



ENGE 2210: Song and Poetry: The Literature of Song and Song-Writing

Introduction

This course takes a closer look at the intimate connections between song and poetry. The history of song has always been closely connected with the oral tradition in literature; conversely, the musicality of literature owes much to the song tradition. Gospel, Negro Spirituals, Folk Music, the Bard Tradition, the Sean Nós tradition, the ballad and the lyric form in poetry, as well as popular music and musicals will all be examined on this course. The course will examine the different song traditions in their social and political contexts. The course will also include a song-writing element. There will be a song-writing workshop with a well-known local songwriter. Students will be asked to write a song in any genre of their choice (folk song, protest song, spiritual song etc.) and then to have that song performed either by themselves or someone else in the class. No previous studies in literature or music are needed to take this course. Students interested in exploring the connections between song and poetry and between song-writing and the poetic craft are welcome to attend this course.

1–3. Course code, English title and Chinese title

<p>Course Code: ENGE 2210 Title in English: Song and Poetry: The Literature of Song and Song-Writing Title in Chinese:</p>

4. Course description

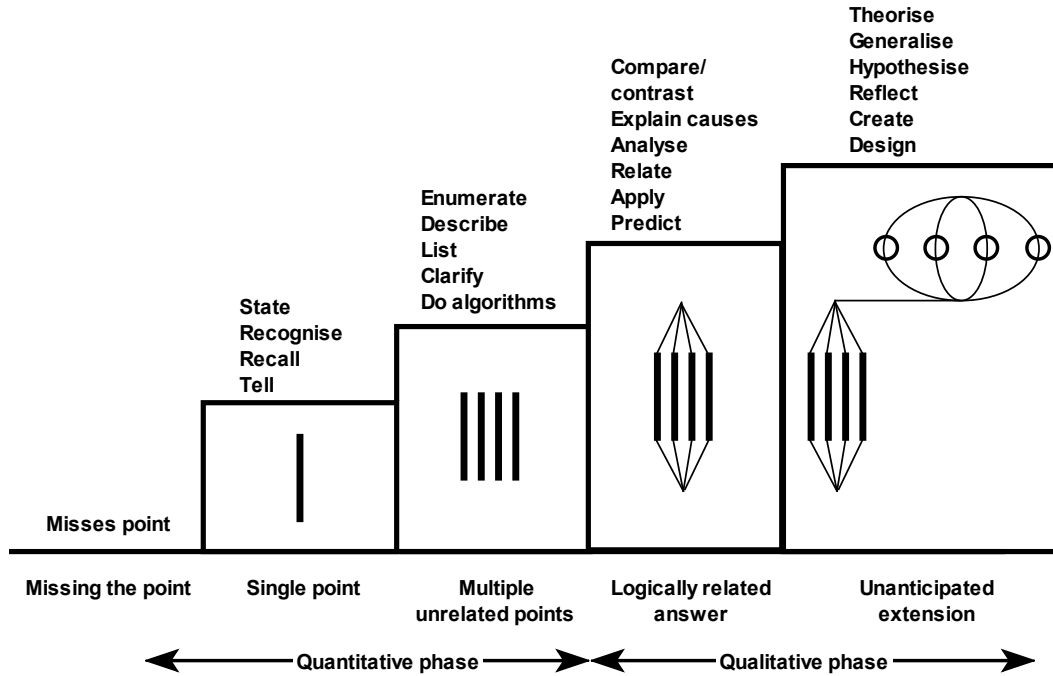
Course description:

Song is one of the most basic human expressions and most basic human means for interacting with different cultures and hence broadening awareness as human beings. Song constitutes both melody and words and is therefore for many initially a non-linguistic means for cross-cultural contact and sharing. Melodies are enabling of some of our first entries into unfamiliar cultures; witness the recent success of Korean songs in the US charts. Once we have reflected on the lyrics of songs that we often initially make our own because of the melodies we are forced to employ critical thinking, self-expression and communication with others to understand how the song also relates to us.

However songs are also literary artworks and the recent awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan only confirms this. However, song is perhaps the most accessible medium for introducing students to the wonders of literature. In being so accessible, song can nurture a global awareness that contributes to whole person-growth rather than narrow specialisation. Song is also by nature interdisciplinary in bringing together literature and music. In being accessible, popular and ever-modern song also extend students' curiosity about different cultures, trends, practices and also perhaps most importantly emotional life. Songs can also promote a habit of reading and even develop attitudes and competence as independent learners and team players. This course will also examine histories of genre and song-writing in promoting focused reflection of how this popular cultural form mediates cultural and political issues thereby “engaging students in active reflections on perennial issues, prompting them to make connections between intellectual pursuits and life at work, at home and in the community”. The performance and workshop aspect of this course will also hope to nurture song-writing and performance talents by introducing students to international and local singer song-writers.



