

MODBOOK

20

IDEAS & EXPOSITION

21

SEMESTER 1

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Ideas & Exposition I



UTW1001A
**IDENTITIES AND IDEAS IN
MODERN MARKET-DRIVEN
SOCIETIES**

taught by Dr Marissa E Kwan Lin

*“...we focus on the pervasiveness of
market logic, which is a way of
thinking that prioritises profit-loss
thinking as a primary means of
conducting our lives”*

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

My field of interest is linguistics, in particular, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). In a nutshell, CDA involves examining the various communications we use in our daily lives for relations of power that we often are unaware of, and MDA looks at these communications as an interactive composite of signs like words, images, gesture, sound, etc. that help us make meaning. Combined together, CDA and MDA can help us understand how our choices, thoughts and behaviours expressed in the different types of communications we use are intricately linked with how societies function.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

I'd like for students to learn how academic reading and writing can be used to discuss prevalent issues of the day, with a basis in good argument, effective use of language and communication skills and a healthy respect for the points of view of all. But, before we can do this, we need some amount of content to read and write about.

In UTW1001A, we focus on the pervasiveness of market logic, which is a way of thinking that prioritises profit-loss thinking as a primary means of conducting our lives. Many researchers have written about the negative impact of this market logic and how it ultimately affects our sense of self and sense of worth as individuals. Thus, I'd like for students to become more aware of how our daily thoughts, actions and opinions may be influenced by this logic, and begin to think of how we should respond to it.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

The module is centred on neoliberalism – the phenomenon that many researchers have argued forms the basis of the market logic we see now that is so pervasive in society.

The term 'neoliberalism' may seem daunting, and this is exactly why we will spend the first few weeks of the semester attempting to answer the question: what is neoliberalism? As with all good questions, there are seldom complete answers. So we aim to tease out neoliberalism's key characteristics that many researchers can generally agree on. One of the readings we will look at in relation to this is the first chapter of David Harvey's 2005 book 'A Brief History of Neoliberalism'.

We will then look at how neoliberalism takes shape in real life. One of the readings we will be looking at is Donald Low's 2013 essay 'Good Meritocracy, Bad Meritocracy'. Readings like these have been assigned to help us examine how neoliberalism impacts our daily lives. As we read the arguments of various academics like Low, we aim to think critically about the points made and the argumentation used.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

We will meet online for our twice-a-week seminars using Zoom to have small group discussions based on a variety of readings taken from the academic literature and webpage articles written for the educated layperson. To help us read effectively in preparation for these seminars, we will also be making use of platforms like Hypothes.is, an online social annotation tool, the LumiNUS discussion forum and Google Docs. Online social annotation tools allow for readers to make annotations on readings that peers can respond to, which can lead to further discussion and input. The LumiNUS discussion forum will be where I can handle questions about the readings and Google Docs will be an option for collaborative work.

The main aim of using this combination of tools is to keep our learning active and on-going. Good ideas may come in a flash, but most of the time, it's important to spend the time discussing and reflecting about ideas in order to come to a greater understanding of them.

UTW1001C

AT THE EDGES OF THE LAW: ETHICS, MORALITY AND SOCIETY

taught by Dr Zhou Ziqian Jan



“...disciplined way of getting closer to those answers, in virtue of which we gain a better understanding of ourselves if not a sense of wonder towards the human condition...”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

I am a philosopher, and rigorous analysis is what I am trained to do. We engage in such analysis or argumentation (i.e. we philosophize) not simply in esoteric philosophy classes but whenever we ask the most searching questions of which no easy answers avail themselves. What does morality require of me? How do I know if the state really is a just one? Is it permissible if the young teenage mother opts for an abortion? Is this ugly object in front of me really art because of the mere fact that it is displayed in a gallery? Am I free? How do I know if I am happy? Is there God? I am sure that we ask ourselves such questions at some points in our lives; the method of philosophical inquiry, then, offers one not so much pre-packed answers but a disciplined way of getting closer to those answers, in virtue of which we gain a better understanding of ourselves if not a sense of wonder towards the human condition. Apart from my own training as a philosopher, I bring also into class a love of the arts and a deep affection for my students

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

I intend for all students enrolled in my module to gain a deeper understanding of some of the most pressing and controversial topics that have inspired heated public debates. For instance, I intend to cover issues such as the freedom of speech, euthanasia and the same-sex debate, which are issues that, when discussed in some societies or communities, threatens excommunication, if not the possibility of harm to oneself. Singapore, several decades ago, may be one such society. Through a discussion of such issues or topics, students will learn to assemble their thoughts in a manner both imaginative and highly logical, and to articulate these thoughts with the right expressions in the right order with an unflinching eye towards the truth.

