

Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus

Course Code: HUMA1302
Course Title: 20th Century Foreign Literature
Course Offered in: Fall 2026
Course Instructor: Lianke YAN

Course Description:

This course examines the radical shifts in 20th-century foreign literature. Moving beyond the 19th century's more unified humanistic tradition, we explore a diverse landscape characterized by distinct individual voices, fragmented perspectives, and literary movements that shaped the modern literary world.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

	Course ILOs
1	Identify, analyze, and critically evaluate the defining literary movements, aesthetic innovations, and values that shaped 20th-century foreign literature.
2	Develop close reading skills through the critical examination and interpretation of major representative works and authors from diverse linguistic and cultural traditions within 20th-century foreign literature.
3	Utilize key concepts and methodologies from literary and cultural studies to interpret texts and situate them within broader contexts.
4	Demonstrate an enhanced ability to analyze and appreciate the function and effect of literary language, form, and themes.
5	Cultivate comparative thinking by exploring connections, contrasts, and dialogues between key works/authors of 20th-century foreign literature and relevant traditions within Chinese literature.

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Weekly Topics:

Week	Topics	Briefly outline what this topic will cover
1	Introduction to the course and literary studies	An Introduction to literature, its ideological foundations and formal elements
2	Interiority and Transformation of Literary Figures	An Introduction to the major writers: Proust, Joyce, Kafka, Woolf, and Faulkner
3	Chinese literature in the world	A discussion of contemporary Chinese Literature from comparative perspectives
4	Structure and Narrative (part 1)	Discussion of narrative style, forms, images, and other features.
5	Structure and Narrative (part 2)	Discussion of the art of storytelling, composition and arrangement.
6	Metafiction: writing and reading that restores writing and reading itself	Twelve types of narrative relationships
7	Labyrinth: On the Path of Narration	Analyzing Borges's "The South"
8	Third Space: The Inside and Outside of the Literary Field	A discussion of how writers navigate the Third Space, their technique, innovation, and uncharted methods
9	Irony: On Writing as an Attitude and Stance	A discussion of irony as a significant stance and rhetorical strategy
10	Ugliness, Evil, and the Perverse: Literature Confronts Humanity's Alien Experiences	Studying the Polish literature, the "Second Cold War," and nuclear anxieties in the 1980s
11	Allegory	Examining the allegorical mode of writing
12	In-Class: presentation (3 hours)	Presentations and discussions
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Assessments:

In-class test : 20%

Mid-term test: 20%

Written assignment: 60%

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Suggested Readings:

1. 20 世紀外國文學，閻連科，中華書局， 2017