

## Cover Letter

7 December 2006

Dear Professor xxx / members of the admission board:

Set to complete my undergraduate study in English Language and Literature within six months, I believe I am well equipped to pursue my graduate study in your prestigious university. The new M.Phil in Criticism and Culture program has the diversity and depth that suit my keen interests both in literary theory and in the full spectrum of human activities. The master study will initiate me into the academic, prepare me for seeking a doctoral degree and a lifetime of intellectual questing.

I have been a student all my life; I am perpetually driven by an insatiable need for knowledge and understanding. Currently a senior in the Department of English Language and Literature, Soochow University, Taiwan, I have ranked first in a class of more than sixty students three times out of the four semesters<sup>i</sup> since transferring into this department as a sophomore, and I expect to graduate summa cum laude<sup>ii</sup> with a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in Political Science in June, 2007.

I actively participate in critical discussions both in and after class, with several professors' references to substantiate this pronounced aptitude. The classes I have taken comprehensively cover literature from the classical to twentieth-century; this year I am taking part in classes on literary criticism, comparative literature, as well as seminars on post-colonialism and other literary approaches<sup>iii</sup>. My minor in Political Science has provided me with a theoretical frame to ground my extensive knowledge in the shifting cultural and political world affairs, which I have been paying intense and sustained attention to.

Having spent my first two college years studying physics, which had been my serious career goal since the age of eleven, I am well versed in scientific concepts and

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methodologies, and instinctively think in sound logic and reason – an invaluable asset in studying theory and criticism.

Growing up in Taiwan and speaking Mandarin Chinese, I have a unique ethnic and linguistic background, which, combined with my immersion in Western cannon, pave the way for a distinct narrative that is both inside and outside / neither inside nor outside of either culture – a perfect vantage point for a lucid observer.

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Lastly, with an IELTS average of 7.5 and 8 in reading and writing<sup>iv</sup>, I have proven my English proficiency sufficient for the demands of graduate work in literary study.

I am confident that I make a strong candidate for admission and am eager to join your intellectually challenging program. Given the opportunity, I can realize myself and distinguish myself in academia. I await your decision.

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Best Regards,

Yours sincerely,

Hsiao-hsuan Chen

<sup>i</sup> Up to now, I did rank 1<sup>st</sup> twice out of three terms. I intend to keep it up and am convinced I shall succeed.

<sup>ii</sup> I don't know what distinction one can possibly achieve in this university. Do I need to compete with students from the whole department or even the whole faculty of foreign language?

<sup>iii</sup> Pending.

<sup>iv</sup> Again, only in anticipation of the actual results. I have not even begun to work on it.