But enough of this module already. Let me make a plea for this creature called the 'Ideas and Exposition' programme. The advertised goal that unifies all IEMs is that students gain a foundation in academic writing. Yet, 'academic' or 'expository' writing, to my mind, may be largely what a student needs to do in order to survive university (or bits of it), and that success in one's future career hardly requires that we revisit this skill, much less excel in it. There is some truth in the foregoing, I have to confess; yet, there is also some truth in what I am now going to say. I hope that students realise or come to realise that writing well requires thinking well and reading well, or what learned folks call the skills of critical thinking and comprehension. Now, even if there is profit to be reaped from being able to reason, read and write—i.e. to 'compete in a global economy' or to be 'future-proof'—this ought not to be a student's only motive for doing these well. Reasoning, reading and writing are processes that are inextricably bound up with the acquisition of knowledge. We are not passive brains in a vat, nor our professors the wires through which information is fed to us. Knowledge is not something superadded (as an afterthought) to an already existing store of the abilities of reasoning, reading and writing; rather, knowledge trickles down to us in virtue of our engaging in these processes. Those who emphasise or see only the monetary value of the skills of reasoning, reading and writing are often individuals who read little, reason badly, and, as a result, write nonsense.

Now, back to this module: by the time you start working you would have forgotten (or not found much use for) most of what you have learnt in university. But you will remember most of what you have learnt in this module. Reasoning has an important role to play in our lives. If you reason well you lessen the likelihood of your being swayed by false beliefs. And, when your beliefs are not held hostage by the arbitrary winds of fashion, your capacity for autonomous and, hence, responsible action expands, which is something to shout about.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

Any good op-ed on issues surrounding the three topics covered in this module should suffice to introduce students to what is being discussed.

For instance:

- 1) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/11/john-finnis-oxford-university-academic-freedom-law>
- 2) <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1997/03/whose-right-to-die/304641/>
- 3) <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/dissecting-ex-cj-chan-sek-keongs-paper-377a-what-it-says-what-it-doesnt-say-and-what-next>

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

The university would require us to conduct lessons through Zoom.

UTW1001D

SELF, SOCIETY, AND THE DIGITAL TSUNAMI ERA

taught by Dr James Stephen

Module Description

Cyberbullying, cyber-racism, online falsehoods. These are some of the phenomena that can be observed online. In an era of overwhelmingly diverse viewpoints within social media platforms, how has digital communication shaped and changed the way we communicate and respond to each other as human beings? Have we compromised more than we have gained? Drawing upon perspectives from various disciplines, this module helps students explore how opinions and ideas are formed, debated and transmitted in an age where human interaction is constantly mediated by technology.

UTW1001D

FROM HUMAN TO 'POSTHUMAN'

taught by Dr Cole



“Bioethics is concerned with moral issues that arise in relation to developments in biomedicine and it adopts the conceptual and analytic tools of philosophy”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

The idea of human beings modifying themselves significantly enough to warrant the use of the term “posthuman” to describe what they become interested me sufficiently to write my doctoral thesis on it. The posthuman topic is highly interdisciplinary as is my own academic background in English Literature, Critical Theory and Bioethics and I have drawn on each of these fields in developing the module. The posthuman theme has been widely explored in film and literature and these expressive forms often provide useful entry points for discussion of the possibilities and controversies surrounding the radical modification of human beings. Bioethics is concerned with moral issues that arise in relation to developments in biomedicine and it adopts the conceptual and analytic tools of philosophy and other disciplines in attempting to resolve them. Critical theory provides further academic perspectives through which to critique social and technological practices and so also lends itself well to thinking about the radical reimagining of the human. Without aiming to go too deep into any of these fields, UTW1001E draws freely upon them to help students engage both their imaginations and their analytical abilities in thinking and writing about the posthuman. In other words, to use both hemispheres of their brains!

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

At the content level, I would expect them to come away with some appreciation of the major issues in contemporary debates around the idea of the “posthuman”, both conceptual (How should we understand the term itself? How are posthumans distinct from humans?) and practical/ethical (Should we strive to become posthuman? If so, what goals should we set ourselves and what tools should we use to realize them?).

