



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Course Number**  
ENG214

**Course Title**  
Literature of the East

**Credits**  
3

**Hours: 3 Lecture**

**Co- or Pre-requisite:**  
Minimum C grade in ENG102

**Implementation Semester  
& Year**  
Spring 2022

**Catalog description:** Survey of rich, diverse, non-Western creative and philosophical traditions influencing literary expression in a wide variety of genres, including regional and diasporic literature spanning the world. Covers classical era texts to experimental literary forms coming from the East and Middle East today.

**General Education Category:**  
**Goal 6: Humanities**  
**Goal 8: Diversity and Global Perspectives**

**Course coordinator:** Sharmila Sen, 609-570-3733,  
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**Required texts/other materials:** In the absence of a current anthology of Asian literature, instructors should choose a sampling of literary works spanning traditional, regional texts in translation and current work available online or in print. When a work is translated into English, when possible, priority should be given to self-translations by the writer or authorized by the writer. Strive for a balance of regional authors, cosmopolitan authors with homes in more than one country, and diasporic authors who can reflect the immigrant experience in the West.

**These sites offer older literature:**

Asia for Educators (Columbia U.): [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/main\\_pop/ps/ps\\_china.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/main_pop/ps/ps_china.htm) . This includes several excerpts from the *Confucian Analects*.

“The Ballad of Mulan”: <https://mulanbook.com/pages/northern-wei/ballad-of-mulan>; another version is included in the Primary Sources of Asia for Educators above.

Guan Hanqing, *The Injustice to Dou E/Snow in Midsummer*. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/52276>

Project Gutenberg has a wide variety of East Asian texts from BCE to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:  
[PL: Language and Literature: Languages and Literatures of Eastern Asia, Africa, Oceania.](#)

**The following online literary journals are helpful sources of new work:**

Words Without Borders: <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/>

The Common Online: <https://www.thecommononline.org/>

Pathlight Magazine: <https://www.pathlightmag.com/>

Paper Republic: New Chinese Literature in Translation: <https://paper-republic.org/pubs/read/>

Asymptote: [asymptotejournal.com](http://asymptotejournal.com)

Granta: <https://granta.com/>

Other longer works of interest by genre:

### Sample Drama

Tawfiq al-Hakim, *Song of Death* (Egyptian)

Zeami Motokiyo, *Atsumori* (Japan, Noh theater)

Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* (Japan)

Any play by Sudipta Bhawmik (US-India)

Jane Harrison, *Stolen* (Muruwari – Australia)

Kamala Shamsie, *Home Fire* (Pakistan)

### Sample Novels

Duong Thu Huong, *Paradise of the Blind* (Vietnam)

Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner* or *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Afghanistan)

Najaf Mazari and Robert Hillman, *The Honey Thief* (Afghanistan/Hazara)

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Interpreter of Maladies* or *The Namesake* (USA-India)

Liu Cixin, *The Three Body Problem* (China)

Naguib Mahfouz, *Zaabalawi* (Egypt)

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* or *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Pakistan-UK)

Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*, *Snow* (Turkey)

Hari Kunzru, “Raj, Bohemian” or *The Impressionist* (UK-Kashmiri/English)

Gish Jen, *The Resisters* (US-China)

Any novel by Amy Tan or Maxine Hong Kingston

Sayatani DasGupta, *The Serpent’s Secret* or any of her Kingdom Beyond books

### Short Story Collections

Intan Paramaditha, *Apple and Knife* (Indonesia – Australia)

Shyam Seladurai, *Story-Wallah: Short Fiction from South Asian Writers*

### Sources for Poetry

Rao, Velcheru Narayana and David Shulman, ed. Classic Teluga Poetry

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mccc-ebooks/detail.action?docID=223217>

Nathalie Handal, *The Poetry of Arab Women*

*Home of 300 Tang Poems* (U. of Va.): <https://cti.lib.virginia.edu/frame.htm>

Any poetry collection by Cathy Park Hong

### 3. General literary studies resource websites:

Purdue OWL: Writing About Literature: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/618/1/>

