

**City University of Hong Kong**

**Information on a Course**  
**offered by Department of English**  
**with effect from Summer Term 2014**

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**Part I**

Course Title: Creative Thesis

Course Code: EN6312

Course Duration: 1 Semester

Credit Units: 6

Level: P6

Medium of instruction: English

Prerequisites: EN 6301 Summer Writing Workshop I and EN 6302 Summer Writing Workshop II and EN 6306 Distance Mentoring Creative Writing I and EN 6307 Distance Mentoring Creative Writing II and EN 6308 Distance Mentoring Creative Writing III

Precursors: NA

Equivalent Courses: NA

Exclusive Courses: NA

**Part II**

**Course Aims:**

This course aims to produce a final project which draws upon the creative writing output over the duration of the program in the student's chosen genre. Students are exposed to detailed editorial critique of their work and are expected to revise writing through as many drafts as necessary to achieve a final creative thesis. The course also encourages students to articulate, through their creative work, a vision of themselves as a creative writer, and to focus the Asian aspect of their work with a unique perspective and voice.

This course offers separate sessions and students can choose from either Creative Nonfiction or Fiction or Poetry.

### Course Intended Leading Outcomes (CILOs)

*Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:*

| No | CILOs   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Produce a satisfactory portfolio of creative writing from which to develop a final creative thesis.   |
| 2  | Apply guided judgment of drafts to revise and improve their writing into more substantive version(s).   |
| 3  | Demonstrate awareness of the Asian aspect of their writing and the literary tradition(s) or genre(s) in which their writing falls and the demands of that tradition(s) or genre(s) as pertain to their own work |

### Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)

*(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)*

| ILO No.     | TLAs  |
|-------------|---|
| CILOs 1 – 3 | Close reading and written critiques by the advisor of three portfolios of creative writing of new & revised work, submitted by students at an agreed upon schedule. In prose (creative nonfiction & fiction), each portfolio comprises 40 – 50 manuscript pages and in poetry 20 – 25 pages of creative writing, demonstrating satisfactory progress towards the final creative thesis. |
| CILOs 1 – 3 | Reflection on each critique, with questions posed to the advisor as needed, in order to improve the subsequent portfolio of work based on the advisor's feedback.   |

### Assessment Tasks/Activities

*(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)*

| ILO No.     | Assessment tasks/activities  | Weighting |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| CILOs 1 – 3 | Three portfolio submissions of work in progress.   | 20%       |
| CILOs 1 – 3 | Final thesis   | 70%       |
| CILOs 1 – 3 | Participation (including timely submission of drafts, responsiveness to feedback and evidence of commitment to relationship with mentor) | 10%       |

### Grading of Student Achievement

Grading pattern: Standard (A+, A, A- . . . F)

### **Assessment Form**

The three assessments that advisors must complete include:

- 1) Portfolio Written Critiques (Four critiques, each to be sent to the student no later than one week after receipt of the portfolio, comprising approximately 4 - 6 single spaced A-4 pages each)
- 2) Final Written Evaluation (One evaluation comprising a single A-4 page)
- 3) Final Grade

1 & 2 are evaluative commentaries and individualized for each student depending on the student's genre and the nature and quality of the creative writing based on the assessment criteria below. At the end of the semester, the advisor must submit all evaluations for filing with the program and indicate the final grade.

### **Assessment Criteria**

The tables below set out the assessment criteria for students in each of the three areas of study, namely Creative Nonfiction, Fiction & Poetry. Regardless of area, all students are expected to submit portfolios on time in accordance to the schedule agreed upon with the faculty mentor for the semester. A complete draft of the creative thesis is due by no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> portfolio submission, and the final creative thesis must be submitted on time in accordance to the program schedule. Late submissions may result in the reduction of one minus grade for each late submission to the final grade (i.e.: B+ becomes B; B becomes B-; etc.).

While the final creative thesis need not be a book-length manuscript (especially in prose), the goal is to produce a professional manuscript, one that is suitable for review by literary publishers in the student's genre. As such, the assessment should take this into account in awarding the final grade.

### ***Assessment Criteria: Creative Nonfiction***

| Grade |  |
|-------|--|
| A     | Writing demonstrates superior ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed. In longer works such as memoir, biographies or other book-length forms, this includes structural integrity from one chapter or section to the next; the ability to define the characters involved and their relationships; time management and narrative development that allows for seamless progress of the storyline; a sense of place in the narrative; dramatic pacing and development that is compelling which creates a sense of urgency for the reader; dialogue (if used) that serves the scene; a seamless blending of facts and research into the narrative that does not interrupt the flow; authorial control over the creative aspects of how nonfictional elements are used through a point of view that does not strain credibility; a persuasive voice and persona for the story that will compel the reader. For essays and shorter works, this includes a clear focus on a central idea or incident; a seamless blending of facts and research into the writing; the ability to collapse time and storyline to the most urgent and necessary scenes as well as dialogue (if used) that serves the scenes |