At the rhetorical level, I would expect students to develop expository skill through summarizing and synthesizing the views of others on the way to developing a defensible position in relation to a question of interest they have set themselves. These are key scholarly skills, but also skills that will serve them well in their future careers.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

We shall explore questions of the following kinds through course readings, film viewings and class discussions (indicative readings provided beneath each):

What is human nature, and should we aim to improve upon it?

- Bostrom, N. (2008). Why I want to be a posthuman when I grow up. <http://www.nickbostrom.com/posthuman.pdf>
- Kass, L. R. (2003). Ageless bodies, happy souls, The New Atlantis, 1, 9-28. <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/ageless-bodies-happy-souls>

How should we understand the term 'posthuman' in relation to other terms such as 'human' and 'transhuman'?

- Gray, C. H. (2017). Post-sapiens: Notes on the politics of future human terminology. Journal of Posthuman Studies, 1(2), 136-150. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jpoststud.1.2.0136>.
- Hook, C. C. (2004). Transhumanism and posthumanism. In S.G. Post (Ed.) Encyclopedia of Bioethics (3rd ed., vol. 5). Macmillan Reference USA.
- Ihde, D. (2011). H-: Of which human are we post? In H+Transhumanism and its critics. G. R. Hansell & W. Grassie (Eds.). Metanexus. <http://metanexus.net/essay/h-which-human-are-we-post>

How would human rights that are tied to our essential nature as human beings fare in a posthuman future?

- Fukuyama, F. (2004). Transhumanism. Foreign Policy, 144, 42.
- Hopkins, P. D. (2008). Is enhancement worthy of being a right? Journal of Evolution and Technology, 18(1), 1-9. <http://jetpress.org/v18/hopkins.htm>

How has the notion of the posthuman been represented through the creative arts?

- Chiang, T. 2002, 'Understand'. In G. Dozois (Ed.), Superman: tales of the posthuman future (pp. 97-124). St. Martin's Griffin.
- Graham, E. L. (2002), Representations of the post/human: monsters, aliens and others in popular culture (pp. 20-37). Rutgers University Press.
- NUS Wind Symphony. (2017, March 19). Rise of the transhuman. University Cultural Centre, National University of Singapore. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQSP-aLMLRg&list=PL99P4SLWgD837XmnLBuUIK2tx0sLOdRyC>

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

In a word, cybernetically! As posthuman scholars, we must now embrace the technology we study in order to share our insights and sharpen our thinking within the "closed signaling loop" of the Zoom platform. These discussions will take place within scheduled class times, though they will be supplemented by asynchronous learning in the form of discussion forums, film viewings, online writing groups, and the like.

Importantly, I want to make the learning experience just as rich as it would be if face-to-face classes were being conducted. Students will still be able to engage with me out of regular class time through individual online chat sessions. Pour a coffee, pull up your favourite chair and share what's on your mind!

UTC1001G

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR: HOW DO 'I' FIT IN THIS SOCIAL WORLD?

taught by Dr Misty So-Sum Wai-Cook



“students will examine the psychosocial and sociocognitive theories and practices of the construction of self-concept/image and public persona”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

Among the various social skills, students will learn intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that are vital for tertiary students as they transition from higher education to a rapid-changing society and adapt to a work environment.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

Students should find this module relevant because understanding human social behaviours and skills identified as 21st-century competencies from the psychosocial and sociocognitive perspectives will allow them to:

- Develop awareness of own and others' behaviours.
- Recognise and regulate their own behaviours and emotions.
- Develop empathy for others and understand relationships.
- Establish positive relationships.
- Work effectively in teams.
- Handle challenging situations constructively and develop leadership skills.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

Three key sections will be covered:

Intrapersonal skills: students will examine the psychosocial and sociocognitive theories and practices of the construction of self-concept/image and public persona, self-regulated learning, and maintaining intellectual openness.

Interpersonal skills: students will examine the psychosocial and sociocognitive perspectives of various interaction dynamics in groups and public communication settings, for example: cooperation, collaboration, conflict management, and leadership.

