

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

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

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| Subject Code | GEC1C48 |
| Subject Title | Understanding Ecocriticism through Environmental movies |
| Credit Value | 3 |
| Level | 1 |
| Pre-requisite / Co-requisite / Exclusion | NIL |
| Objectives | <p>‘Ecocritical’ perspectives have emerged within literary and cultural studies as ways of understanding the interaction between culture, especially literature, and environmental discourse and practice. While the earliest ecocritical studies focused on genres of writing most closely connected to conservation and environmental movements (such as ‘nature writing’ and environmental rhetoric), ecocriticism has recently grown much broader both in scope – it now includes a burgeoning interest in film and the visual and performing arts – and in diversity. This course attempts to introduce major concepts in ecocriticism, and expand its application from its deep-rooted focus on western wildlife films and Hollywood cinema to a broader coverage of films and animations in a global scale.</p> <p>This course is divided into three sections: Fundamentals in Ecocriticism, Human, Animals and Nature, and Pollution, Disaster and Global Environmental Crises. The first section provides an overview of the history of and major theoretical approaches in ecocriticism. Key concepts reviewed include deep ecology, postcolonial ecocritical discourse, environmental justice studies, postmodern and poststructuralist eco-theories, material ecocriticism, and conceptualization of ecocinema /ecomedia studies. Second section focuses on human’s relationships with animals, plants and other living species. Focusing on cases of human beings’ dominance over and mistreatment of nonhuman species, the section emphasizes the blurred boundaries and interconnection between human and nonhuman world, and propose alternative, non-anthropocentric perspectives in seeing the world. The third section focuses on visual texts that represent environmental crises arisen from pollution and toxicity to climate change and natural disasters on a global scale. And offer critical perspectives in how we as human beings should position ourselves in a world of many environmental challenges.</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. have deeper understanding of environmental issues as represented in selected visual texts. b. examine theories, concepts and major debates in ecocriticism. c. develop their ecological awareness, sensitivity and core values towards animals, the environment, nature and society. d. understand environmental cultures through cinema of different regions. |

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| | e. read critically visual cultural texts ranging from film, photography, comics, visual artwork to media image. |
| Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus <i>(Note 2)</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What counts as Ecocinema? 2. Visualizing global environmental change 3. The Environmental impact of media production 4. Environmental justice and postcolonial ecocriticism 5. Slow cinema, deep ecology and beyond. 6. Wildlife and animal rights in documentary filmmaking 7. The transnational turn in ecocinema studies: from Hollywood to Latin American movies. 8. Ecocriticism and ecocinema in Asia: from global to local 9. Toxicity, contaminations and eco-disaster movies in Korea 10. Medical humanities and poison discourse in Japanese cinema 11. Popular culture and ecocriticism in China 12. Critical reflections on the Age of prosperity and culture of excess and waste |
| Teaching/Learning Methodology <i>(Note 3)</i> | <p><u>Lectures:</u> This subject will be taught primarily using a lecture format. To support this with an aim towards both alignment and relevancy, lectures will closely follow the assigned reading. Students will be taught to how to scan the reading material before attending the lecture so that they are better prepared for the lecture and to question unclear concepts within it. The questions raised due to lack of understanding or interest will be dealt during the class time. To further motivate students to develop their interest in the course and learn as much as they can, lecturer will make use of different teaching materials such as film clips, documentaries, music, drama and performances videos in addition to lecturing in a conventional format.</p> <p><u>Seminars (Presentation and Participation):</u> The course won't be successful without active participations of all students, and thus seminar sections will be an important component. Besides allowing students to more directly engage the material with ready access to the teacher, seminars can serve as a mechanism which empowers students to read, actively engage, and ultimately comprehend selected textbook chapters. Students in seminars will be further subdivided into different presentation groups. The basic approach will be peer teaching in which each presentation group in turn will facilitate discussion of the assigned presentation topic through a series of questions posed to the other presentation groups, and consequently a close interactive atmosphere can be fostered which in turn will be essential to encourage students to get immersed in the learning environment.</p> <p><u>Learning to Learn:</u> Strengthening student learning skills is most effective when done in the context of interesting and relevant content material. This subject will make use of numerous materials from the Poly U's Learning to Learn Project, previously funded by the UGC and developed under the aegis of the EDC, such as the Learning Review Table and the Question Guide, both to encourage students to engage in the questioning process and to transfer those skills to other classes.</p> |

| 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) | | | | |
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| | | | a | b | c | d | e |
| | 1. Seminar: Presentation and participation | 35 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | 2. Critical paper (individual or as part of a Group project) | 35 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | 3. Mid term quiz in the format of multiple choices and open-ended essays | 30 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Total | 100 % | | | | | |
| <p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>Assessment for this subject will be 100% continuous assessment. It is composed of a seminar with group presentation, a critical paper on ecocriticism and ecocinema, a mid-term quiz on topics covered in class.</p> | | | | | | | |
| Student Study Effort Expected | Class contact: | | | | | | |
| | ▪ Lecture | | 27 Hrs. | | | | |
| | ▪ Seminar | | 12 Hrs. | | | | |
| | Other student study effort: | | | | | | |
| | ▪ Readings/Quizzes/Discussions/Reflections | | 39 Hrs. | | | | |
| | ▪ Presentations/ Papers/ Group projects | | 39 Hrs. | | | | |
| | Total student study effort | | | 117 Hrs. | | | |

