

Course Title: ENGE2390 (formerly ENGE3330 Reading Poetry)
Description: This course provides an introduction to the art of reading poetry. We will read and analyze a range of poems of diverse styles and forms from the Renaissance to the present day so as to stimulate students' creative and critical responses to poetry. We will also read and analyze contemporary poetry written in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. While this is not a course on creative writing, it nonetheless explores, among other topics, the role of the imagination, the act of writing, the purposes of poetry, the notions of tradition and of the individual talent, for these are issues with which poets engage, whether directly or indirectly, in their poems.
Learning outcomes: 1. To enjoy reading poetry and to understand the act of reading as a critical exercise. 2. To understand poetry as a form of creative violence inflicted on language. 3. To explore the social, historical and political background of the formation of themes and motifs in poetry. 4. To critically evaluate the ideas, values and effects embedded in poetry.

Task nature	Description	Weight
Class Participation	Discussion in tutorials.	10%
Class Presentation	Oral presentation followed by facilitating of class discussions. (pls. incl. 2-4 page softcopy handout)	10%
Term Paper	Font size 12, double-spaced essay. (6-8 pages)	30%
Final Centralized Exam (Open Book/Note)	This is a 2-hr written examination. You must answer each question with reference to <u>at least 2 poems on the course</u> . Choose 2 questions out of 4.	50%

Required Texts and Order of Topics:

Note: The lectures will make no attempt at discussing all the poems. I am more interested in the depth and quality of our engagement with poems rather than how much we can “cover”.

There is no single anthology that contains all the poems we will be discussing. Thus, please refer to the specified links for the poems. The links indicate URL addresses of reliable sites where the poems are available. Please read the poems ahead of the lectures.

Weeks 1 and 2: On Image, the Figurative and the Literal

William Blake: “The Sick Rose”, “Ah, Sunflower”
[\[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1934/1934-h/1934-h.htm\]](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1934/1934-h/1934-h.htm)

Robert Frost: “The Road Not Taken”
[\[https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44272/the-road-not-taken\]](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44272/the-road-not-taken)

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

[<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42891/stopping-by-woods-on-a-snowy-evening>]

Allen Ginsberg: “Supermarket in California”, “Sunflower Sutra”

[<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47660/a-supermarket-in-california>]

[<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49304/sunflower-sutra>]

Shakespeare: Sonnet 18: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

[<http://www.shakespeares-sonnets.com/>]

Week 3: Form, Rhetoric, Purpose

Shakespeare’s sonnets:

Sonnet 19: “Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws ...”

Sonnet 29: “When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes ...”

Sonnet 116: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds ...”

Sonnet 130: “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun ...”

Sonnet 138: “When my love swears that she is made of truth ...”

[<http://www.shakespeares-sonnets.com/>]

Week 4: Memory, Imagination, Society

S. T. Coleridge:

“Frost at Midnight” (p. 240), “Kubla Khan” (p. 295)

[<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29090/29090-h/29090-h.htm>]

Wordsworth:

“Tintern Abbey” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45527/lines-composed-a-few-miles-above-tintern-abbey-on-revisiting-the-banks-of-the-wye-during-a-tour-july-13-1798>]

“She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45549/she-dwelt-among-the-untrodden-ways>]

“Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower”

[<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45559/three-years-she-grew>]

“To Toussaint L’ouverture” [<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/sep/18/poem-of-the-week-to-toussaint-louverture-by-william-wordsworth>]

“Written in London, September 1802” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45565/written-in-london-september-1802>]

“London, 1802” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45528/london-1802>]

Weeks 5 and 6: Tradition and the Individual Talent
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T. S. Eliot:

“Preludes” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44214/preludes-56d22338dc954>]

“Rhapsody on a Windy Night” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44215/rhapsody-on-a-windy-night>]

Wallace Stevens:

“Anecdote of the Jar” [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=3778>]

W. B. Yeats: “Sailing to Byzantium” [<https://poets.org/poem/sailing-byzantium>]

Seamus Heaney: “Digging” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47555/digging>]