Students will also critically analyse and evaluate the appropriateness, successes, and failures of **intrapersonal and interpersonal** skills concurrently of social human behaviours in various real-world social contexts relevant to them; for example, in educational, political, and business settings.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

Classes will be conducted online



UTW1001F
**THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF
HIGHER EDUCATION: IMPACT AND
CHALLENGES**

taught by Dr Fong Yoke Sim

***“What are the implications of English
as medium of instruction (EMI) for
cultural and academic values in
countries where English is not a first,
or even a second, language?”***

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

My interest in the internationalisation of higher education (IHE) began with my own postgraduate studies in the UK, first for my MSc and then PhD. The latter experience especially impressed on me the marvel of IHE: I was teaching in NUS but studying for a doctorate degree from a British university. Besides the brief annual residency requirement, I completed the bulk of my coursework and communicated with my supervisors on my dissertation via the Internet. Additionally, my dissertation topic and my interaction with the international students I was teaching led me to research and publish around the subject of international higher education. Thus, I bring to UTW1000F my interest in IHE, research insights on the topic and first-hand experience of its benefits. However, recent literature has highlighted the controversies of IHE and this has led me on a new search to study the developments of IHE and its challenges to higher education and its stakeholders.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

NUS UTown residential college students are already surrounded by and engaged in IHE: students and faculty from all around the world, exchange/internship/STEER programmes, and opportunities abound for other international experiences. Yet, all these are only the manifestations of the phenomenon. Through participating in the module, students will delve more deeply into the process of IHE and critically reflect on its rationales, approaches, strategies, and developments. Against this framework to ground their general understanding of IHE, they will compare the different paths that regions, countries, and institutions take and examine the outcomes of these diverse case studies. Students will then be ready to grapple with the controversies that confront IHE and its impacts on individuals, institutions, society and the world.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

While analysing the key impacts and challenges of IHE, students will engage in discussions and debates surrounding IHE. How have, say, academic mobility and cross-border programmes influenced students, institutions, countries and the world? What are the implications of English as medium of instruction (EMI) for cultural and academic values in countries where English is not a first, or even a second, language? Students may also choose to research other topics of interest to them, such as marketisation of IHE, global citizenship and the role of technology. Not forgetting that the impact of the current COVID-19 on IHE suggests itself as a very pertinent topic for investigation.

For a sample of readings, here are some to begin with:

Contexts:

- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8:1, Spring 2004, 5-31. DOI: 10.1177/1028315303260832
- de Wit, J. H. (2011). Globalization and internationalisation of higher education. *RUSC. Universities and Knowledge Society Journal*, 8(2), 77-164.
- Engwall, L. (2016). The Internationalisation of Higher Education. *European Review*, 24:2, 221–231. DOI:10.1017/S1062798715000575

Case Studies:

Daquila, T. C. (2013). Internationalizing Higher Education in Singapore: Government Policies and the NUS Experience. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 17:5, 629–647. DOI: 10.1177/1028315313499232

Andersson, B. & Mayer, T. (2015). Internationalization of higher education—the Nanyang Technological University story: perspectives and experience from the Lion City. In John, K. Hudzik (Ed.), *Comprehensive Internationalization* (pp. 175-182). Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

Hong, M. (2018): A comparative study of the internationalization of higher education policy in Australia and China (2008–2015). *Studies in Higher Education*. DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2018.1553154

Controversies:

Knight, J. (2013). The changing landscape of higher education internationalisation – for better or worse? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 17:3, 84-90. DOI: 10.1080/13603108.2012.753957

Altbach, P. G. (2014). Moocs as neocolonialism: Who controls knowledge? *International Higher Education*, (75), 5–7.
<https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2014.75.5426>

Gu, M. M., & Lee, J. C.-K. (2018). “They lost internationalization in pursuit of internationalization”: students’ language practices and identity construction in a cross-disciplinary EMI program in a university in China. *Higher Education* 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0342-2>

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

Classes will be conducted online for all UTW modules in Semester 1 of AY 2020-2021. Seminars for UTW1001F will take place mainly via the Zoom platform with whole class activities such as lectures, discussions, role plays, debates and presentations. Small group meetings will be conducted via Zoom’s breakout rooms in the course of the seminars. Schedules, readings, videos/links, discussion questions, PowerPoint lecture slides and assignments will be uploaded to LumiNUS before and/or after classes. Students may work together on documents via LumiNUS or google docs. As classes are also made up of people, activities will be designed and support provided for each section to develop a sense of community and camaraderie in the course of the semester.



