American Culture Through Literature
—From Screen to Text

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Target Students

- This course is targeted at Chinese students who major in practice-oriented university.
- Students are sophomores who have already laid a basic foundation in reading, speaking, and analytical writing in English, but still need significant improvement in these areas, so as to be engaged in trades related to their major.
- Students are arranged in classes of 20.
Course Description

- 2 credits
- 2 hours/week, 16 weeks
- This course focuses on the understanding and analysis of American culture being reflected through literary works adapted into movies, and it guides students in comparative study on American and Chinese culture through both oral and written forms.
Course Structure

Lecture Part

Practice Part

- Previewing
- Viewing
- Reviewing
- Reflecting
English Drama Competition

“剧演文学经典 绽放青春华彩”
The course is designed to adopt a combination of situational approach, task-based approach and communicative approach, involving audio-video materials, role play, group discussions, oral report and short essay writings.
Course Objectives

• (1) gain solid language skills in both oral and written expression;
• (2) get familiar with techniques of public speaking and role playing;
• (3) understand basic facts and values that shaped the American nation and still influence American society;
• (4) develop ability to read literary works critically to analyze and synthesize ideas in them;
• (5) apply comparative analysis between American culture and Chinese culture;
• (6) cultivate critical thinkers who are practice-oriented to meet the demands of modern society.
Unit 7 America in the 1920s: *The Great Gatsby* (4 hours)

Part 1 Previewing
- Reading excerpts of *The Great Gatsby*
- Watching movie
- Social and historical background relating to the work (for presentation)
- F. Scott Fitzgerald’s life and his literary accomplishments (for presentation)

Part 2 Viewing
- Clips of movie (10 ms)

Part 3 Reviewing
- Student presentation
- Excerpts (language points/main characters/major conflict)
- Literary concept: symbolism
- Cultural note: American dream

Part 4 Reflections
- Questions
- Discussions
- Writing
- Assignments
Course Assessment

• (1) Class presentation (20%)
• (2) Class participation (20%)
• (3) Regular written work (10%)
• (4) Term paper (30%)
• (5) Role play (20%)
Course Evaluation

- This course is to design an online questionnaire after each unit to gather information from students to investigate whether they achieve the unit objectives.
Sample Lecture

The Great Gatsby

Interpreting the American Dream
Previewing


Unit Objectives

- Get familiar with the major works of F. Scott Fitzgerald.
- Understand basic social and historical background of the USA in 1920s, and be able to compare it with Chinese counterpart.
- Be able to analyze the major characters and theme of *The Great Gatsby both in oral and written forms*. 
Symbols + BOOK
Symbolism is a magic device in literature.

- Suggests more than its literal meaning
- Connects ordinary senses of reality to some moral or spiritual order
• 1. What are some of *The Great Gatsby*’s most important symbols we have analyzed?

• 2. How do symbols help to reveal the theme of this work?
Question 1—Symbol (viewing)

What is it?

Where is it?

What does it symbolize?
Question 1 - symbol

What is it?

A. Freedom and democracy
B. Money and power
C. Daisy and hope

Where is it?

A. Near Daisy's house
B. At Gatsby's house
C. Next to Nick's house

What does it symbolize?

A. Freedom and democracy
B. Money and power
C. Daisy and hope
What does the green light symbolize?
Question 2: How do symbols help to reveal theme?

Bankruptcy of Dream

- Green Light
- Eyes
- East Egg and West Egg
- Other Symbols
Practice Part
Assignments

• Write a plan to role-play a scene in *The Great Gatsby*.
• Find out a symbol not discussed in class and write out your understanding.
• Additional readings:
• Preview next Chapter.
Conclusion

- Develop language skills
- Spread key values
- Cultivate critical thinking
- Share characteristic culture
The end