Dr. Kristi Siegel’s Introduction to Modern Literary Theory: <http://www.kristisiegel.com/theory.htm>

The Voice of the Shuttle: <http://vos.ucsb.edu>

American Comparative Literature Association Research Portal: <https://www.acla.org/resources-links/literary-societies-general-research>

Institute for World Literature: <http://iwl.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

Eclat! U.Penn’s “Essential” Comparative Literature and Theory Sites:

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/Eclat/>

Key Terms in Post-Colonial Theory: <https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm>

Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity: <https://literariness.org/2016/04/08/homi-bhabhas-concept-of-hybridity/>

Abrogation: <https://postcolonial.net/glossary/abrogation/>

Pascal-Yan Sayegh, "Cultural Hybridity and Modern Binaries: Overcoming the Opposition Between Identity and Otherness?" <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00610753/>

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

*Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:*

1. **Close Reading:** interpret complex texts of different genres and styles through close reading [Supports ILG #1, 6, 8; PLO #1,3]
2. **Literary Strategies:** demonstrate knowledge of the distinctive ways writers and translators use words and different literary structures to shape a reader's response to their work [Supports ILG #1, 6, 8, 9; PLO #1]
3. **Synthesis of Texts:** create original essays using course texts and scholarly research, synthesizing readings to create original interpretations [Supports ILG #1, 4, 6, 10, 11; PLO #2-4]
4. **Critical Analysis:** analyze a piece of literature using the most appropriate critical approach(es) such as psychological, historical, philosophical, feminist, sociological, etc.) [Supports ILG #1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11; PLO #3]
5. **Literary Context:** evaluate literature's dual role as both product of and producer of culture using textual evidence of major historical and social shifts (conquest, trade, slavery, migration, colonization, economic, political, or religious change, social justice movements). [Supports ILG #1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; PLO# 1]
6. **Documentation of Sources:** use correct MLA documentation in formatting essays and citing literature and other sources [Supports ILG #1, 4, 10; PLO #2]

### **Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

**Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Institutional Learning Goal 4. Technology.** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

**Institutional Learning Goal 6. Humanities.** Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**Institutional Learning Goal 7. History.** Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective:** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

**Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

**Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

### **Program Learning Outcomes for Liberal Arts (PLO)**

1. **Concept Knowledge.** Understand the vocabulary, methods, and major concepts presented in the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences.
2. **Communication.** Articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing.
3. **Critical Thinking.** Perform a series of thinking tasks including speculation, analysis, and synthesis [i.e., abstract reasoning.]
4. **Research Methods.** Utilize research materials and methodologies.

### **Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

#### **Unit I Introduction to the Study of Eastern Literature** [Supports Course SLOs #1, 4, 5]

##### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- differentiate between reading and analyzing works in translation and works written in the original language, especially in regard to “close reading.”
- describe the ways literature is embedded in cultural, historical, and therefore linguistic and ethical contexts.
- demonstrate understanding that interpreting Eastern literature involves acknowledging and expanding one’s own cultural/critical definitions and boundaries.
- explain the interconnectedness and mutual influence of world cultures throughout literary history due to factors such as trade, conquest, war, imitation, appropriation, missionizing, imperialism, colonization, and migration; realize that many “Western” stories have “Eastern” origins.
- understand and use terminology such as orientalism, the Other/othering, appropriation, abrogation, colonial, post-colonial, decolonizing, cosmopolitan, diaspora, and cultural hybridity.
- distinguish between using “the Other” as a means of self-definition and aggrandizement or critique of the marginalized vs. trying to accurately record details about other cultures.

**Although these interpretive structures are introduced in Unit 1, students will gain competency in using them through their work in the following units.**

**Other units will vary, depending on how the instructor chooses to set up the class (by historical chronology, theme, region, or genre). The following sample units are based on theme; choose how many will be used based on the length of the literature read for each unit:**

#### **Unit II The Voice of Women** [Supports Course SLOs #1-6]

##### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- identify gender-based restrictions on women’s autonomy and voice in traditional folk tales, legal, or philosophical writing, for instance, The Confucian Analects, *Yeh-Shen* or “The Ballad of Mulan.”
- understand how those restrictions can co-exist with depictions of strong, autonomous women.
- “close read” a passage in order to discover the impact of word choice on the reader’s ability to enter imaginatively into the writer’s world.

