Teaching English Literature in Xi’an Jiaotong University

西安交大的英国文学教学

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I. English Literature: The Core Course for the English Majors  
1 (A General Introduction and Literature Review)

1.  
- According to the 2010 National High Education English Teaching Curriculum for the English Majors, English Literature Courses have been recognized as the professional core courses (compulsory courses).
- Therefore, English language and literature is no longer simply considered as a tool only. Instead, English literature has become essential for the cultivation of the young students.
- The English literary classics have been taken as a kind of food for thought (for the refining of the mind and purifying the soul), the best course(s) the faculty of English can offer the students.
The teaching methodology, accordingly, has been shifted from the teacher-centered method to the student-centered or teacher-student interaction type as well as a problem-solving based method.

Students are more and more involved in the teaching process (with their presentations, their analysis, their reflections and their comments as well as their performances: poem-reciting or drama performance).

And personal reading experience is more valued and emphasized than gaining knowledge in this field.
I. English Literature: The Core Course for the English Majors

3. (A Literature Review and Comment)

- Besides, modern facilities like multi-media devices are being more frequently employed in teaching literature.
- As a teacher of English literature, very often I will employ integrative way of teaching by making use of video clip, on-line movie clip watching, audio-work of poem reciting, etc., and I will also assign the students to make audio-visual document of their own poem reciting work.
- As a result, the students’ interest in reading English literary works has been greatly aroused.
- Meanwhile, the research work and academic activities on provincial level and nationwide have helped promote teaching English literature according to the certain perspective of literary theory, e.g. teaching literature with Reader-Response theory; or from the perspective of cognitive poetics; or with the Reception theory.
Our Beautiful Campus
Our Brilliant Students

Shen Chenyu, an MA Student, won the second prize in the FLTR Press Cup National Reading Contest.

The Two girls are both from Class 43, and they both got the offer from Harvard University Last month.

Three of our Students have just finished their Internship in the UN.
II. Interdisciplinary Programmes Offered by Our Faculty and Our School

• 2. Our University is very supportive for our teaching innovation, and we are encouraged to launch innovative interdisciplinary courses involving literature and culture.

• 1) Our Faculty of English has launched several common core courses including British-American Literature and Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Culture, which aim at broadening the students’ horizon and cultivating their critical thinking ability and their ingenuity.

• 2) Besides, The Faculty of English has run a bilingual program for several years: English - German, English –Russian and English-French, which has been proved to be very successful.

• 3) Moreover, our School of Foreign Studies has newly set up a doctoral program of “Systematic Studies of Linguistics and Culture”, which involves four disciplines: linguistics, philosophy, computer science and management science.
III. Teaching English Literature in Xian Jiaoda

1. Literature courses in our Curricula for the English Majors.

Our latest curricula offers the following literature courses for the English majors:

1) History and Anthology of British literature. (two semesters for the sophomore), obligatory
2) History and Anthology of American literature. (two semesters for the junior)
3) English short stories. (freshmen), elective
4) English Drama, Junior, elective
5) Analysis and Appreciation of English poetry, elective
6) Extensive Readings of Ancient Classics of both Western and Eastern Cultures
7) (freshmen, obligatory)
8) Bible and Literature
9) Anglo-American Modernism Literature, senior, elective
10) Comparative Literatures, senior, elective
III. Teaching English Literature in Xian Jiaoda 2: An Interdisciplinary Teaching Method Employed Under the Principle of Comparative Studies

—I’ve been teaching 4-6 courses annually, and sometimes even 7-8 courses for one academic year, which mainly include:

1. History and Anthology of British Literature. (for undergraduates)
   英国文学史及选读(本科生, 大三/大二)

2. Anglo-American Modernism Literature. (for undergraduates) (co-teach with a foreign teacher)
   英美现代派文学（本科生，大四; 与外教合上）

3. Extensive Reading of Ancient Western and Eastern Classics. (co-teach with Chinese teachers)
   文化拓展阅读（本科生，大一; 与中国教师合上）

4. The Quintessence of British Fiction (best of the British Classics) (for graduate students)
   英国小说选萃，（研究生，学位必修课）

5. Shakespearean Drama (for graduate students)
   莎士比亚戏剧（研究生，选修课）

6. Western Literary Theory (for graduate students)
   西方文论（研究生，必修课）

7. Anglo-American Literature (Common Core Course, co-taught)
   英美文学（全校通识课，选修）

8. Comparative Cultures (Common Core Course, compulsory, co-taught)
   中西文化比较（全校通识课，必修）
III. Teaching English Literature in Xian Jiaoda 3: An Interdisciplinary Teaching Method Employed Under the Principle of Comparative Studies

- 1. I believe that works of literature, a very valuable culture heritage of the whole mankind. Like other forms of art, they are more of the works of human heart than of the mind.

- They serve not only for delight, for ability, but also for refining the mind as well as purifying our soul. Only through reading ancient and modern classics, one can be said to have been cultivated and nurtured, and civilized.

- 2. So, in my humble opinion, teaching literature is like sharing spiritual manna with the students rather than training them how to make use of a tool.

- 3. also, literature is the best way to cultivate, educate, and to cure (psychological/mental problem or depression). The best education of children and adults as well is the education of love, which can be achieved through literature and arts, and which is the best way to counterpoise an utilitarian education.
Under the principle of comparative studies, I have integrated philosophy, art and music into teaching English Literature.

For, history makes man wise, poets witty, mathematic subtile, natural philosophy deep, moral grave, rhetoric and logic able to contend. Teaching under comparative study principle can help the students gain better understanding of those literary works.