UTC1001H
**EATING RIGHT(S):
THE POLITICS OF FOOD**

taught by Dr Anuradha Ramanujan

***“...how global pandemics expose the
vulnerabilities of the modern food
system; debates surrounding
genetically modified crops/food...”***

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

My level 1 module “Eating Right(s): The Politics of Food draws on my interests in globalization studies, food studies, environmental politics and critical pedagogy. Although the topic lends itself quite readily to multi-disciplinary perspectives, class readings are carefully selected to appeal to students with different academic interests, knowledge and experiences. For instance, we may explore the same issue – e.g. how global pandemics expose the vulnerabilities of the modern food system; debates surrounding genetically modified crops/food; the influence of food marketing on consumer choice – from the perspectives of a developmental economist, a biologist, a political scientist and a business ethics scholar. In the process, students engage critically with important concepts and debates on the topic area and develop an understanding of how academic knowledge/meaning is constructed and communicated.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

Course materials, class discussions and writing tasks aim to familiarize students with key concepts and debates in the field of global food politics and promote critical engagement with a range of issues by explicitly modelling how academic arguments are constructed. Students develop the skills needed to summarize, synthesize and evaluate academic arguments, ask relevant questions to identify areas of inquiry and effectively communicate their own perspectives both verbally and in writing. More broadly, my “critical pedagogy” approach seeks to help students make connections between classroom practices, institutional knowledges and larger questions of power, justice (social and environmental) and agency.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

Key focus areas include food production systems and technologies, land grabs, food marketing, food waste, international trade agreements in relation to issues of food (in)security, consumer choice, public health and environmental sustainability. They vary from semester to semester. However, some of the questions and concerns framing the module include:

How does politics shape the agri-food system? Why, at a time when we produce more food than ever before in our history, is world hunger on the rise? What international policies govern the production, distribution and consumption of food? How did industrial agriculture become the global norm and how does it impact rural communities and ecosystems? How do alternative food movements conceptualize food security in relation to both society and environment? Can science and technology aid in the creation of more sustainable food systems? Do individual actions matter or does the focus on consumer responsibility/choice efface issues of power and structural inequality within the food system? We examine these questions in three units using scholarly sources from different disciplines, popular writings and film. Where relevant, our examination of these issues will take into account Singapore's unique position as an urban city-state that imports over 90% of its food.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

All classes and individual consultations will be conducted online via Zoom. In addition, we may use Google Docs, Padlet and the LumiNUS Forum for in-class writing activities and discussions. The syllabus and course readings will be uploaded to LumiNUS before the start of the semester. Other materials such as handouts, peer review sheets, lecture notes/videos and PowerPoint slides will be uploaded periodically throughout the semester. There will be no field trips this semester.

Ideas & Exposition II

UTW2001J

BLOOD, DEATH & DESIRE: INTERPRETING THE VAMPIRE

taught by Dr Coleen Angove



“... pop culture is seldom just about entertainment, but provides cultural documents, albeit often encoded in ways that need our careful analysis.”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

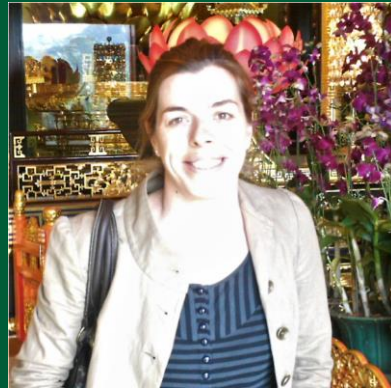
I've long been interested in Gothic studies, now a respectable field of study, although historically regarded as sensational and academically inferior. Similarly, the study of contemporary pop culture products of horror is also gaining academic respectability. There is an explosion of research into how fictional monsters reveal the anxieties of the cultural and historical contexts within which they appear. This allows for a fascinating exploration of films and television series to see what they reveal about how we see our world.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

Apart from reflecting on good writing practice, I would like each student to become engrossed in what a (fictional or real) monster of his/her choice reveals about the prejudices, subconscious desires and/or cultural anxieties of a particular historical place and time. I hope students will learn about how pop culture is seldom just about entertainment, but provides cultural documents, albeit often encoded in ways that need our careful analysis.

What are some key topics covered in the module? And some sample readings?

We will look at ways of defining monsters, consider the theories on the social function of the monster, and also read analyses of monsters, including vampires and Zombies in contemporary films and television series.



