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	ELC1A04
Subject Title	From *Lord of the Rings* to *Harry Potter*: Fantasy, reality and humanity
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	None
Objectives	**Background** *Lord of the Rings* is the second best-selling novel ever written, and the *Harry Potter* series is the second best-selling series. They contain universal themes of power and temptation, courage, fate and free will, survival and overcoming challenges, power and temptation, courage, fate and free will, survival, overcoming challenges, friendship, loyalty, love and romance. By taking this subject, students will improve their: • **Knowledge of human nature, relations and development** Students will read about, describe and analyse from a theoretical perspective human nature as displayed by the characters in the stories, their relationships and their character development. They will apply this knowledge by writing a short fantasy story in which the nature, relations and development of characters are described. • **Literacy** (requiring extensive reading and substantive writing). The subject includes the English reading and writing requirements, and students will receive additional feedback and advice which will help them to improve their writing. • **Higher order thinking** (requiring students to exercise and demonstrate systematic, critical and creative thinking skills) Students will learn to hypothesise, theorise, generalise, criticise, justify, and evaluate aspects of stories in relation to human nature, relations and development, and demonstrate this in a book report. They will then use these skills to create a short story. • **Life-long learning** (incorporating learning to learn activities) Students will develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, knowledge construction and life-long learning abilities by utilizing the learning-to-learn activities from the EDC website to analyse fantasy fiction.

Intended Learning Outcomes
 	
(Note 1)
	Upon successful completion of the subject, students will be better able to:
	  a) understand human nature, relationships and development as presented in fantasy stories
	  b) read, understand and analyse fantasy fiction
	  c) think critically with regard to fantasy fiction using problem-solving, knowledge construction and life-long learning through completing learning-to-learn activities
	  d) discuss fantasy fiction stories orally and in writing
	  e) write a fantasy short story.
	
	Outcome (a) will improve students' understanding of human nature, relationships and development through a number of approaches, based around the common themes of fantasy fiction such as power and temptation, courage, fate and free will, survival and overcoming challenges.
	
	Outcome (b) will improve students' literacy by requiring them to engage in extensive reading. Students will be taught reading strategies relevant to fantasy fiction. These strategies will be generalisable to their other reading.
	
	Outcome (c) will involve students in developing their critical thinking, problem-solving, knowledge construction and life-long abilities utilizing learning-to-learn activities from the EDC website such as the Asking Questions Guide worksheet for tutorials and the Knowledge Building Worksheet in lectures. An example of the use of the Knowledge Building Worksheet would be to collect and relate aspects of a fantasy fiction story such as sub-genre, historical context, plot, location, characters, their culture, relationships and world views, and from these create an idea for a short story.
	
	For Outcome (d) students write a book report on a fantasy novel. This will demonstrate the critical thinking from Outcome (c).
	
	Regarding Outcome (e) students will use their understanding and analysis from the above outcomes combined with creativity in order to write a short story. There will be scaffolding in the lectures and the tutorials to help students realize this outcome.

Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus *(Note 2)*	**Synopsis** The subject will introduce, in an academically rigorous manner, human nature, relations and development in fantasy literature. It will cover its foundational pre-suppositions, such as the reasons that fantasy is a form of literature, the value of studying it, and how theories of human nature, relations and development form the basis of literature. It will examine the structure of its knowledge domain, for example the main themes including power and temptation, courage, fate and free will, survival,

	overcoming challenges, friendship, loyalty, love and romance.
	Students will read a short story and/or watch a film or television episode in preparation for the two hours of lectures and one tutorial. Relevant films are listed as optional preparation activities. The lectures will cover two areas each week: one on the themes of human nature, relations and development, and one on analysing the genre and writing fantasy fiction based on these themes. In the tutorials students will work on their stories and do an online quiz on the learning outcomes of the lectures and the stories relevant to them.
	In the assessments students will write a book report on a novel, and write a short story. All the short story readings are either available free on the internet, mainly from Project Gutenburg, are in the PolyU library, or links will be provided. Most of the novels are available in the PolyU library. All are classics of the genre, chosen as examples that illustrate the lecture and tutorial topics.
	Indicative Syllabus Lecture topics: Human nature: courage, temptation, fate and free will, personality, identity. Human relations: power and violence, good vs. evil, race, religion, teamwork, friendship, family, love, loyalty, romance, group behaviour, society and politics, language and communication. Human development: overcoming challenges, personal growth. Writing fantasy fiction: origins, sub-genres and themes of fantasy fiction, plot, characterisation, narrator, settings in time, place and culture, literary style including imagery and symbolism, and dialogue.
	Novels that students can select from include Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, The Silmarillion, the Harry Potter series, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and other C.S. Lewis Narnia novels, A Game of Thrones, Discworld and other fantasy novels.
Teaching/Learning Methodology *(Note 3)*	The subject examines human nature, relations and development with different theoretical perspectives as detailed in the indicative syllabus above. Students will develop skills and attitudes focusing on their own self by self-analytical and life-long learning activities carried out in the lectures and tutorials. In the tutorials a blended delivery approach will be applied, involving instruction, interaction, oral presentations and online in-class quizzes. Tutorials will also include teaching input and individual, group or pair work, reading texts, discussing meaning and comparing texts.