5. Learning outcomes



Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- understand the historical developments of different song traditions
- understand better how song and poetry are connected
- appreciate the importance, relevance and value of songwriting in the history of literature
- produce a well-reasoned essay
- The course enables students to practice all of the four key stages of learning from the above graph



6. Course syllabus

Topic	Contents/ fundamental concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction: syllabus, reading material, teaching method, study techniques, exam issues ○ No reading • Week 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic: The Oral Tradition; Early English Song. In this class we will look at the history of the oral tradition and its importance for both poetry and song today in various culture. • Week 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic: The Songs and Lyrical Ballads of Romanticism. In this class we will explore some key lyrics and songs from the Romantic period and ask ourselves why poetry and song are today regarded as completely separate forms. • Week 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic: The Sean Nós Tradition and Folk Music; Irish Traditional Song. In this class we will examine how one unique form of folk music – Irish folk music – has inspired future writers and poets. • Week 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic: The American Song Tradition: Songs of Love and Heartbreak. In this class we explore one of the most influential song traditions of the 	<p>Course overview</p> <p>The oral tradition in poetry and song. The importance of the oral tradition for pre-literate societies. Speech and text. Philosophical reflections on this distinction from writers such as Jacques Derrida. English Folk Song and the Shakespearian inheritance. Thomas Arne “Where the Bee Sucks There Suck I” [Lyrics William Shakespeare]. Readings: Oral Tradition: “Evaluating educational media using traditional folk songs in Laos.” Yoshida, Itsuko ; Kobayashi, Toshio ; Sapkota, Sabitri ; Akkhavong, Kongsap. Health promotion international, 2012-03, Vol.27 (1), p.52-62. Oral Tradition: “Dipping into the Well: Scottish Oral Tradition Online” Macaulay, Cathlin. Center for Studies in Oral Tradition. Oral tradition, 2012, Vol.27 (1), p.0-0.</p> <p>Songs as Lyrics for the poets of the Romantic Era. The Songs of William Blake, William Wordsworth, Franz Schubert & Lord Byron: see more here https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/douglass/music/album-hebrew.html</p> <p>The Song Tradition in Irish Literature. Early Irish Songs. 17th and 18th Century English Songs in Ireland. Folk Songs and the writings of Joyce and Yeats. <i>Folk Song: The Globalisation of Irish Folk Song Performance</i>. Harte, Colin F. Center for Irish Studies at the University of St. Thomas. New hibernia review, 2015, Vol.19 (2), p.151-152 [review]</p> <p>The American Song Tradition. Readings: <i>The Songlines</i> by Bruce Chatwin (1987) [introduction]. Nettl, Bruno. <i>An introduction to folk music in the United States</i> (1962). Allen Ginsberg: “Kaddish”. Walt Whitman “Song of Myself”. “I Sing the Body Electric”</p>



<p>twentieth century, the American song tradition and its relationship with such poetic movements as the Beats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Week 6<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Topic: Song-writing workshop with guest songwriters. In this class we will have a workshop with international songwriters. • Week 7<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Film [only extracts shown in class]: <i>Topic: The Songs and Writings of Bob Dylan</i>. In this class we will explore the work of Bob Dylan, the first writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature for work done in the Song Tradition. • Week 8<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Topic: Popular Song. Pop music, Asian song cultures and the translation of song lyrics. In this class we explore how Asian songs have been translated into English and some of the issues noted when listeners move from song in tonal languages to song in non-tonal languages.○ Class test • Week 9<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Topic: Songs of Protest and Politics. In this class we will examine how important songs have been for various protest movements around the world. • Week 10<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Topic: Songs of Praise: Spiritual Song. In this class we will explore the rich history of song and religious belief. • Week 11<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Song Performances or Presentations on Songs • Week 12:	<p><i>No Direction Home: Bob Dylan</i>. Dir. Martin Scorsese (2005). The lyrics of Bob Dylan. Readings: <i>Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen: Deaths and Entrances</i> By David Boucher, Lucy Boucher. [extracts]</p> <p>Readings: Hong Kong Cantopop: A Concise History by Stephen Yiu-Wai Chu. [extracts]. “Positive Psychosocial Outcomes and Fanship in K-Pop Fans: A Social Identity Theory Perspective” by Derek A. Laffan; “Cantopop: The voice of Hong Kong. December 2002. <i>Journal of Asian Pacific Communication</i> 12(2):217-243</p> <p>Readings: Protest Song: Reactions to “patriotic” and “protest” songs in individuals differing in political orientation. Ziv, Naomi. London, England: SAGE Publications. <i>Psychology of music</i>, 2018-05, Vol.46 (3), p.392-410. Extract from <i>33 revolutions a minute: A history of protest songs from Billie Holiday to Green Day</i> by D. Lynskey. Chapter 1.</p> <p><i>The Song of Solomon</i>. Marini, Stephen (2003). <i>Sacred Song in America</i>. [Chapter 3]</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Song Performances or Presentations on Songs <p>Week 13: Summing up</p>	
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7. Course components (Learning activities)

