

**HUMA 5360                      History and Theory of Comparative Literature                      Fall 2020**

Time:                      Tuesday                      9:00 – 11:50 am  
Venue:                      Zoom  
Instructor:                      Xiaolu Ma                      Rm.3377; [hmxlma@ust.hk](mailto:hmxlma@ust.hk)  
Office hours:                      By appointment

***Course Description***

This course introduces students to the field of Comparative Literature through a variety of readings. It examines the development of the discipline by looking into the major theories and methodologies. Through readings and in-class discussions, we explore the significance of reading literature from comparative perspectives, crossing geographical, temporal, and linguistic boundaries. We also encourage students to examine the key concepts, themes, and debates that have shaped the evolving field of comparative literature. For this semester, a special attention is given to Marxism and culture.

***Intended Learning Outcomes:***

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. have a clear idea of the emergence and development of Comparative Literature as a discipline
2. analyze critically the issues of comparative literature related to issues such as translation, identity, intertextually, and globalization
3. formulate their own comparative perspective in a research project on literary texts from different cultural traditions
4. read and talk about understand dense theoretical texts
5. write about a range of cultural texts using the theories examined in this course

## **Week 1 Introduction (Sept 8)**

### **Comparative Literature**

#### **Week 2 (Sept 15)**

Domínguez, César. *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications*. (Chapter 1,2)

#### **Week 3 (Sept 22)**

Domínguez, César. *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications*. (Chapter 5)

René Wellek, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature."

#### **Week 4 (Sept 29)**

Apter, Emily. "Global Translatio: The "Invention" of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933."

Damrosch, David. "Rebirth of a Discipline: The Global Origins of Comparative Studies."

Saussy, Huan. "Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes."

### **Western Marxism**

#### **Week 5 (Oct 6)**

Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*

"What is Orthodox Marxism?"

"Class Consciousness"

"The Changing Function of Historical Materialism"

#### **Week 6 (Oct 13)**

Michail Bakhtin, "Epic and the Novel."

Michail Bakhtin, excerpts from *Rabelais and His World*

#### **Week 7 (Oct 20)**

Benjamin, "Author as Producer,"

Walter Benjamin, excerpts from *The Writer of Modern Life*

#### **Week 8 (Oct 27)**

Pollock, "State Capitalis"

Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology"

#### **Week 9 (Nov 3)**

Horkheimer, "End of Reason"

Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State"

#### **Week 10 (Nov 10)**

Adorno, "Subject and Object"

Adorno, "Sociology of Knowledge"

#### **Week 11 (Nov 17)**

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*,  
Section 1: "Desiring Machines"

Deleuze and Guattari, *1000 Plateaux*  
Chapter 1: "Introduction-Rhizome"

### **Week 12 (Nov 24)**

Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*,  
"Prolegomenon,"  
Section 1: "The Semiotic and the Symbolic"

### **Week 13 Discussion (Dec 1)**

#### *Course Assessment*

Class Participation	20%
Midterm Paper (Oct 16)	30%
Final Paper (Dec 25)	50%

#### *Course Requirements*

#### **Class participation**

This is a seminar course. You are expected to attend all classes and stay for the entire class. You are allowed two absences without penalty. Each additional absence lowers your final grade by 2%. However, you can make up your absences by submitting a one-page analysis of the readings of that week. Any student with 5 absences or more will fail this course. There will be close reading of selected passages and thorough analysis of critical issues related to the texts. Students should read the assigned materials before class. I measure class participation based on the following criteria: arriving to class on time, completing required reading, engaging in class discussion, and respectfully listening when your classmates speak.

Course will be taught online. Please check Zoom and Canvas before our first class.

<https://itsc.ust.hk/zoom-online-teaching/how-join-online-zoom-webinar-class>

#### **Midterm paper**

3 pp in length. Times New Roman size 12 font, double line spacing, 1-inch margins, and half-inch indentations at the beginning of each paragraph. Please submit it by 8pm of the due date. Please submit it in Word format and make sure that the file is readable. Unreadable files will not be counted as successful submission. Late submission will be accepted as late as two days after the due date but will receive half credit unless permission from the instructor is obtained before the due date. Consider this assignment as reader responses to the readings. It must stick close to the texts. A summary of the content is helpful. Try to raise questions about the readings that relate to the issues treated in discussions and lectures. The best responses will treat individual passages and analyze these in order to raise larger issues and questions. You do not need to

provide answers to these questions.

### **Final paper**

7 pp in length (10 pp for Mphil students). Times New Roman size 12 font, double line spacing, 1-inch margins, and half-inch indentations at the beginning of each paragraph. Your paper should make a complex, well-defined argument in which you carefully use the theoretical material we have covered in exploring the cultural object or phenomenon of your choosing. Please submit it by 8pm of the due date. Please submit it in Word format and make sure that the file is readable. Unreadable files will not be counted as successful submission. Late submission will be accepted as late as two days after the due date but will receive half credit unless permission from the instructor is obtained before the due date.

### **Academic Honesty**

Acts of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Please go to our university webpage on academic dishonesty policy (<http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/index.html>), and read definitions of plagiarism and acts of dishonesty. Acts of dishonesty will lead to a failing grade in this course.