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| <p>Reading List and References</p> | <p>Clark, Timothy. 2011. <i>The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Estok, Simon and Kim, Won-chung, (eds.). 2013. <i>East Asian Ecocriticisms: A Critical Reader</i>. Palgrave Macmillan.</p> <p>Garrard, Gregg. 2014. <i>Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism</i>. Oxford: OUP.</p> <p>Glotfelty, Cheryl. Fromm, Harold, (eds.). 1996. <i>The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology</i>. Univ. of Georgia Press.</p> <p>Huggan, Graham. 2010. <i>Postcolonial Ecocriticism</i>.</p> <p>Kääpä, Pietari, and Gustafsson, Tommy, (eds.). 2013. <i>Transnational Ecocinema: Film Culture in an Era of Ecological Transformation</i>. Intellect Ltd..</p> <p>Lu, Sheldon, and Mi Jiayan, (ed.). 2010. <i>Chinese Ecocinema: In the Age of Environmental Challenge</i>. Hong Kong University Press.</p> <p>Reed, T.V. 2002. "Toward an Environmental Justice Ecocriticism." In <i>The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, and Pedagogy</i>. Pp. 145-162.</p> <p>Rust, Stephen, and Monani, Salma, Cubitt, Sean, (eds.). 2013. <i>Ecocinema Theory and Practice</i>. Routledge.</p> <p>Shapiro, Judith, <i>Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China</i>. Cambridge UP.</p> <p>Slovic, Scott, (ed.). <i>ISLE journals (Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment)</i>.</p> <p>Westling, Louise, (ed.). 2014. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Willoquet-Maricondi, Paula. 2010. <i>Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film</i>.</p> <p>Movie clips:</p> <p><i>Aguirre, the Wrath of God</i> (dir. W. Herzog, Austria, 1973)</p> <p><i>Bambi</i> (dir. David Hand, USA, 1943)</p> <p><i>Baraka</i> (dir. R. Fricke, USA, 1993)</p> <p><i>The Burning Season</i> (dir. J. Frankenheimer, USA, 1994)</p> <p><i>Under the Dome</i> (dir. Chai Jing, China, 2015)</p> <p><i>Darwin's Nightmare</i> (dir. H. Sauper, Austria, 2004)</p> <p><i>Daughters of the Dust</i> (dir. J. Dash, USA, 1991)</p> <p><i>The Day After Tomorrow</i> (dir. R. Emmerich, USA, 2004)</p> <p><i>Days of Heaven</i> (dir. T. Malick, USA, 1978)</p> <p><i>Dead Man</i> (dir. J. Jarmusch, USA, 1995)</p> <p><i>Deliverance</i> (dir. J. Boorman, USA, 1972)</p> <p><i>Easy Rider</i> (dir. D. Hopper & P. Fonda, USA, 1969)</p> <p><i>Even the Rain</i> (dir. Tambien la lluvia, Iciar Bollarin, Spain, 2010)</p> <p>Excerpts from <i>Winged Migration, March of the Penguins, Planet Earth</i></p> <p><i>The Gleaners and I</i> (dir. Agnes Varda, France, 2000)</p> <p><i>Grizzly Man</i> (dir. W. Herzog, USA, 2005)</p> <p><i>The Host</i> (dir. Joon-ho Bong, Korea, 2006)</p> <p><i>Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000</i> (dir. A. Tanner, Switzerland, 1976)</p> <p><i>King Kong</i> (dir. Merian Cooper, USA, 1933)</p> <p><i>Lessons of Darkness</i> (dir. W. Herzog, 1991)</p> |
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| | <i>The New World</i> (dir. T. Malick, USA, 2006) <i>Picture of Light</i> (dir. P. Mettler, Canada, 1994); <i>Princess Mononoke</i> (dir. H. Miyazake, Japan, 1997) <i>Prospero's Books</i> (dir. P. Greenaway, UK, 1991) <i>Reassemblage</i> (dir. Trinh T. Minh-Ha, Senegal, 1983); <i>Safe</i> (dir. T. Haynes, USA, 2012) <i>School Days with a Pig</i> (dir. Tetsu Maeda, Japan, 2008) <i>Shooting Indians</i> (dir. Ali Kazimi, Canada, 1997) <i>Stalker</i> (dir. A. Tarkovsky, USSR, 1979) <i>12 Monkeys</i> (dir. T. Gilliam, USA, 1995) <i>Whale Rider</i> (dir. N. Caro, New Zealand, 2002) <i>Yellow Earth</i> (dir. Chen Kaige, China, 1988) |
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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.

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| Subject Offering Department | GEC |
| Cluster Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Nature, Relations and Development <input type="checkbox"/> Community, Organization and Globalisation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History, Cultures and World Views <input type="checkbox"/> Science, Technology and Environment |
| Medium of Instruction | English |
| Requirements intended to fulfil | <input type="checkbox"/> China-Study Requirement (CSR) <input type="checkbox"/> English Reading (ER) and English Writing (EW) <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese Reading (CR) and Chinese Writing (CW) |