Lecture and tutorial. One Essay. A Group Project. An individual performance or presentation on/of song. A collection of blog/vlog entries on “Words and Music”

8. Assessment type

Key point: If we consider assessment to be part of the learning activities in the course, then it is clear that assessment must be matched to the desired learning outcomes. You need to consider what and how the assessment task(s) are able to help students achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Assessment type	Percentage
Participation during tutorials	10%
One end-of-term essay [about 10 pages double-spaced]	30%
Group project	20%
An individual performance of, or presentation on, song	20%
Class quiz	10%
Your 5 blog or vlog entries on “Words and Music”	10%

9. Required and recommended readings

<p>Required readings: Course readings for the above content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The Songlines</i> by Bruce Chatwin (1987) [introduction] ● <i>How Music Works</i> by David Byrne (2012) [introduction and chapter one] ● Oral Tradition: “Evaluating educational media using traditional folk songs in Laos.” Yoshida, Itsuko ; Kobayashi, Toshio ; Sapkota, Sabitri ; Akkhavong, Kongsap. Health promotion international, 2012-03, Vol.27 (1), p.52-62 ● Oral Tradition: “Dipping into the Well: Scottish Oral Tradition Online” Macaulay, Cathlin
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Center for Studies in Oral Tradition

Oral tradition, 2012, Vol.27 (1), p.0-0.

- *The Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; selected songs
- *Songs of Innocence and Experience* by William Blake (1794); selected songs
- *Folk Song: The Globalisation of Irish Folk Song Performance*. Harte, Colin F

Center for Irish Studies at the University of St. Thomas

New hibernia review, 2015, Vol.19 (2), p.151-152 [review]

- Selections of Songs from Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Joni Mitchell, Nina Simone, Kate Bush, Tom Waits, Neil Young, Lennon & McCartney and others
- **Protest Song: Reactions to “patriotic” and “protest” songs in individuals differing in political orientation.** Ziv, Naomi. London, England: SAGE Publications. *Psychology of music*, 2018-05, Vol.46 (3), p.392-410
- *The Song of Solomon*; Songs by William Shakespeare, Henry Purcell, John Dowland;
- Marini, Stephen (2003). *Sacred Song in America*. [Chapter 3]
- Nettl, Bruno. *An introduction to folk music in the United States* (1962)
- Lynskey, D. (2011). *33 revolutions a minute: A history of protest songs from Billie Holiday to Green Day*. New York: Ecco.
- Walt Whitman “Song of Myself”; “I Sing the Body Electric”
- Allen Ginsberg, “Kaddish”
- Stephen Wai-Chu. *Cantopop: A Concise History* [extract]

Film & Documentaries

- *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. Dir. Martin Scorsese (2005)

Recommended readings:

During the course, I will often make reference to works that students can read if they so wish

10. Feedback for evaluation

Key point: There are many forms of evaluation that you can use to generate the feedback from students such as questionnaires, and qualitative feedback from students through focus-group meetings or email exchanges. Planning to have a variety of evaluation strategies is more likely to ensure that valid, rich and diagnostic information is received.

Feedback for evaluation:

For any questions or queries please contact me: osullivan@cuhk.edu.hk



12. Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Key point: Help students to easily locate your contact information. The information allows students to arrange for any consultation after classes or receive support in terms of learning and teaching from teacher, tutors and/or teaching assistants. It is better to put both the teachers' and TAs' contact details such as name, office location, phone number and email address.

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	
Name:	Michael O'Sullivan
Office Location:	319 Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	39437024
Email:	osullivan@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	
Website:	
Other information:	

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	
Office Location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Teaching Venue:	
Website:	
Other information:	

13. Details of course website

Key point: Information concerning the accessibility of the course website (if it exists). This might be an open website or the Blackboard platform hosted by the University. Teachers should also demonstrate the site in class so as to familiarize the students with the key functionalities. More information on setting up course websites can be found at: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eLearning>

This will be shared with all students in class

14. Academic honesty and plagiarism

Key point: Relevant information can be found via: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. A course outline may also include subject-specific requirements on plagiarism. A statement to be included in a course outline can be constructed from the following paragraphs, depending on the nature of the assessment tasks.

Academic honesty and plagiarism



Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

October 2014