Course Outline
ENGE4240 (2026-2027)

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

Course Code: ENGE4240
Title in English: SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE (Introduction to Computational Literary Studies)
Title in Chinese:

4. Course description

Course description:
In the context of a world that was beginning to understand the power of "big data," Franco Moretti introduced the notion of "distant reading" to the field of literary studies. A method of literary scholarship that embraced the technological explosion at the end of the twentieth century, Moretti's distant reading looked to transcend a literary studies that he thought of as dominated by the "theological exercise" of close reading – which he characterized as the "very solemn treatment of very few texts taken very seriously." Distant reading attempted (attempts) to make sense of thousands of texts at the same time. It asks questions that only a survey of tens of thousands of texts can answer – how does the thematic concern of western literature change over the decades or the centuries? And not just the thematic concern of the canonical literature we all know, but all western literature (or as much of it as we can recover today!) While such questions could not be answered by the individual scholar, Moretti understood that they could be answered with the aid of computation. This course introduces you to the debates provoked by Moretti's ideas and then moves on to show you how distant reading is practiced today. By way of workshop and project-based learning, you will be introduced to the statistical analysis platform that many computational literary studies scholars use today – R. You will then learn how to use this platform in order to generate your own distant readings of texts.

5. Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes:
By the end of the course, you should be able to:
- understand the contentions and provocations of Moretti's notion of "distant reading"
- use the statistical analysis platform called 'R' as a means to meaningfully analyse and critique literary texts

6. Course syllabus

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Computational literary studies Distant Reading	Introduction to R coding language and environment Frequency Counts TF-IDF Word embedding Topic Modelling Data visualization

7. Course components (Teaching modes and Learning activities)

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face **(please specify if it is hybrid, i.e. some students will attend the activities elsewhere)**	**Percentage of time**
e.g. Lectures (hybrid ~~yes~~/no)	10%
Interactive workshop (hybrid ~~yes~~/no)	70%
Online asynchronous	20%
Multimedia resources	
Assigned reading	
Online exercises	

8. Assessment type, percentage and rubrics

Assessment type	Percentage
Preparation & Participation	10
Weekly Task	15
In-Class Presentation	25
Pamphlet	50

Assessment rubrics
Available on course website

9. Required and recommended readings

Required readings:
Jockers, Matthew. Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History (University of Illinois Press, 2013)
Moretti, Franco. Distant Reading (Verso, 2013)
Stanford Literary Lab: Pamphlets (https://litlab.stanford.edu/pamphlets/)

Recommended readings:
Hamilton, Grant. "The Book, Meaning, and Densities of Essential Forms in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*," *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 35, (2024): 18-38.
Jockers, Matthew. *Text Analysis with R for Students of Literature* (Springer, 2014)
Moretti, Franco. *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900* (Verso, 1998)
Ramsay, Stephen. *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism* (University of Illinois Press, 2011)
Underwood, Ted. *Distant Horizons* (Chicago UP, 2019)

10. Feedback for evaluation

Both informal and formal feedback is welcome for the duration of the course. However, formal course/teacher evaluation forms will also be distributed towards the end of class.

11. Course schedule

Class/week	Date	Topic	Requirements
1	(11 Jan)	Introduction	
2	(18 Jan)	R and RStudio	
3	(25 Jan)	Tokenisation / Raw Frequency	
4	(1 Feb)	DFM / Collocations / Plots	
5	(8 Feb)	CNY	
6	(15 Feb)	KWIC / TF-IDF / Lexical Dispersion Plots / Word Clouds	
7	(22 Feb)	Topic Modelling / LDAvis	
8	(1 Mar)	Word Embedding	
9	(8 Mar)	READING WEEK (Similarities / Distances / Networks)	
10	(15 Mar)	Sentiment Analysis / Syuzhet	
11	(22 Mar)	Corpora / Parts of Speech Tagging / UdPipe	
12	(29 Mar)	EASTER	
13	(5 Apr)	CHING MING	
14	(12 Apr)	In-class Presentations	
15	(19 Apr)	In-class Presentations	

12. Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	Professor
Name:	Hamilton
Office Location:	3/F Fung King Hey Bldg
Telephone:	Xt 7445

Email:	hamilton@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	TBC
Website:	
Other information:	

13. Details of course website

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

Use of some AI tools is allowed
Students may use some AI tools in some learning activities and/or assessments on the condition that they discuss the matter with the course convenor. Guidance about AI use will be given in class, but some tasks/assessments may require the use of AI tools.

In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course convenor.

Acknowledging support from AI tools
Students are required to acknowledge all functional uses of an AI tool and cite it when they paraphrase, quote, or incorporate into their own work any content (whether it is text, image, data, or other format) that was created by it.

For example:
'I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/) to (specify the support, e.g. plan my essay, generate some ideas for the content, ask for examples of data collection instruments, get the dates of historical events, etc.).

An example of citation
OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 20 version). https://chat.openai.com/chat

(Students are reminded that due to the rapid developments of AI tools, some citation formats may be updated regularly.)

15. Use of AI tools for grading and provision of feedback on student work

No AI tools will be used to provide feedback on any assessment task(s) for this course.

16. 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.

17. 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).