

GE2103: APPRECIATING MASTERPIECES OF WESTERN CULTURE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Appreciating Masterpieces of Western Culture

Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

Course Number

2103

Academic Unit

Chinese and History (CAH)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

GE Area (Primary)

Area 1 - Arts and Humanities

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

To enhance students' understanding of Western culture and civilization, this GE course is designed to give undergraduate students of all specializations – not least those in science and technology – an opportunity to acquire some basic knowledge about the achievements of Western civilization in arts and literature, and the important philosophical ideas behind those achievements. This GE course will provide students with a sense of discovery, and by discussing many of the canonical works in arts and literature, they will be able to appreciate the importance of humanistic ideas in the history of the West. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with factual knowledge by reading the designated texts and supplementary materials. They will continue discussion in tutorials and online on the Blackboard, and they will have a mid-term quiz as well as a final examination.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify the major artistic movements and trends in Western culture since the Renaissance.			x	
2	Recognize the aesthetic spirit of Western masterpieces in literature and other arts and have a firm understanding of the cultural diversity of the Western tradition.		x		
3	Analyze the meaning and significance of some masterworks in Western cultural history.			x	
4	Analyze interconnections between various arts in different forms and different periods in the Western cultural tradition and relate them to their respective socio-historical backgrounds.			x	
5	Reflect critically on both the affinities and differences between Chinese and Western cultures and connect their own background and time.		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	Lectures, reading assignments, multi-media resources, mind maps that focus on summative knowledge about great masterpieces of the Western tradition.	1, 2, 3	
2	Reading discussions, response papers, mind maps that focus on formative knowledge and utilize literary and analytical tools and approaches.	3, 4, 5	
3	Group discussions, written reflections with a focus on contextualizing masterpieces historically and ideologically.	4	
4	Group discussions on cultural differences and affinities, written reflection on student's own identity within the larger context of creative expression.	5	
5	Group presentations that reflect the diversity of artistic expressions of the human experience, either across different movements or different genres.	4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	In-class performance(attendance)	4, 5	10	-	No
2	Mid-term Quiz	1, 2, 3	30	-	No
3	Group project	4, 5	20	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

60

Examination (%)

40

Examination Duration (Hours)

2

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

In-class performance(attendance)

Criterion

Students are required to attend each lecture and tutorial, where they are encouraged to compare the western cultural masterpieces with their own home cultural traditions.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Full attendance and active participation in discussion.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Near full attendance and good participation in discussion.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate attendance and participation in discussion.

Marginal (D)

Lack of adequate attendance and participation in discussion.

Failure (F)

No or nearly no attendance.

Assessment Task

Mid-term Quiz

Criterion

Quiz will test and reward students' familiarity and mastery of key elements in Western culture.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent scores in quiz.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good performance in quiz.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Acceptable performance in quiz.

Marginal (D)

Poor scores in quiz.

Failure (F)

Very poor scores in quiz.

Assessment Task

Group project

Criterion

Students are required to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of texts in different periods. As a group project, they are expected to introduce a new work of their choice (art, literature, music, film) and contextualize it within the framework

of the class content. This encourages students to think about their preferences and it assesses their ability to apply learned knowledge to texts and works not covered. It also enhances their ability to apply learning to a variety of materials later on.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent presentation of group project.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good presentation of group project.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Acceptable but not good presentation of group project.

Marginal (D)

Poor presentation of group project.

Failure (F)

Very poor presentation of group project.

Assessment Task

Examination

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent performance and scores in the exam.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good performance and acceptable scores.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate performance in the exam and scores.

Marginal (D)

Poor performance in the exam and scores.

Failure (F)

Very poor performance in the exam.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Western culture; arts and literature; knowledge; criticism and interpretation.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man.
2	Selections from William Shakespeare, Hamlet.
3	Selections from John Milton, Paradise Lost.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Herman Dooyeweerd, Roots of Western Culture. Lewiston, N.Y. : E. Mellen Press, 2003.

Annex (for GE courses only)

A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)

PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning

1

PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology

2

PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

4, 5

PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data

2

PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text

3, 5

PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills

2, 3

PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team

2, 3

PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues

4, 5

PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions

1, 4, 5

PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation

4, 5

B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task

Final Examination