

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of English  
with effect from Semester A 2020 / 21**

---

---

**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** Literature and the City

**Course Code:** EN3581

**Course Duration:** One Semester

**Credit Units:** 3 credits

**Level:** B3

Arts and Humanities

**Proposed Area:**  
*(for GE courses only)*

Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Science and Technology

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Medium of Assessment:** English

**Prerequisites:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* None

**Precursors:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Equivalent Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Exclusive Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

This course aims to introduce students to a diverse range of city literature, creative nonfiction and literary journalism situated in different socio-cultural contexts from the nineteenth century to the present day. Students will explore how selected writers represent, narrate and (re) imagine the city and the urban experience. Drawing upon theories and practices in literary studies, cultural geography, sociology and spatiality, students will be introduced to key concepts and critical perspectives in the study of space, place and the city. Topics to be discussed include: city and modernity, gender and space, flâneur and the metropolis, memory and place, and cosmopolitanism. Students will generate reading and creative responses to selected texts throughout the course, as well as develop critical skills in analysing literary and cultural texts

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Identify key aspects of city writing from the nineteenth century to the present day		V	V	
2.	Analyse the aesthetic and creative aspects of literary and nonfictional works		V	V	
3.	Apply critical reading, thinking, and writing skills in interpreting literary and cultural texts		V	V	V
4.	Discuss the characteristics of literary and cultural texts and understand their interdisciplinary character		V	V	V
5.	Generate creative and critical responses to texts		V	V	V
		100%			

\* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5		
Interactive lecturing and discussion	Each week students will be introduced to a range of texts and will be encouraged to discuss and analyse them individually and in groups	V	V					
Composition and critical analysis of	Students will write a critical essay to engage with key concepts and ideas introduced in class. They	V	V	V	V	V		

key concepts and ideas	will need to carry out research for the critical essay.								
Creative and critical responses to literary texts	Students will generate creative and critical responses to selected texts throughout the course.	V	V	V	V	V			

#### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.					Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5		
Continuous Assessment: 100 %							
<b>Reading Responses</b> Students will compose reading responses on selected texts and topics throughout the course.					V	20%	Individual Work
<b>Group Creative Project</b> Students form small groups to give a creative response to a set text of the course. The project will be presented and curated on a course-dedicated website.		V	V	V	V	25%	Group Work
<b>Critical Essay</b> Students will write a critical essay engaging with a key topic in city literature. They need to carry out secondary source research to support and develop their argument.	V	V	V	V	V	45%	Individual Work
<b>Participation</b> Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities and prepare the set texts before each class.		V	V	V	V	10%	Individual Work
Examination: % (duration: , if applicable)							

\* The weightings should add up to 100%.