UTW2001Z

THE SEMIOTICS OF COLOUR

taught by Dr Laetitia Monbec

“...inclusiveness or discrimination can be expressed through colour use in visual communication”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

Having studied language and semiotics, I became extremely interested in colour as a semiotic mode, and the way colour makes meaning in our visual world. This includes looking at the types of meanings, and how these meanings are formed, and why they are formed. I am interested in looking at how specific social constraints may lead to colour taking on particular meanings, for example, how degrees of freedom of speech can impact the way colour can actually mean. Another fascinating area is how inclusiveness or discrimination can be expressed through colour use in visual communication. I am also informed by my watercolor practice through which I interact with colours in a more concrete and tangible way, with each pigment creating unique effects, and also meanings that connect to a whole history of international trade and discovery.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

I think students will learn to observe and analyse the impact of colour in our visual world critically, to not take it for granted or to accept it unquestioningly. They will learn that just like language, colour can express a range of meanings that shape our culture in very subtle ways. Students will explore how colour realises different types of meanings such as ideational meanings (e.g. colour in flags or in brand logos), interpersonal meanings (including meanings related to evaluation and emotion) and textual meanings (e.g. color in user interface in online environments). They will also learn how to research issues related to colour and explore a question of their choice with guidance from the tutor. Students' research paper may develop a theoretical position on color as a semiotic mode; analyze colour use in a particular artefact; or explore impact or interpretation of colour meaning among community members.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

Students will be encouraged to explore a field of their choice (this could be their discipline, or any area of interest). We will investigate different questions related to the site of production and the intended or unintended meanings of an artefact or a colour practice, and/or the site of interpretation , namely how a community or a viewer may perceive the colour use.

Examples of questions explored:

- Under what circumstances does colour become a semiotic mode in its own right (like language)?
- How does a specific colour use shape our perception of an event or a community?
- For readings, we have a range of academic publications in Semiotics, and a few non academic sources (for example from the New Yorker or other news articles) and some films and documentaries.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

We will use a range of platforms and activities to make sure we build a supportive community where we all feel comfortable to express our views. There will be synchronous meetings on zoom and group work on Google, and discussions using a range of platforms. There will be plenty of opportunities for individual feedback, one on one consultation with the tutor, and peer reviews. I know Tembusu students will be as creative as usual to create an enriching and enjoyable learning environment!



UTW2001Q

“WHAT’S IN A WORD?”

MEANING ACROSS CULTURES

taught by Dr Wong Jock Onn

“...there is a difference between the world created by the language they speak and the ‘objective’ world”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

I am a semanticist by training and my primary research areas are semantics (the study of language meaning) and pragmatics (the study of how people ‘use’ language). I have published a number of papers in these areas and the languages studied include English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Singlish. Unfortunately, while semantics is relevant to almost all fields of study, it is not something that many scholars pay attention to. As a result, an excellent researcher may not always be the best communicator. Meaning lies at the heart of language and studying it can help one express oneself clearly. As a semanticist, I am in the position to guide students to become better communicators.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

Students will learn what meaning is about and its ethnocentric nature. They will learn how a language, shaped by the culture in which it is used, can predispose speakers to view the world in a certain culture-specific way. They will realize that there is a difference between the world created by the language they speak and the ‘objective’ world. In addition, students will learn how to write with clarity and how to organize their ideas cohesively. Above all, they will learn how to express complex ideas in simpler English, something which most other writing programs do not emphasize.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

This module focuses on word meaning. Key topics include semantic universals and the semantics of emotion terms, particles, interjections, address forms and cultural artifacts. Are there meanings that are found in every language? What does an emotion consist in? What do particles do? What goes into an interjection? What do address forms reflect? How complex is the idea of a cultural artifact. How do we capture their meanings? These are some of the questions the module explores. Below are some sample readings. I would like to point out that the third one below, which I co-authored with Tao, a former student of this module, was developed from Tao's final paper. Tao was a resident of RC4 when he read the module. You could access the paper using our library's website. Do a search for the title of the edited volume (in italics below).

