights?
3. Shakespeare and the Just War: Reading <i>Henry V</i>	Just War Theory; Writers and the War Machine
4. Literature and the Workers’ Struggle: Karl Marx and Charles Dickens’s <i>Hard Times</i>	The relationship between literature and Marxism. <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> . The work of Charles Dickens.
5. Literature and Nationalism: William Butler Yeats and Nationalism. “Easter 1916”, “September 1913”	Literature and nationalism, literature and political self-determination, literature and the fight for political independence. The political work of W. B. Yeats
6. Literature and State Control: George Orwell’s <i>1984</i> and “Politics Vs Literature. Solzhenitsyn. “The Nobel Lecture in Literature 1970”. Extracts from Hans Fallada’s <i>A Stranger in My Own Country</i>	Literature and State Control. The work of George Orwell.
7. Literature and Race: Richard Wright <i>Native Son</i>	Literature and Racial Politics. Literary descriptions of political oppression because of race. Reaction. Contemporary debates.
8. FILM: The Dictator: Extracts from Charlie Chaplin’s <i>The Great Dictator</i> and Michael Moore: <i>Capitalism: A Love Story</i> . Also read <i>Dictator</i> by Richard Harris.	Film and the satirical treatment of the dictator in two different political eras.
9. Literature and Fascism: Extracts from Adolf Hitler’s <i>Mein Kampf</i> and Thomas Mann’s “Civilization’s Literary Man”: “An extract from <i>Reflections of a Non-political Man</i> ”	Literature and fascist ideology. Reaction to the recent republication of Adolf Hitler’s <i>Mein Kampf</i> . How does this work of autobiography relate to the later political movement known as Fascism? What can it tell us about Fascism? Thomas Mann on the beginnings of German National Socialism.
10. Literature and Conservatism: Ayn Rand <i>Anthem</i> and selected essays from <i>Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal</i> : “Extermism: or the art of Smearing”, “Conservatism: an Obituary,” and “The New Fascism: Rule by Consensus”	Conservatism and neoconservatism. The relationship between literature and political neoconservatism.
11. Literature and Terrorism: <i>Submission</i> by Michel Houellebecq, Seamus Heaney’s “Punishment”, & Introduction to <i>Holy Terror</i> by Terry Eagleton	The literary reaction to terrorism in various political contexts.
12. Literature, Civil Disobedience & Protest:	Literature and civil disobedience, censorship and protest



Selected writings David Thoreau, Bob Dylan, Ta-Nehisi Coates and others.	
13. Group Presentations	Discussion and presentation of the material covered in class
14. Group Presentations	

8. Assessment scheme (including rationale)

Task nature	Description	Weight
Course Blog	Students maintain a class blog/notebook throughout the course	10%
Outreach Assignment	Working individually or in a group, document in an imaginary 5-page Grant Proposal how you propose to use literature and/or creative expression in an outreach project for the betterment of your community	25%
Paper	5-page essay on topics covered in the second half of the course	35%
Tutorial Presentation		10%
Tutorial Attendance and Contribution		10%
Group Presentation		10%

9. Recommended learning resources

<p>Recommended learning resources:</p> <p>COURSE TEXTS A course reader on Literature and Politics Required texts: Charles Dickens <i>Hard Times</i>, Michel Houellebecq <i>Submission</i>, Ayn Rand <i>Anthem</i>, Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i></p> <p>RECOMMENDED READING: James Seaton. Cultural Conservatism, Political Liberalism: "Liberalism and Literature: Richard Rorty and Lionel Trilling" Jacques Ranciere. The Politics of Literature. London: Polity Press, 2011. Ernst Bloch et al. Aesthetics and Politics. London: Verso, 2004. Thomas Picketty. Capital in the Twenty-First Century. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014. The Communist Manifesto. Karl Marx Fredric Jameson: <i>The Political Unconscious</i>. London: Routledge, 1983. Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Nobel Prize Lecture 1970. Albert Camus. Nobel Prize Lecture 1957. George Orwell. <i>Essays</i>. London: Penguin, 2000. Celia Marshik. <i>British Modernism and Censorship</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Selected Writings from Bob Dylan, Neil Young and Pete Seeger.</p>
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10. Feedback for evaluation

<p>Feedback for evaluation: Tutors and professor osullivan@cuhk.edu.hk and office hours</p>

14. Academic honesty and plagiarism



Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.