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)				

Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	a	b	c	d	e	
1. Book report (includes the Reading Requirement)	30	✔	✔	✔	✔		
2. Short story (includes the Writing Requirement)	40	✔				✔	
3. Online continuous assessment quizzes	30	✔	✔	✔			
Total	100 %						

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

For the book report, students need to read and understand fantasy fiction (Outcome b); understand human nature, relationships and development in fantasy stories (Outcome a); think critically with regard to fantasy fiction (Outcome c); and discuss fantasy fiction stories in writing (Outcome d). Overall this targets students' literacy.

For the short story, students need to write a fantasy short story (Outcome e). This shows an understanding of Outcome a) understand human nature, relationships and development in fantasy stories. This targets the higher-order thinking skill of creativity.

For the online continuous assessment quizzes, students need to understand human nature, relationships and development in fantasy stories (Outcome a); read and understand fantasy fiction (Outcome b) and think critically with regard to fantasy fiction (Outcome c). These are multiple choice quizzes which assess both factual information and the student's critical thinking skills following the guidelines from EDC's workshop on using multiple-choice questions to assess critical thinking. It also targets students' knowledge of human nature, relations and development, as knowledge of the subject content in these areas will be tested.

Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ Lectures	26 Hrs.
	▪ Tutorials	13 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	

	▪ Reading a novel, reading short stories, watching video sources, assignment preparation.	78 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	117 Hrs.

Reading List and References	**Reading List**
	Students will be required to read a complete fantasy novel for the book report in assignment 1. In line with the reading requirement, this novel should be over 200 pages.
	<mark>A list of possible novels will be included in the subject handouts.</mark> ~~Novels may include, but are not limited to:~~
	~~The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien~~ ~~Any one of the Harry Potter books by J.K. Rowling~~ ~~Further possibilities will be included in the subject handouts.~~
	References
	Baggett, David & Klein, Shawn E. (2004). *Harry Potter and philosophy*. Chicago, Ill.: Open Court. PR6068.O87 Z69 2004
	Bassham, Gregory & Bronson, Eric (Eds.) (2003). *The Lord of the Rings and philosophy: one book to rule them all.* PR6039.O32 L6356 2003
	Berndt, Katrin and Steveker, Lena (2011). *Heroism in the Harry Potter series*. Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. PR6068.O93 Z736 2011eb
	Chance, Jane (2001). *The lord of the rings: the mythology of power*. PR6039.O32 L6332 2001
	Dickerson, Matthew T. (2003). *Following Gandalf: epic battles and moral victory in the Lord of the rings*. PR6039.O32 L63334 2003
	Flieger, Verlyn (2002). *Splintered light: logos and language in Tolkien's world*. PR6039.O32 S5325 2002
	Hallett, Cynthia W. (2005). *Scholarly studies in Harry Potter: applying academic methods to a popular text*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen. PR6068.O87 Z854 2005
	Kenworthy, Christopher (1997).*Writing science fiction, fantasy & horror: how to create successful work for publication*. Plymouth: How To Books. PN3377.5.S3 K45 1997eb
	Lobdell, Jared (2004). *The world of the rings : language, religion, and adventure in Tolkien* .PR6039.O32 L6353 2004
	Mandala, Susan (2010). *Language in science fiction and fantasy: the question of style*. London; New York: Continuum. PE1421 .M356 2010
	Porter, Lynnette R. (2005). Unsung heroes of the Lord of the Rings: from the page to the screen. PR6039.O32 L6313 2005

| | Reagin, Nancy R. (2011). *Harry Potter and history*. Hoboken, N.J. : Wiley. PR6068.O93 Z724 2011eb

Rosebury, Brian (2003). *Tolkien: a cultural phenomenon*. PR6039.O32 Z8183 2003

Rutledge, Fleming (2004). *The battle for Middle-Earth: Tolkien's divine design in the Lord of the rings*. PR6039.O32 L63714 2004

Smith, Mark E. (2002). *Tolkien's ordinary virtues: exploring the spiritual themes of The lord of the rings*. PR6039.O32 L63718 2002

Smith, Rob (2007). *Hogwarts, Narnia, and Middle Earth: places upon a time*. Huron, Ohio: Drinian. PR6068.O87 Z885 2007

Todorov, Tzvetan (1975). *The fantastic: a structural approach to a literary genre*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. PN3435 .T613 1975

Wood, Ralph C. (2003) *The gospel according to Tolkien: visions of the kingdom in middle-earth*. PR6039.O32 L6386 2003 |
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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.

July 2017