- "Emotions of Jesus" by Anna Wierzbicka:
<http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics/article/view/17846>
- "A semantic menagerie: The conceptual semantics of ethnozoological categories" by Cliff Goddard:
<http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics/article/view/19346/16160>
- Jiashu Tao & Jock Wong, 2019. The confounding Mandarin colour term 'qing': Green, blue, black or all of the above and more? In Lauren Sadow, Bert Peeters & Kerry Mullan (eds.), *Studies in Ethnopragmatics, Cultural Semantics and Intercultural Communication: Minimal English and Beyond* (pp.95-116). Singapore: Springer

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

Classes will be conducted on Zoom (e.g. using the shares screen function for class discussions & breakout rooms for group discussions), a user-friendly app. Google apps will also be used.

UTW2001M

SPORTS & SOCIALISATION

taught by Dr Mark Brooke



“...we look at case studies to discuss these issues such as the stories of Kerri Walsh Jennings warned to avoid pregnancy by sponsors unless she wanted to give up sport as a career”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

As we use a small class seminar approach, the space we share is ideal for eliciting opinions about academic topics covered. We discuss issues related to the module's journal article reading syllabus. Sometimes we look at case studies to discuss these issues such as the stories of Kerri Walsh Jennings warned to avoid pregnancy by sponsors unless she wanted to give up sport as a career; or Maria Toorpakai who pretended to be a boy in Pakistan so that she could play sports. I like to hear what students have to say and to share my knowledge and views on these current affairs topics.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

We have presentations of academic journal papers covering diverse scholarly perspectives on sport socialisation processes. We explore the content and the form of these papers; perhaps their critical theories and methodologies (normally within the interpretivist paradigm) as well as their academic language and writing techniques. One of the main goals of the course is to convert this reading into writing. At the end of the module, students' produce their own research papers on a topic that they find motivating. If it is good enough, and they have the time, I am happy to help students take their work further and publish it. So far, I have co-published 2 journal papers with IEM2 students.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

We examine processes of socialisation into, out of and through sport. For example, we investigate the role that social structure or significant others play in a person's choice to enter sport. We look at the relationship between sport participation and a person's gender, race, class, and physical ability. Is sport empowering or not? Currently, my interest is in exploring sport as a popular culture site advocating inclusive masculinity and feminism. I am also very interested in upcoming and developing sporting cultures such as e-sports and lifestyle sports such as Ultimate Frisbee and Skateboarding.

My 2019 book *Case Studies in Sport Socialisation* covers several of the key subjects we discuss in the module. This is available at the NUS library as an eBook. Example module readings used in the past are:

- Salter, A., & Blodgett, B. (2012). Hypermasculinity & dickwolves: The contentious role of women in the new gaming public in the *Journal of broadcasting & electronic media*, 56(3), 401-416;
- Le Clair, J. M. (2011). Transformed identity: from disabled person to global Paralympian. *Sport in society*, 14(9), 1116-1130;
- Velija, P., Mierzwinski, M., & Fortune, L. (2013). 'It made me feel powerful': women's gendered embodiment and physical empowerment in the martial arts. *Leisure studies*, 32(5), 524-541.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

We will conduct online sessions only using Luminus, Zoom, Teams and Google docs. We will use these tools in the best ways possible to ensure that the module content is engaging and student-tutor/student-student interactions are effective. If used well, very effective learning can take place.

UTW2001P

SCIENCE FICTION & EMPIRE

taught by Dr Jason Lawrence Banta

Module Description

Science fiction is less about the future than it is about the present. Many science fiction narratives critique contemporary social issues, particularly imperialism and colonialism. This course will introduce students to the theories of colonialism and their importance in a modern context. Armed with this knowledge, students will engage with classic and contemporary science fiction texts in order to understand, as well as question, how such narratives describe and proscribe ways of ordering the world. In developing their original research projects, students will explore how this intersection between popular narrative and ideology influences many of the ways we think about culture today.

UTW2001PW

ALTER EGO / AUTHENTIC SELF? ONLINE POLITICAL IDENTITIES

taught by Dr Nazerene Ibrhamin

Module Description

This module explores how online interactions foster collective identities premised on real/imagined social, economic and political injustice. The 20th century generated identity politics, with its focus on a shared loss of dignities resulting from prolonged colonial or imperial oppression. Evolving political and social settings gradually led to movements centred around distinct group identities (feminist movements, civil rights movements etc.). Advancements in digital communication in the new millennium have led to new variants of online collective identities. This module will examine how virtual identity politics is impacting offline politics, and demanding changes to socio-economic and political landscapes both locally and globally.

