B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title : Critical Literacies
Course Code : ENG 3206
Recommended Study Year : 3rd Year for 4-year System
No. of Credits/Term : 3
Mode of Tuition : Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours : 2 hours Lecture/week
                     1 hour Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme : Required Course
Prerequisite(s) : N/A
Co-requisite(s) : N/A
Exclusion(s) : N/A
Exemption Requirement(s) : N/A

Brief Course Description

This course examines literacy with a critical lens in the context of 21st century education mediated by new technologies in the globalized world. Going beyond simply training students to read, write and make meaning from texts, the course aims to develop students’ literacy and analytic skills to understand the different concepts of and about texts produced by the different discourses and cultural practices through time. The course also aims to demonstrate that the textual realities produced by the discursive practices of mass media, the professions and academia are the more or less overt manifestations of power relations in society and organisations. Another aim of the course is to provide students with a cultural toolkit for their critical reflection upon textual inclusion and exclusion, and how texts influence and position us as members of society. In so doing, the course will draw upon the important concepts of dialogism and intertextuality in discourse, to examine the consumption and production of a variety of texts. In the process it will unpack the ideologically-based concepts at personal, institutional, and societal levels, with a specific focus on the Asia-Pacific region.

The course relates to the core course ENG 3202, Language and Society. While both courses touch on topics such as bilingualism, code choice, and languaging as an act of identity, this course discusses these topics in relation to ideology, and the exercise of power through language and discourse.

The course uses the grammatical concepts introduced in ENG 2103, Introduction to English Grammar, to analyse texts and unpack their ideology.

Aims

The course aims to enable students to:
1. Develop a personal opinion and reflect critically in response to a variety of texts;
2. Analyse, challenge and resist texts through ideological and logical critique using the concepts of dialogism and intertextuality;
3. Utilize conventions of academic writing such as quotation, citation, referencing and paraphrase to position themselves in relation to the different voices within and between texts;

4. Develop their own stance as informed and responsible citizens in the postmodern 21st century.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate active responses to deconstruct and challenge a variety of texts in terms of ideological and intertextual critiques;

2. Identify and analyise critically the linguistic and discursive strategies and devices used to incorporate and disguise ideology in discourse, such as:
   a) lexis, including metaphor
   b) grammar
   c) subject-positioning
   d) presuppositions and inferred assumptions;

3. Evaluate critically the role of language and discourse in constructing and deconstructing social realities and regimes of “truth”

4. Apply effectively the academic conventions for using others’ texts and voices, and for distinguishing these texts and voices from their own;

5. Adapt and create texts for socially positive purposes to reveal the hidden ideology and power relations that frame inequality and injustice in areas such gender, race, ethnicity, age and the environment.

6. Reflect upon and evaluate critically their own stance as informed and responsible citizens of global society in the postmodern 21st century.

**Indicative Content**

1. Overt and covert ideology in texts.

2. Linguistic relativity and bilingualism: vocabulary and lexical fields in English and Chinese.

3. Metaphor and ideology.

4. The role of grammar in ideological representation.

5. Subject positioning and reading positions in discourse.


7. Advertising, news, professional texts and academic textbooks: overt and covert ideology.

8. Intertextuality and the construction of social reality.

9. Dialogism, polyphony and resisting texts.

10. Intertextual conventions in academic essays.

**Teaching Method**

The course will consist of a lecture in which the key concepts and skills are introduced and a one-hour tutorial in which the students will apply the concepts and skills to analyse
texts, including their own texts. Students will give presentations demonstrating the analytical abilities they have acquired.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Exam 40% (outcomes 1 and 3).
2. Coursework 60%, comprising:
   a) 6 short analytical exercises: 30% (outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5).
   b) A presentation: analysing an academic text, tracing the construction of its realities, regimes of truth, and perhaps the historical development of key concepts in the text: 15% (outcomes 3, 5, 6).
   c) A project: production of a media or professional text with an academic analysis of the linguistic and other means used for expressing or disguising its ideological underpinnings: 15% (outcomes 1-6).

Assessment

Formative assessment (60%, 6 short exercises, a presentation and a project)
Summative assessment (40%, written exam)

Required Readings


Note. Students should have access to the core books as they will be used extensively.

Supplementary Readings


Note. The learning and teaching experiences of the course will inform the revision of the course book entitled, Critical reading and writing. Moreover, students shall be aware of the University regulations about academic dishonesty in course work and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations.