

Reading Contemporary Cultures in English II

Class Time: 9:10-12:00 Tuesday

Classroom: B103 Humanities and Social Sciences Building II

Instructor: Shu-Ling Chen

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Office Hours: 2:00-4:00 Tuesday

Books Used:

Brooks, Arthur C. & Oprah Winfrey. *Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier*. 2023.

Edmondson, Amy. *Right Kind of Wrong: The Science of Failing Well*. 2023.

Goshgarian, Gary, ed. *The Contemporary Reader*. 11th ed. 2013.

Grant, Adam. *Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things*. 2023.

Hari, Johann. *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention—and How to Think Deeply Again*. 2022.

Milkman, Katy. *How to Change: The Science of Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*. 2021.

Mlodinow, Leonard. *Emotional: How Feelings Shape Our Thinking*. 2022.

Sandel, Michael J. *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* 2020.

Shaw, Robert Bruce. *All in: How Obsessive Leaders Achieve the Extraordinary*. 2020.

Suleyman, Mustafa & Michael Bhaskar. *The Coming Wave: Technology, Power, and the 21st Century's Greatest Dilemma*. 2023.

Vinsel, Lee & Andrew L. Russell. *The Innovation Delusion*. New York: Currency, 2020.

Zakaria, Fareed. *Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World*. 2020.

Course Description:

This course is designed to help students better understand various aspects of contemporary cultures and further strengthen their critical reading and thinking skills. After learning how to read critically, we will study chapters from 11 books published in recent years and 23 articles chosen by students from *the New York Times*, *Time*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *ABC*, *The Washington Post*, *India Briefing*, *Al Jazeera*, and *FP*, etc. on topics such as hidden potential, happiness, emotions, conformity, leadership, globalization, technology, the Israel-Hamas war, 2023 G20 summit, Taiwan election, gender issues, plastic, and homelessness, etc. We will read the selected chapters and articles critically and discuss them cross-culturally. Students need to give two group presentations on the texts and another on introducing Taiwan to the world. In addition, to strengthen their critical thinking and presentation skills, students have to make three short individual presentations on the issues studied in this class. Students are expected to come to class prepared and participate in English in class discussions.

Schedule:

Week 1. 2/20/14: Introduction

Week 2. 2/27: Goshgarian, "Introduction: How to Read and Write Critically" (1-23), "Who Decided January 1st Is the New Year?", "Thousands in Shelters Overnight after Tsunami Warnings in Japan" & "Spanish Opposition Fears Kosovo Passport Recognition Could Set a Precedent for Catalonia"

Week 3. 3/5: (1) Grant, Chapter 2: "Human Sponges" (43-60, 251-253), (2) "Key Outcomes of the 2023 G20

Summit Held in India” & “Oil Prices Rise on US-UK Strikes over Red Sea Attacks”

- Week 4. 3/12: (3) Brooks, Chapter 1: “Happiness Is Not the Goal, and Unhappiness Is Not the Enemy” (1-23, 209-212), (4) “The Last of the Moon Men: The Stories of the Surviving Apollo Astronauts” & “NTU Passes Student Mental Health Leave”
- Week 5. 3/19: (5) Mlodinow, Chapter 9: “Managing Emotions” (183-202, 228-230), (6) “What We Know about the War between Israel and Hamas” & “Palestinians Must Be Able to Stay in Gaza – Blinken”
- Week 6. 3/26: (7) Edmondson, Chapter 1: “Chasing the Right Kind of Wrong” (23-48, 301-304), (8) “Companies from Starbucks to McDonald’s Face Controversy amid Israel-Hamas War” & “Indonesians Boycott McDonald’s, Starbucks over Support for Israel”
- Week 7. 4/2: (9) Hari, Chapter 2: “Cause Two: The Crippling of Our Flow States” (46-62, 300-301), (10) “Why Are American Drivers So Deadly?”
- Week 8. 4/9: (11) Milkman, Chapter 7: “Conformity” (169-193, 235-237), (12) “Kenya’s Discreet Church Set up to Welcome LGBT Worshipers” & “‘The Book of Clarence’ Review: Messiahs Wherever You Look”
- Week 9. 4/16: **Midterm Examination**
- Week 10. 4/23: (13) Sandel, Chapter 1: “Winners and Losers” (17-31, 230-232), (14) “This 2024 Presidential Election Could Change the World – And It’s Not Happening in the US” & “Taiwan Election: It’s Not War Young Voters Worry About – It’s Jobs”
- Week 11. 4/30: (15) Zakaria, Lesson 8: “Globalization Is Not Dead” (167-186, 286-294), (16) “Mickey Mouse Is Finally in the Public Domain. Here’s What That Means.” & “Cats Filled the Prison. Then the Inmates Fell in Love.”
- Week 12. 5/7: (17) Vinsel, Chapter 8: “The Maintenance Mindset” (141-158, 243-244), (18) “What It’s Actually Like Being a Woman in the CIA” & “Claudia Goldin’s Nobel-Winning Research Shows ‘Why Women Won’”
- Week 13. 5/14: (19) Shaw, Chapter 4: “Building Great Products: Elon Musk & Tesla” (72-93, 192-196), (20) “Trash or Recycling? Why Plastic Keeps Us Guessing.” & “Microplastics Are Everywhere: Is It Possible to Reduce Our Exposure?”
- Week 14. 5/21: Learning Culture from a Movie
- Week 15. 5/28: (21) Suleyman, Chapter 12: “The Dilemma” (205-222, 312-313), (22) “Can a Big Village Full of Tiny Homes Ease Homelessness in Austin?”
- Week 16. 6/4: Group Presentations: Presenting Taiwan to the World

Week 17. 6/11: **Final Examination**

Grading Policy:

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 15%

Midterm + Final Examinations: 45%

Two Group Presentations: 20%

Three Individual Presentations: 5%

Group Presentation on Taiwan: 5% (Evaluated by the Whole Class)

Two Rules:

If you miss class over 3 times, you will get 0 for Attendance unless you have a good reason.

Please be on time. Being late 3 times equals 1 absence.