UTW2001M

DISCOURSE, CITIZENSHIP & SOCIETY

taught by Dr Gene Nevara



“...my research interest lies in critically examining how (political) discourse reproduces dominant ideas that circulate in society and shapes the way people think, feel and act”

How do you bring your field of interest into the seminar?

As a scholar, I'm interested in investigating discourse in society—that is, talk, text, and the use of symbols in sociopolitical contexts at large. Specifically, my research interest lies in critically examining how (political) discourse reproduces dominant ideas that circulate in society and shapes the way people think, feel and act. What I teach in the classroom is to a significant extent based on my experience as a scholar in rhetoric and public address and discourse studies. When I talk about writing academically, I do not just draw from textbook examples of academic scholarship. I find it necessary to draw from my actual experience of ideating, incubating, drafting, revising, editing, and fine-tuning my research articles. I also talk about my own struggles and the challenges that I face as an academic writer.

Students in my class are guided through processes of academic writing and of critically analyzing discourses on social issues that they are interested in or feel strongly about. It is important that students find these social issues significant to them so that they will be able to invest time and effort in their individual research projects. To help them carry out these projects, I introduce them to frameworks or ways of analyzing texts and talk through class readings and discussion. In that way, they become critically aware of how language and the use of symbols in general can perpetuate or potentially challenge social practices and behavior.

What do you intend for the students to learn from the module?

Through the module, I hope that students would be able to develop strong research skills and a critical disposition toward scholarly or academic writing. The students should be able to write their ideas in a clear and engaging fashion; they should be able to engage the literature by reaffirming current ideas, challenging others or offering possibilities of extending or complicating existing ones.

In terms of content, I hope they become aware of how they can develop into good, that is, critical, engaged, productive, ethical, responsible producers and consumers of discourse. I hope that they turn into good “rhetorical citizens”—members of society that use and critically examine language and other symbolic resources in order to understand why society works in certain ways and what may be done to sustain or alter these ways. I want them to be competent, critical and creative in crafting messages as well as in decoding these messages with the ultimate goal of helping society change for the better—a society that is just and humane.

What are some key topics that will be covered in the module? Would it be possible to provide some sample readings for the module?

The module starts with the notion “rhetorical citizenship”, a concept introduced by rhetoric scholars Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen in several papers. Rhetorical citizenship pertains to the ways citizens or members of polities or social groups use language and other non-linguistic symbolic resources to enact change, influence policies, sustain or transform social practices. Once students have a clear theoretical grounding on the relationship of discourse/rhetoric and society and how such a relationship is mediated as well as shape or define citizenship, they are introduced to case studies that offer specific analytical frameworks in studying discourse in society.

The case studies vary. One reading investigates rhetorical practices in public deliberation between civil society and government agencies and how these rhetorical strategies are mobilized to come up with an agreeable solution to all parties. Another case looks into public debates on controversial social issues and interrogates the competing narratives on both sides; the paper further interrogates the kind of language used by speakers on both side that polarize society, rend politics and poison the rhetorical atmosphere. We also look into local cases written by Singaporean and Singapore-based academics scholars. Some of these cases examine how citizen discourse on multiculturalism is used to resist liberal immigration policies, how online spaces are utilized to engender public participation, and how symbolic resources are used by local activists to challenge boundaries while staying pragmatic by towing the line.

The readings also include cases that investigate how dominant ideas are reproduced and circulated and how they are resisted and potentially transformed using certain rhetorical strategies. By studying these cases, students familiarize themselves with ways through which other researchers study systematically social problems from a discourse or rhetorical perspective. They are introduced to theoretical and methodological options from which they can select that which are appropriate for their individual projects. Needless to say, the recent discourses on COVID-19, the general elections in Singapore, and the global rise of populist leaders offer a wellspring of ideas and cases for critical interrogation and careful reflection.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, how would classes be conducted?

All IEM classes will be conducted online for Semester 1. We have been preparing for teaching fully online as team. We would like to assure our students that online classes will be treated with our signature pedagogies and the same academic rigor that we deploy in our face-to-face classes. The pandemic has generated a multitude of discourses from heads of state, activists, pundits and the general public. These discourses will definitely be useful in teaching the content of the module and in identifying research projects on the part of students enrolled in Discourse, Citizenship and Society.



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Designed by Sophia Tan

To find out more about the University Town College Programme,
please refer to:
<https://tembusu.nus.edu.sg/education>