100%

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Critical Essay	Argumentation	Thesis is clear and appropriate for the writing task. There is a sense of originality in the way the writer has answered the question. Ideas are well supported and conclusions reveal a progression of ideas	The responses contain sharp ideas that are clearly expressed, original, and thoughtfully supported.	Elements of B and D	The topic is clear but there is little originality in the way that the writer has answered the question. Ideas are not always supported. There is little sense of progression as the paper develops.	The essay appears to be off topic or only loosely related to the task. The writer may have misunderstood the question.
	Language	Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. A wide variety of sentence structures are used.	Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well constructed. Small errors may persist but the meaning is sharp and clear.	Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors cause minimal distraction.	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear	Almost every sentence has some kind of error, which causes serious problems for the reader. The meaning is often lost or distorted.
	Engagement	Sophisticated critical reading and interpretative skills apparent.	The discussion of the primary texts is appropriate and sufficiently detailed. There is a sense of the writer critically engaging with the texts.	Elements of B and D	Some discussion of the primary texts, but mostly in general and broad terms. The selection of primary texts may not be appropriate for the task. Citation methods are not clear or inconsistently applied.	Very little if any engagement with the primary texts
	Presentation	The written assignments are extremely well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation	The written assignments are well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation	The written assignments are adequately presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation	The written assignments are poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation	The written assignments are very poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Reading Response Tasks	Engagement and Support	Demonstrates a very detailed understanding of the course readings. Specific and accurate support	Demonstrates a good understanding of relevant texts with some specific support	Demonstrates fairly good understanding of relevant texts, but lacking in detail. There may be some inaccuracies.	Demonstrates a superficial understanding of relevant texts. Support is not always detailed or accurate.	Demonstrates a minimal understanding of relevant texts and/or lacking in content.
	Ideas	The main ideas of the response are sharp, creative, and compelling.	The response is coherent and contains some elements of creativity and originality.	Main ideas are mostly clear but the response may be lacking in terms of specific or original ideas.	The main ideas are not always clear and the response appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance.	The response appears to be off topic or ideas are generally incoherent.
Group Creative Project	Ideas	The main ideas are creative, original and compelling	The main ideas are thoughtful and contains elements of originality	There are some interesting ideas, though the project appears to be lacking in terms of original or creative ideas.	The project appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance.	The project ideas are generally incoherent, or irrelevant to the chosen topic
	Content	The key ideas of the creative project are very well expressed. Demonstrates an excellent understanding of the literary text. Establishes an intertextual relationship with the source text while demonstrating a strong sense of originality	The key ideas of the creative project are well-articulated. Demonstrates a very good understanding of the literary text. Establishes an intertextual relationship with the source text while demonstrating some elements of originality	The key ideas of the creative project are to a large extent conveyed. Demonstrates a fair understanding of the literary text. The intertextual relationship with the source text can be strengthened. The project may be lacking in terms of original or creative ideas.	The main ideas are unclear. Demonstrates limited understanding of the literary text. The intertextual relationship between the source and the creative response needs to be strengthened. The project is lacking in terms of originality or relevance.	Failed to demonstrate an understanding of the literary text. There is no attempt to establish an intertextual relationship with the original text. The project is lacking in terms of relevance.
	Presentation	The creative project is extremely well-presented. The chosen approach succeeds in bringing out the major features and ideas of the project.	The creative project is well-presented. The chosen approach to a large extent brings out the major features and ideas of the project.	The creative project is to a large extent clearly presented. The chosen approach may not bring out all the key features and ideas of the project.	The creative project is not effectively presented. The chosen approach is not effective in bringing out the key ideas of the project.	The presentation appears to be incoherent and is in lack of consideration.

Participation	Participation in in-class activities	Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes tasks satisfactorily.	Makes occasional contribution to in-class discussion and completes the tasks satisfactorily.	Seldom makes contribution to in-class group discussion; only completes few in-class tasks.	Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class tasks.	Fails to complete in-class tasks or participate in class discussions.
---------------	--------------------------------------	---	--	--	---	---

### Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

#### 1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

City, narratives, literature, society, modernity, metropolis, space, place

#### 2. Reading List

##### 2.1 Compulsory Readings (tentative list)

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Baudelaire, Charles. "The Painter of Modern Life".
2.	Berman, Marshall. <i>All That is Solid Melts Into Air</i> (selections)
3.	Dickens, Charles. <i>Sketches by Boz: Illustrative of Everyday Life and Everyday People</i> (Selections)
4.	Leung, Ping-kwan. <i>City at the End of Time</i> (selections)
5.	Pamuk, Orhan. <i>Istanbul: Memories of a City</i> (Selections)
6.	Poe, Allan Edgar. "The Man of the Crowd"
	Rhys, Jean. "Let Them Call It Jazz"
7.	Italo Calvino. <i>Invisible Cities</i>
8.	Other materials, such as criticisms and poems, will be distributed by the instructor

##### 2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Alter, Robert. <i>Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel</i> . New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
2.	Bachelard, Gaston. <i>The Poetics of Space</i> . Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.
3.	Benjamin, Walter. <i>The Arcades Project</i> . Tran. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.
4.	De Certeai, Michel. <i>The Practice of Everyday Life</i> . Tran. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988.
5.	Dennis, Richard. <i>Cities in Modernity: Representation and Production of Metropolitan Space 1840-1930</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
6.	Lehan, Richard Daniel. <i>The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History</i> . Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.
7.	Nord, Deborah. <i>Walking in the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City</i> . Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995.
8.	Parsons, Deborah. <i>Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity</i> . Oxford, New York: OUP, 2000.
9.	Solnit, Rebecca. <i>Wanderlust: A History of Walking</i> . London and New York: Verso, 2002.
10.	Tuan, Yi-Fu. <i>Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience</i> . London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
11.	Williams, Raymond. <i>The Country and the City</i> . Hogarth Press, 1985.