- use an appropriate critical lens to evaluate how a writer creates and shares meaning with readers in modern retellings of traditional stories.

### **Unit III Independent Goals and Family/Social Obligations** [Supports Course SLOs #1-6]

#### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- complicate the customary binary model comparing the individualistic West to the collectivist, conformist East through analysis of works from different regions of Asia and the Middle East.
- understand that “the East” is not a monolithic region with a single standard for human behavior, and that several factors influence how attuned to self or society an individual is expected to be.
- explore different definitions of maturity and adulthood based on cultural expectations of personal responsibility and obligation through analyzing coming of age stories.
- gain empathy and understanding for people caught in power dynamics that lead them to make choices that are sometimes hard for Westerners to understand.

### **Unit IV The Transience and Importance of Beauty** [Supports Course SLOs #1-6]

- identify the literary strategies writers use to create atmosphere, context, and an emotional reaction to the plot and characters, leading to an overall interpretation.
- through analysis of works like *Atsumori*, excerpts from *The Tale of Genji*, or Tang poetry, understand concepts such as *mono no aware*.
- realize how cultural definitions of “the beautiful” can impact one’s life choices, priorities, and goals.
- explore how changing political perspectives such as the rise of communism or prolonged colonialism can complicate traditional cultural attitudes toward beauty, interposing new beauty standards or de-prioritizing beauty to elevate utilitarianism, as in Chi Zijian’s “A Jar of Lard.”
- consider feminism as an attempt to decolonize from patriarchal definitions of beauty.

### **Unit V Colonial and Post-Colonial** [Supports Course SLOs #1-6]

- discuss the complex cultural situation created by colonialism and the resulting post-colonial reaction in various literary works, which may include film.
- understand the differing definitions of “decolonization” from the perspectives of colonizer and different groups of the colonized; be able to use the term as it relates to a claiming of personal as well as national autonomy, as discussed in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind*.
- interrogate the choice of post-colonial writers to compose in English or not; gain awareness of the role of translators in conveying non-English works to an English-speaking audience.

### **Unit VI Cultural Hybridity** [Supports Course SLOs #1-6]

#### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- explain “cultural hybridity,” connecting it to ongoing globalism, an effect of post-colonialism, migration, travel, and connective technology.
- understand “magical realism” as a form of decolonization, protest against empiricism or other forms of cultural hegemony, or a perceived loss of culture through reading works such as Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West*, Salman Rushdie’s “The Firebird,” or Liu Cixin’s “Taking Care of God.”
- investigate an author’s choice to rewrite classical Western texts to give them an Eastern setting through works such as Kamala Shamsie’s *Home Fire*, a re-setting Sophocles’ *Antigone* in Pakistan OR to retell traditional tales for a new generation, as in Sayantani DasGupta’s Kiranmala series or Intan Paramaditha’s “Blind Woman with a Missing Toe.”
- recognize the element of choice or lack of choice involved in migration through stories told from those perspectives.

**Evaluation of student learning:** [Evaluates SLOs 1-6]

Achievement of the course objectives will be evaluated by the following tools. The weighted percentage of these means of assessing student learning will vary slightly among different instructors, but the greatest emphasis should be on formal written work.

**In-class Exercises: 20%.** Students are expected to come to class having read the material and prepared to actively discuss it. Students participate in graded small group workshops to practice interpretive skills needed for the essays and in peer review of essay drafts. In-class work may include an annotated bibliography and reading quizzes.

**Formal Written Work: 60%.** Students will submit @ 15 pages of peer-reviewed, final draft work, split into individual essays at the instructor’s discretion. These research essays should demonstrate careful text-based analysis, including location of the text within a social and historical context, analysis of the characters or speakers in a variety of socially-defined categories, and integration of well-chosen and cited scholarly sources. Use of an appropriate critical lens is encouraged.

**Midterm, Final, or Presentation: 20%,** depending on the instructor’s preference.