

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.

Subject Code	ENGL1CN22
Subject Title	Around Europe in Thirteen Weeks: A Critical Review of European Culture through its Films.
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	None. [Remarks: ENGL students may take this subject.]
Objectives	<p>This course aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide an introduction to Europe and its various cultures • introduce students to key current issues. <p>In particular, we will explore the human and natural landscapes of various countries in Europe and the issues concerning those communities today. We will do so through current films and television series. Topics covered will include the importance of family and friends, local traditions and cuisine, the main event that has shaped today's Europe, World War II, and people's attitude to it, as well as new movements such as the #metoo and the rise of the far right.</p> <p>Students will be expected to watch extracts of pre-selected films, identify the issues reflected in them and the different attitudes to these issues in selected European countries. The sessions will guide students to discover the various countries and to integrate the issues researched with the various national cultures.</p> <p>Teaching will follow a blended classroom methodology. Both the content and the teaching methodology aims to be motivational. The course seeks to shift students away from their comfort zones, what they know and understand, and help them to become more critical and inquisitive about new topics. Students will learn to appreciate how much can be glimpsed from films.</p>
Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstrate an understanding of current key cultural issues affecting Europe today. b) Identify national and supra-European cultural issues reflected in films. c) Research art and culture through the application of conceptual tools and methodological principles. d) Develop higher order thinking through personal and group reflections, analyzing, from different cultural perspectives, the various issues identified above and reflect on the success of national approaches.

<p>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</p> <p><i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<p>This subject proposes a virtual journey through Europe’s cultures by means of its most current films.</p> <p>The first week will provide a general introduction to Europe and also to the film industry. We will start by looking at individuals and the nuclei they form in cities and villages. Then, in week 4, we will look back at life during and after World War II taking this as the baseline to compare the social and cultural changes that have taken place since then. During the last four weeks we will look at how world events are affecting the unity of European countries (including the unity of the European Union) and what the future might bring for Europe.</p> <p>Each session will showcase one specific film in order to identify key cultural issues affecting Europe. Secondary themes in the film will be highlighted to introduce students to national and supra-national cultural issues. Extracts from other films and series will be used to further discuss the issues under discussion. The proposed content of each week will be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Europe, its languages and cultures including the European film industry. This will cover some basic information about the politics involved in producing a film, the importance of the film industry to a particular country, film genres, objectives behind films, and some basics as to filming strategies employed in successful genres. 2. Local traditions, the family as the nucleus of society. 3. The scars of corruption and crime. 4. Life in big cities and small villages, different ways of life. 5. Racial and religious integration. 6. Old wars in Europe, trying not to forget the European side of World War II. 7. Politics and the rise of the far right. 8. New wars in Europe, does religion still matter? 9. European migrants. 10. The happiest countries, the most socialist countries. 11. The future of Europe. Balancing old and new. 12. An aging Europe: lonely people. 13. A united Europe: a new inclusive society. <p>As new films on these topics become available or cultural issues develop, the list of countries, topics and films studied will be updated.</p>
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology</p> <p><i>(Note 3)</i></p>	<p>This subject will follow a blended learning approach. Students will be encouraged to follow a SPOC (small, private, online course) that will direct them to trailers and films which will form the basis for collaborative discussion both online and face to face.</p> <p>Online activities will vary and, depending on the cohort and the films selected for the course. They could include quizzes as well as writing critical pieces, feedback and discussion of others’ writings, and creating a mini-script about a specific issue to highlight it /educate a specific public / argue a point / seek a reaction. All the online activities will be part of a portfolio that will be assessed together as ‘Online activities’. Students will be asked to write at least four pieces of around 500 words each (should they write more than four entries the best four will be counted for grading). This will account for 50% of the grade and will be an individual activity.</p> <p>This method seeks to develop independent learners, able to manage their learning process. It will also lead students to carry out additional research to answer online polls, discussions, self and peer reflections.</p>

The second assignment, also 50%, will be based on group work (4 to 5 students). Students will be asked to work in groups and present the themes of the week exploring their significance at a European level. These will be done through the creation of a short-video (a story based on one of the mini-scripts created for Assignment 1) and an accompanying presentation explaining the video. Presentations will be face to face or virtual (depending on the number of students enrolled) and other groups will listen and comment on the conclusions of each group. These comments will be discussed during the face to face sessions. The 50% weighting will be split into 75% for the actual presentation/video and 25% for the comments/class discussion. Each group will present at least once during the semester.