Gary Snyder: “Axe Handles” [<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/Gary-Snyder/7860>]

Sylvia Plath:

“The Applicant” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57419/the-applicant>]

“Daddy” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48999/daddy-56d22aafa45b2>]

“Lady Lazarus” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49000/lady-lazarus>]

Weeks 7 and 8: Representing Women

John Donne:

“The Apparition” [<http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/apparition.htm>]

“The Flea” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46467/the-flea>]

“To His Mistress Going to Bed” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50340/to-his-mistress-going-to-bed>]

Aphra Behn: “Love Armed” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43641/love-armed>]

Anne Sexton: “Her Kind” [<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/her-kind>]

Week 9: Narrating Asia

Li-Young Lee: “Dreaming of Hair”, “For a New Citizen of these United States”

[<http://www.poemhunter.com/li-young-lee/poems/>]

“The Cleaving” [<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50871/the-cleaving>]

Week 10: Poetry of Malaysia

Shirley Lim: “Lament”, “Learning English”, “Bukit China”, “Song of an Old Malayan”
[handout of poems will be provided]

Wong Phui Nam: “When I am dead”, “I feel out of the verges of the swamps”, “There is no rumour as you would hear”, “For a Birthday” [handout of poems will be provided]

Week 11: Poetry of Singapore

Edwin Thumboo: “Ulysses by the Merlion” [<https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/ulysses-merlion-12161>]

Alfian Sa’at:

“The Merlion”, “Void Deck”, “Job Week 1992” [handout of poems will be provided]

Week 12: Poetry of Hong Kong

Madeleine Marie Slavick: “city automatic”, “subway searching”, “city cloud”, “The Star Ferry”
[handout of poems will be provided]

Jennifer Wong: “To the little girl in a village home I never met”, “The Colour of Race”, “From Beckenham to Tsim Sha Tsui”

[<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/154931/to-the-little-girl-in-a-village-home-i-never-met>]

[<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/154933/the-colour-of-race>]
[<https://www.haranapoetry.com/iv20-from-beckenham-to-tsim-sha-tsu>]

References:

Ee, Tiang Hong. *Responsibility and Commitment: The Poetry of Edwin Thumboo*.

Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent". *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*.

Goh, Robbie B. H. "Imagining the Nation: The Role of Singapore Poetry in English in 'Emergent Nationalism'". *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 41.2 (2006): 21-41.

Hirsch, Edward. *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry*.

Lim, Shirley Geok-lin. "Afterword - Tongue and Root: Language in Exile". *Monsoon History*.

Patke, Rajeev. "Nationalism, Diaspora, Exile: Poetry in English from Malaysia". *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 38.3 (2003): 71-85.

Plato. *The Republic* (Book 10).

Poon, Angelia. "Performing National Service in Singapore: (Re)imagining Nation in the Poetry and Short Stories of Alfian Sa'at". *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 40.3 (2005): 118-138.

Sidney, Philip. *An Apology for Poetry / The Defence of Poesy*.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*.

Note: This reference list is by no means exhaustive. Students are encouraged to read up on the following types of books available in the library: (1) general introductions to poetry, (2) books and essays by individual poets, and (3) research books and academic articles *on* the individual poets.

Unless there are matters to be addressed directly to the course instructor, your tutor should be your first port of call. If you have questions or if you wish to set up individual/group consultations, we prefer to be first contacted by e-mail.

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	
Name:	Eddie Tay
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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.

Students' work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded.

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.

Use of generative AI tools

All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks.

Guideline on sharing lecture recordings

Attention is drawn to the following:

The copyright of any lecture recordings shared in the course, whether they are produced by teachers, students, or peer note-takers, belongs to the University.

Students should not share these recordings with others without obtaining prior written consent from the teacher(s).

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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+ / Adequate (Plus): VERY ADEQUATE 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 / Adequate: ADEQUATE 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- / Adequate (Minus): SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE 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 : BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on a A FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the task 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 (Minus): ALMOST BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the task 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 task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.