

# CAH5737: THEORIES FOR UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY CHINESE-LANGUAGE FICTION

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**Effective Term**

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

**Course Title**

Theories for Understanding Contemporary Chinese-language Fiction

**Subject Code**

CAH - Chinese and History

**Course Number**

5737

**Academic Unit**

Chinese and History (CAH)

**College/School**

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

**Course Duration**

One Semester

**Credit Units**

3

**Level**

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

**Medium of Instruction**

Chinese

**Medium of Assessment**

Chinese

**Prerequisites**

Nil

**Precursors**

Nil

**Equivalent Courses**

Nil

**Exclusive Courses**

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course introduces key literary theories and critical approaches for analyzing contemporary Chinese-language fiction. Focusing on works from the late 20th century to the present, it explores how narrative techniques, thematic concerns, and socio-political contexts shape literary production and interpretation. Students will engage with a range of theoretical frameworks - including narratology, postcolonial theory, feminism, and cultural studies - to examine how fiction reflects and critiques modern Chinese-speaking societies. Through close reading and critical discussion, the course equips students with the conceptual tools and analytical skills necessary for interpreting literary texts and conducting independent research.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify and explain key theories and concepts in narrative fiction studies.		x	x	
2	Apply theoretical frameworks to analyze contemporary Chinese-language fiction and explore emerging issues within the field.		x	x	x
3	Conduct close textual analysis of contemporary Chinese fiction using appropriate critical methods and concepts.		x	x	x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	Students will engage with lectures which are theme-based with emphasis on transferring course knowledge.	1, 2, 3

2	Tutorial	Students will engage with tutorials. In various sessions, students are divided into small groups that take turns to act as presenters and discussants. The presenters are required to give an oral presentation on an assigned topic. They will submit in written form a revision of the presentation after receiving comments from discussants and the lecturer. In both reports, they are expected to demonstrate full understanding of the assigned readings, give in-depth arguments, and discover new points for discussion.	1, 2, 3	
3	Peer review	Students will engage with discussions in classes. The discussants will take part in active discussion of the presentation. They will submit to the lecturer their comments of the presentation and discovery of new issues in written form. Both oral and written discussions will be assessed.	1, 2, 3	

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Oral and written presentations of assigned topics. Emphasis will be placed on the depth of knowledge and discovery of new issues.	1, 2, 3	30	Formulation, organization and presentation of arguments and findings of assigned topics.	Yes

2	Participation and in-class discussion. Motivate students' spirit in learning and enhance their awareness in discovering new points of discussion.	1, 2, 3	20	Reflection on presentation, posting critical questions.	No
3	Final Report: A 5,000-word critical essay that applies appropriate theoretical frameworks and analytical methods to examine selected works of contemporary Chinese-language fiction.	1, 2, 3	50	Demonstration of knowledge learned and discovery of new arguments.	Yes

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

1. Oral and written presentations of assigned topics (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

Show command of the knowledge provided in the assigned readings, as well as ability to discover new issues pertaining to the topics of discussion.

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Excellent linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Excellent oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Excellent reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Good**

(B+, B, B-)

1. Good command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Good linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Good oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Good reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-)

1. Adequate command of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Fair linguistic competence to describe the arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Acceptable oral and written presentation skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Fair reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Marginal**

(D)

1. Familiarity with the assigned topics and readings.
2. Able to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Marginal ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Marginal reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Failure**

(F)

1. Unfamiliarity with the assigned topics and readings.
  2. Unable to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
  3. Unsatisfactory ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
  4. Unsatisfactory reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.
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**Assessment Task**

2. Participation and In-class discussion (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

Active involvement in discussing the related topics.

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Very active participation in discussion.

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) Active participation in discussion.

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Passive participation in discussion.

**Marginal**

(D) Very passive participation in discussion.

**Failure**

(F) No participation in discussion.

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**Assessment Task**

3. Final Report (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

A 5,000-word critical essay that applies appropriate theoretical frameworks and analytical methods to examine selected works of contemporary Chinese-language fiction.

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of essential aspects of the course content.
2. Excellent linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Excellent oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Excellent reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Good**

(B+, B, B-)

1. Good command of knowledge of essential aspects of the course content.
2. Good linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Good oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Good reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Fair**

(C+, C, C-)

1. Adequate command of the course content.
2. Fair linguistic competence to describe the arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Acceptable oral and written presentation skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Fair reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Marginal**

(D)

1. Familiarity with the subject matter.
2. Able to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Marginal ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Marginal reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Failure**

(F)

1. Unfamiliarity with the subject matter.
2. Unable to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Unsatisfactory ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Unsatisfactory reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

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### **Assessment Task**

1. Oral and written presentations of assigned topics (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

Show command of the knowledge provided in the assigned readings, as well as ability to discover new issues pertaining to the topics of discussion.

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Excellent linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Excellent oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Excellent reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Good**

(B+, B)

1. Good command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Good linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Good oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Good reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C)

1. Familiarity with the assigned topics and readings.
2. Able to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Marginal ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Marginal reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Failure**

(F)

1. Unfamiliarity with the assigned topics and readings.
  2. Unable to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
  3. Unsatisfactory ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
  4. Unsatisfactory reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.
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### **Assessment Task**

2. Participation and In-class discussion (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

Active involvement in discussing the related topics.

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Very active participation in discussion.

### **Good**

(B+, B) Active participation in discussion.

### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C) Very passive participation in discussion.

### **Failure**

(F) No participation in discussion.

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### **Assessment Task**

3. Final Report (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

A 5,000-word critical essay that applies appropriate theoretical frameworks and analytical methods to examine selected works of contemporary Chinese-language fiction.

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of essential aspects of the course content.
2. Excellent linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Excellent oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Excellent reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Good**

(B+, B)

1. Good command of knowledge of essential aspects of the course content.
2. Good linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Good oral and written presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Good reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C)

1. Familiarity with the subject matter.
2. Able to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Marginal ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Marginal reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Failure**

(F)

1. Unfamiliarity with the subject matter.
2. Unable to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Unsatisfactory ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Unsatisfactory reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

**Part III Other Information****Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Lee, Leo Ou-fan, "Literary trends I: the quest for modernity, 1895–1927," "Literary trends: the road to revolution 1927–1949," in <i>The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 13: Republican China 1912-1949</i> .
2	王德威主編：《哈佛新編中國現代文學史（上下）》，臺北：麥田，2021。
3	Peter Barry, <i>Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory</i> , Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.
4	David Lodge, <i>The Art of Fiction: Illustrated from Classic and Modern Texts</i> , Penguin Books, 1994.

**Additional Readings**

	Title
1	[日]土田知則/[日]青柳悅子：《現代文學理論實踐：敘事·自我同一性·跨境》，朱衛紅譯，桂林：廣西師範大學出版社，2023。
2	王德威：《後遺民寫作》，臺北：麥田，2007。
3	史書美：《反離散：華語語系研究論》，臺北：聯經，2017。
4	Antoine Compagnon, <i>Literature, Theory, and Common Sense</i> , trans. Carol Cosman, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004.
5	Michel Foucault, <i>The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought</i> , eds., Paul Rabinow, Penguin Books, 1991.
6	Walter Benjamin, <i>Illuminations: Essays and Reflections</i> , eds. Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, 1969.
7	Georg Lukacs, <i>The Theory of the Novel</i> , Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1974.
8	René Girard, <i>Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure</i> , Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
9	Paul De Man, <i>Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism</i> , Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
10	Richard Rorty, <i>Contingency, Irony and Solidarity</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.