Face to face sessions will be used to develop the oral communication skills of students. These sessions will deliver additional information to develop further discussion from an alternative point of view to that covered during the online sessions.

Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes

(Note 4)

Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)					
		a	b	c	d		
1. Online activities: quizzes and written entries (portfolio)	50%	X	X	X	X		
2. Class presentations/ video and discussions	50%		X		X		
Total	100 %						

Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:

Online activities are designed to strengthen personal participation, research and reflection skills. These include online discussions, quizzes to test understanding and learning, research and sharing of relevant information. Activities will guide students into appreciating different points with each set of exercises. The focus will vary, some suggestions are:

- on the historical background and current implications –causes and effects– of the topic;
- on the main aims of the film (stir emotions, entertain, educate, etc.) and how these are achieved.
- on the genre and its specific strategies (some theory from film studies might be included at this point, although this will not be the main focus of the subject it will be used as an additional element to keep students’ interested);
- on the production itself (political, financial or other reasons).

Face to face activities are designed to encourage students to communicate orally with others, taking into consideration their own and others’ thoughts and

	interpreting the effects of the newly acquired European knowledge.	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ Lectures and seminars	26 Hrs.
	▪ Online (teacher led)	13 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	▪ Online (student led – exercises and discussions)	51 Hrs.
	▪ Watching films	26 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	116 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>European Films – to be confirmed every year depending on the key issues at the time and the most current films dealing with those issues. Films will have to be selected to suit the audience (age issues will be carefully monitored) and what will be available within PolyU's library and PolyU's AppleTV film library at the time. Potential films could include:</p> <p>Baschet, M., Kolar, C. , Dumas, F. & Tanovič, D. & Tanovič, D. (Director), (2002). <i>No man's land</i>. [Motion Picture]. Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Slovenia, Italy, United Kingdom, Belgium. MGM Home Entertainment.</p> <p>Berghäll J. (Producer), & Berghäll J. & Hotakainen, M. (Directors). (2010). <i>Steam of Life</i> [Motion Picture]. Finland. Oktober Oy Rode Orm Film AB.</p> <p>Dittrich, L. (Producer) & Müller, C. (Director) (2015). <i>Look Who's Back</i> [Motion Picture]. Germany. Constantin Film.</p> <p>García, E. (Producer) & Almodóvar, P. (Director). (2006). <i>Volver</i> [Motion Picture]. Spain. Sony Pictures Classics.</p> <p>Grunert, M. & Rieks, M. (Producers), & Zandvliet, M. (2016). <i>Land of Mine</i> [Motion Picture]. Denmark, Germany. Nordisk Films.</p> <p>Krummenacher, M., Gassmann, J., Blatter, L., Frei, G., Jaberg, B., Jaquier, C., Meier, J., Nölle, T., Rupp, L. & Scheiwiler, M. (Directors). (2015). <i>Wonderland</i>. [Motion Picture]. Switzerland, Germany.</p> <p>Loach, K. (Producer) & Loach, K. & O'Brien, R. (Directors). (2007). <i>It's a Free World</i> [Motion Picture]. United Kingdom. IFC Films.</p> <p>Ivern, O & Cristobal, M.. (Producers) & Ferreras. I. (Director). (2011). <i>Wrinkles</i> [Animated Motion Picture]. Spain. Cameo Media.</p> <p>Sleiter, O. (Producer), & Pif (Director). (2013). <i>The Mafia Kills Only in Summer</i>. [Motion Picture]. Italy. 01 Distribution.</p>	

	<p>Recommended texts:</p> <p>Forbes, J., & Street, S. (2000). <i>European cinema: An introduction</i>. Basingstoke [England] ; New York: Palgrave.</p> <p>Holmes, D., & Smith, A. (2000). <i>100 years of European cinema: Entertainment or ideology?</i> Manchester; New York : New York: Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press.</p> <p>Nelmes, J. (2012). <i>Introduction to film studies</i> (5th ed.). London ; New York: Routledge.</p>
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Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon completion of the subject. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time over-crowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method purports to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.