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|   | dramatized; no excess language. Regardless of form, the prose must demonstrate a solid command of language which is tightly copy edited and honed, as well as a cadence suited to the chosen form and genre. With respect to genre, the writing must demonstrate a mastery of the traditions of the chosen genre or show innovation in a creative reworking or subversion of established traditions, which can be in terms of language or theme or elements of craft. The writing produced must encompass an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to published work of high literary merit. |
| B | Writing demonstrates good ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed. The work produced must encompass an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to published work of average to good literary merit.  |
| C | Writing demonstrates average but competent ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed. The work produced encompasses an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to writing of acceptable literary merit that may or may not be considered publishable.  |
| D | Writing demonstrates weak ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed. The work produced is of a level that is unlikely to be considered publishable.  |
| F | Writing lacks competent ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed. The work is of low literary merit and would not generally be considered publishable.  |

***Assessment Criteria: Fiction***

| Grade |  |
|-------|--|
| A     | Fiction demonstrates superior application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form and genre of the work(s) produced. For novels or novellas, this includes structural integrity from one chapter or section to the next; the ability to establish a set of characters and their relationships; time management and plot development that allows for seamless progress of the storyline; a sense of place in the narrative; dramatic pacing and development that is compelling which creates a sense of urgency for the reader; dialogue that serves the fiction; clear handling of shifts in point of view or character-driven point of view in the case of 1 <sup>st</sup> person narrative; an overarching authorial perspective that articulates a worldview for the work-in-progress. For shorter fiction, this includes a well developed and believable protagonist; the ability to collapse time and storyline to the most urgent and necessary scenes for the drama; dialogue (if used) that serves the fiction; the right |

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|   | balance between front and back storylines for the drama at hand; no excess language. Regardless of form, the prose must demonstrate a solid command of language which is tightly copy edited and honed, as well as a cadence suited to the chosen style and voice of the fiction. With respect to genre, the writing must demonstrate a mastery of the traditions of the chosen genre or show innovation in a creative reworking or subversion of established traditions, which can be in terms of language or theme or elements of craft. The fiction produced must encompass an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to published work of high literary merit. |
| B | Fiction demonstrates good application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form and genre of the work(s) produced, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The work produced must encompass an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to published work of good literary merit.   |
| C | Fiction demonstrates average but competent application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form and genre of the work(s) produced, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The work produced encompasses an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to writing of acceptable literary merit that may or may not be considered publishable.  |
| D | Fiction demonstrates weak application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form and genre of the work(s) produced, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The work produced is of a level that is unlikely to be considered publishable.  |
| F | Fiction lacks competent application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form and genre of the work(s) produced, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The work is of low literary merit and would not generally be considered publishable.  |

***Assessment Criteria: Poetry***

| Grade |  |
|-------|--|
| A     | Poetry demonstrates superior application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form(s) of the work produced to encompass some experimentation in other forms of poetry, even if one primary form dominates the creative output. This includes an excellent command of grammar and language, specifically in word choices; the ability to use line breaks, punctuation and other visual linguistic elements for the desired effect in the work; mastery of a range of figures of speech (e.g.: metaphor, simile, synecdoche, imagery, metonymy, etc.) normally used in poetry; authorial control of point of view, narrative, time shifts and other technical aspects of rendering poetic expression; the ability to manipulate rhyme, cadence, meter, any other linguistic elements commonly used for poetry. With respect to various poetic forms, the work produced in any specific form (e.g.: lyric poem, sonnet, villanelle, etc.) must demonstrate a technical mastery of the form and an appreciation of its traditions. The poetry produced must encompass an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to published |

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|   | work of high literary merit.   |
| B | Poetry demonstrates good application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form(s) of the work produced to encompass some experimentation in other forms of poetry, even if one primary form dominates the creative output, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The poetry produced must encompass an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to published work of good literary merit.  |
| C | Poetry demonstrates average but competent application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form(s) of the work produced to encompass some experimentation in other forms of poetry, even if one primary form dominates the creative output, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The poetry produced encompasses an overall artistry, creativity and depth that is comparable to writing of acceptable literary merit that may or may not be considered publishable. |
| D | Poetry demonstrates weak application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form(s) of the work produced to encompass some experimentation in other forms of poetry, even if one primary form dominates the creative output, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The poetry produced is of a level that is unlikely to be considered publishable.   |
| F | Poetry lacks competent application of elements of craft specific to the chosen form(s) of the work produced to encompass some experimentation in other forms of poetry, even if one primary form dominates the creative output, as detailed in the assessment criteria for the A grade. The poetry is of low literary merit and would not generally be considered publishable.   |

**Keyword Syllabus:** To be advised

**Recommended Reading Text(s)**

To drawn from the Master Reading List of the MFA programme.