As the old saying goes: great minds think alike.
IV. Case -- Literature, Art and Philosophy

18th Century Neo-classicism: Addison/Pope vs. Laozi

In literary criticism, this term refers to the revival of the attitudes and styles of expression of classical literature.

It is generally used to describe a period in European history beginning in the late seventeenth century and lasting until about 1800. In its purest form, Neoclassicism marked a return to order, proportion, restraint, logic, accuracy, and decorum.

以复兴古希腊罗马艺术为旗号的古典主义艺术，早在17世纪的法国就已经出现。一直延续到19世纪初叶，成为欧洲文学艺术的主要思潮。所谓古典主义，就是以古希腊、罗马的文学艺术为典范而得名。到了18世纪中叶，庞贝城的发掘，德国学者温克尔曼美学思想的传播，引起了人们对古典主义的兴趣，古典主义又重新复兴起来，故称新古典主义。
雅克-路易·大卫 - Jacques-Louis David

作品名称：荷拉斯兄弟之誓（贺拉斯兄弟宣誓） - the oath of the horatii. 1784

以三个圆拱门将整个画面分为三部分,画面突出地显露
出一种质朴和古罗马式的庄严感，男子的刚毅和女性
的柔弱对比鲜明。

罗马式半圆弧的拱券结构深受基督教宇宙观的影响,
罗马式教堂在窗户、门、拱廊上都采取了这种结构,甚至
屋顶也是低矮的圆屋顶。这样,整个建筑让我们感到圆
拱形的天空一方面与大地紧密地结合为一体,同时又以
向上隆起的形式表现出它与现实大地分离。
Literature: Eighteenth century England

- Prosperous economically, stabilized politically
- Age of reason; age of enlightenment; age of neo-classicism
- The age of Pope and Addison—a smooth and mild age.
- Educated men were for a civilization marked with Decorum; proportion; appropriateness; order; peace; balance; refinement; elegance; polish.

- A model was found in the Roman civilization of Augustan Age;
- standard of French classicism adopted. valuing not passion but clarity, balance, proportion and concentration on language and style.
The Royal Exchange

The Royal Exchange

Addison’s style

His essays are noted for grace, poise and familiarity. He always chose the right word and had an ear for subdued and graceful rhythm.

“the model of the middle style”—familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious.

...real eminence of a country. I have often been pleased to hear disputes adjusted between an inhabitant of Japan and an alderman of London, or to see a subject of the Great Mogul entering into a league with one of the Czar of Muscovy. I am infinitely delighted in mixing with these several ministers of commerce, as they are distinguished by their different walks and different languages; sometimes I am jostled among a body of Armenians; sometimes I am lost in a crowd of Jews; and sometimes make one in a group of Dutchmen. I am a Dane, Swede, or Frenchman at different times; or rather fancy myself like the old philosopher, who upon being asked what countryman he was, replied, that he was a citizen of the world...
If we consider our own country in its natural prospect, without any of the benefits and advantages of commerce, what a barren uncomfortable spot of earth falls to our share! Natural historians tell us, that no fruit grows originally among us, besides hips and haws, acorns and pignuts, with other delicacies of the like nature; that our climate of itself, and without the assistances of art, can make no further advances towards a plum than to a sloe, and carries an apple to no greater a perfection than a crab; that our melons, our peaches, our figs, our apricots, and cherries, are strangers among us, imported in different ages, and naturalized in our English gardens; and that they would all degenerate and fall away into the trash of our own country, if they were wholly neglected by the planter, and left to the mercy of our sun and soil. Nor has traffic more enriched our vegetable world, than it has improved the whole face of nature among us. Our ships are laden with the harvest of every climate; our tables are stored with spices, and oils, and wines; our rooms are filled with pyramids of China, and adorned with the workmanship of Japan; our morning's draft comes to us from the remotest corners of the earth; we repair our bodies by the drugs of America, and repose ourselves under Indian canopies. My friend Sir Andrew calls the vineyards of France our gardens; the Spice Islands our hotbeds; the Persians our silk-weavers, and the Chinese our potters. Nature indeed furnishes us with the bare necessities of life, but traffic gives us a great variety of what is useful, and at the same time supplies us with everything that is convenient and ornamental. Nor is it the least part of this our happiness, that whilst we enjoy the remotest products of the north and south, we are free from those extremities of weather which give them birth; that our eyes are refreshed with the green
Alexander Pope
Whatever Is, Is Right

- All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
- All Chance, Direction which thou canst not see;
- All Discord, Harmony not understood;
- All partial Evil, universal Good:
- And spite of Pride, in erring Reason’s spite,
- One truth is clear, Whatever Is, is Right.

An Essay on Man—embodies the 18th c concepts of the universe and man’s place in it.—a middle position in the Great Chain of Being.
Chapter 41 (from *The Book of Tao and Teh*)

- The bright Tao seems dark;
- The advancing Tao seems to be retreating;
- The even Tao seems rough;
- The great virtue resembles valley;
- The pure whiteness seems black;
- The infinite virtue seems lacking;
- The virile virtue seems idle;
- The pure simplicity seems turbid.
- The great square has no corners;
- Of the utensils the most precious takes the longest time to be finished;
- The great sound seems soundless;
- The great image seems formless.
- The Tao always conceals itself without a name.
- But it is the Tao alone that helps and completes everything.

故建言有之：明道若昧，進道若退，夷道若类；
上德若谷，大白若辱，
广德若不足，建德若偷，质真若渝；
大方无隅，大器晚成，
大音希声，大象无形。
道隐无名。夫唯道，善贷且成．


5. 石慧. 认知诗学视野下的英美文学教学研究. [J] 哲学文史研究，2017(1)


Thank You!