

Department of English
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

ENGE2380
Twentieth-Century Fiction

Dr. Pinky Lui

1. Course Description:

This course examines some of the key works of fiction written in the twentieth-century and its engagement with crises and transformations of modern life and identity. It does so by thinking about how these works engage with the challenges and opportunities that emerged in a century molded by world wars, technological innovation, economic upheaval, and shifting social norms. Through the close study of *The Great Gatsby*, *Rebecca*, and *The Bell Jar*, the course explores how these works of fiction and their authors interact with themes such as selfhood, alienation, fragmentation, memory, gender, sexuality, and class. By situating these literary texts within their historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts, the course invites students to examine how these works interrogate questions of identity and social roles that help define the experience of modernity, and reflect on the complexity of modern lives represented in twentieth-century fiction. The course will also examine narrative techniques adopted by the writers to communicate the juxtaposition between a rapidly changing world and the unstable “self”. Through critical discussion and textual analysis, the course considers how twentieth-century fiction ultimately redefines storytelling as a means of representing fractured consciousness and modern anxiety.

2. Learning Outcomes:

After successful completion of this course you will:

- Students will acquire knowledge of the twentieth-century fiction and its historical, cultural, intellectual contexts
- Students will learn to analyse twentieth-century fiction as vehicles for cultural values and anxieties
- Students will evaluate the power and persuasiveness of the novel form to give answers to presiding questions concerning identity

3. Class organization and assessments:

Each week consists of a lecture and a tutorial. Students are expected to finish the required reading before class, attend all lectures and tutorials, and contribute to the tutorial discussions.

Assessment Tasks	Weight
Attendance and Participation	10%
Reading Responses + Final Reflection	10%
Presentation	15%
Mid-Term Essay	25%
Final Exam	40%

4. Course schedule:

Week	Topic	Text
1 14/1	Introduction: Voices of the Twentieth-Century	-
2 21/1	New Beginnings and the Jazz Age	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
3 28/1	Capitalism and City	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
4 4/2	Green Light and Freedom	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
5 11/2	Lunar New Year	
6 18/2	Twentieth-Century Gothic	<i>Rebecca</i>
7 25/2	Death of Class	<i>Rebecca</i>
8 4/3	Memory and Survival	<i>Rebecca</i>
9 11/3	Reading Week	
10 18/3	From Page to Screen	TBC
11 25/3	Age and Anxiety	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
12 1/4	Breakdown, Mind, and Body	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
13 8/4	Recovery and Space	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
14 15/4	Conclusion: The Ghosts of the Twentieth-Century	-
15 22/4	Final Exam	

5. Required readings

Students are highly encouraged to acquire **physical** copies of the novels as digital devices will not be allowed during in-class exams.

- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. [1925] New York: Penguin, 2000.
- Du Maurier, Daphne. *Rebecca*. [1938] London: Virago, 2025.
- Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. [1963] London: Faber & Faber, 2001.

6. Contact details for teacher(s)

Lecturer Name:	Dr. Pinky Lui
Office Location:	TBC
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Teaching Assistant Name:	
Office Location:	
Email:	

7. Feedback for Evaluation

Students are welcome to give feedback to the course at any time. They can do so by communicating to the lecturer directly or by email.

8. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in teaching, learning and assessments

Students are not allowed to use any AI tools in any kind of learning activity or assessment that will be counted towards students' final grade of the course, or used for evaluating students' attainment of the desired learning outcomes. Students are expected to produce their own work independently without any collaboration or use of AI tools.

9. 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.

In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.

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. Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality. Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher. Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/share/copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/teachers concerned.

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Fair (Plus): VERY SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Fair: SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Fair (Minus): SOMEWHAT SATISFACTORY performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY satisfactory performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Fails to address the course and likely does not understand what the course requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.