

ARTH 501 / EAST 503-002

Configuring Faces of Classical China

Tuesdays 11:35am-2:25pm
Arts 385

Professor Jeehee HONG

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:40-3:40pm, or by appointment

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COURSE OUTLINE

The era of the pandemic has exposed our obsession and frustration with the face. The face has always occupied the center of social engagement, virtual and real, constantly re-inscribing the negotiation between the self and that self's image. While we live in a culture where the authenticity and expressiveness of the face—real and represented alike—is generally celebrated, not all cultures share (or have shared) the currency of the ideal faciality. How might we understand different forms of such negotiation in the culture where representation of explicit emotional expressions — the faces that smile, frown, or cry — is largely shunned? What could the very negotiation tell us about social, cultural, religious, or political milieu of that society? This seminar draws on historical and conceptual dimensions of how such “making” of faces was interwoven with the lives of the people in premodern China, beyond its seeming role as a simple sign of their inner, emotional interests. Underlying such interests were certain attitudes toward defining, making, and remaking of boundaries that derived from the shifting landscape of social classes, religious beliefs, as well as of image making itself. Focusing on linkages between the represented facial expressions and senses of boundary making, the seminar explores a set of often contrasting subjects through distinctive modes of representation. Each mode reveals particular practices of seeing revolving around various sites of social and religious encounters, ranging from spaces of commemoration or worship (such as monastery or tombs), through street corners (shared by commoners and literati alike, or selectively shared with women and foreigners), to the expanded world (shared by humans and animals).

The seminar is divided into five sessions:

Defining the Face and Boundaries

The Social Face

Face-making, World-making, and World-altering

“True” Faces: Portraiture

Transferring and Transforming Eyes

Seminar Format:

In each class, 1-2 students (depending on the size of the class) give presentations based on assigned readings and images, and the class discusses major issues from the presentations as well as readings.

READINGS: All course readings will be provided as downloadable pdf files located on MyCourses or available as eBooks on the library website.

For those who have little knowledge of Chinese history and culture: Refer to the following throughout the course:

*Patricia Buckley Ebrey. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On reserve at the library.

*Thorp, Robert L. and Richard Vinograd. *Chinese Art and Culture* (New York: Abrams, 2001). On reserve at the library.

VISUAL SOURCES

Besides the images selected and/or provided on MyCourses, make the best of digital sources on following websites as well as Artstor:

National Palace Museum, Taipei

<http://theme.npm.edu.tw/selection/Category.aspx?sNo=03000117&lang=2>

Museum of Fines Arts, Boston

<http://www.mfa.org/node/9638>

Freer and Sackler Galleries, Washiongton DC

<http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/chinese.cfm>

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

Search the following artists

: Han Gan; [Emperor] Huizong; Zhou Dongqing

University of Chicago Scroll Project

<https://scrolls.uchicago.edu/>

Instructions and Requirements:

1. All texts are **required** readings, except for the ones with an asterisk.* (those are suggested readings)
2. Check out relevant visual sources along with readings, if applicable, whenever they are available (in books or online). This method usually takes more of your preparation

time, but certainly helps you better understand the images and given descriptions/arguments in the readings.

3. Preparation for discussion

: Each student must finish ALL assigned readings before class.

Presenters in each class will provide critical summaries of the readings along with images relevant to the texts, and bring topics to discuss (It is recommended that important examples be chosen from the images from readings and/or other sources available online or books).

The discussion should utilize but not simply repeat the facts and ideas found in the reading materials.

After presentations, the class will discuss issues that derive from the presentations, as well as from visual sources and readings in general. Everyone will be required to prepare at least two questions/topics for each class, including the presenter. Those who are not in charge of presentation of the class are expected to actively engage with the discussion, which will be the main source of evaluation for “discussion.”

Notes on Presentations

: Presentation for each reading should be 5-7 minutes long.

Instead of reading a finished paper, a student should prepare the presentation as a well-organized Powerpoint-lecture (“show-and-tell” lecture) with an audience in mind.

(Bring your USB storage to class, or send me an electronic file at least one hour before the class)

If the readings assigned to you do not include many images (and more theoretical), you don’t need to bring images, but prepare for topics that you would like to discuss in the class and explain why they are important and/or interesting

4. Proposal

A proposal of the paper (no longer than 2 pages, with a separate bibliography). Ideally the topic will be developed from discussions during the course, but other topics are welcome as long as they are relevant to the theme of the seminar. Comparative research (with a subject from your own research area) is also a possibility.

Due 5pm, Friday Oct 27. Submit electronically via MyCourses.

Your proposal should include a tentative title, introduction to materials, tentative thesis and bibliography.

5. Final paper

: The final paper should be an original research paper, about 15-20 pages long with accurate footnotes and bibliographical information. (10 pages for undergraduate students)

For citations, follow *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Due 5pm December 15.

Late submissions of any of the writing assignments will be penalized by 5% per day unless a doctor’s note is given (doctor’s notes must be received within 3 days of the

due date).

Grading:

Presentation 20%; discussion 25%; proposal 15%; paper 40%

Policy on the Use of Generative AI

For general research: If you choose to use Generative AI for gathering or checking information related to the course material, always check the main sources from which the information came. Make sure they are trustworthy and academically authoritative. If it is not traceable or unclear, do not use/accept the information.

For writing a proposal and a final research paper: Use of Generative AI is not permitted for writing. If you do find sources through Generative AI, you must check and locate the original source in its entirety (academic articles or books) from which you use it for writing. Be aware that stitching together fragmented information/sentences via Generative AI tends to yield an incoherent paper with poor quality in terms of both content and writing itself. To achieve the most productive, organic, and solid research paper, try to cultivate and maintain the classical research methods: check the original sources and cite them properly. Any negligence of proper citations will result in plagiarism.

UNIVERSITY NOTICES

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the office for students with disabilities, 514-398-6009.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Weekly Schedule

September 5 (Tuesday) Introduction

Defining the Face and Boundaries: Material, Concepts, and Methodologies

Sept 12 (Tuesday) Locating the Face: Between Seeing and Experiencing (Modern conceptions)

(Ideal/aesthetic vs. experience)

Sociology of senses (Kantian/Neo-Kantian tradition)

1) Georg Simmel, "The Aesthetic Significance of the Face," *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918: A Collection of Essays, with translations and a bibliography* (1959), pp. 276-281.

*(suggested reading) James T. Siegel, "Georg Simmel Reappears: "The Aesthetic Significance of the Face"," *Diacritics* vol. 29, no. 2 (1999). Available online via library website.

(Phenomenology)

2) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Primacy of Perception: and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics* (Northwestern University Press, 1964). Focus on the first 8 pages.

: Think about where in the relationship between "eye and mind" the body and the face could be positioned.

: What are strengths and weaknesses in applying Merleau-Ponty's proposal to the study of representations of a face?

(experience in cultural context: anthropology)

3) Andrew J. Strathern, "Introduction"(pp.1-8) "The Social Body" (Ch. 1, pp. 9-23) and "Mind, Body, and Soul" (Ch. 3, pp. 25-39), in *Body Thoughts* (Univ. of Michigan Press, 1996).

eBook available via library catalogue.

: Think about any potential connections (both overlaps and distinctions) between Marcel Mauss's/ Mary Douglas's conceptions of "bodily techniques (habitus)" / "body as a natural symbol" and Merleau-Ponty's "technique of the body."

Sept 19 Museum visit, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Selected objects to be announced

September 26 Locating the Face: Between Seeing and Experiencing (Chinese discourses)

1) Mark Lewis, (Chapter 1) "Human Body," in Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (2006), 13-76. Available online via library website.

2) Ladislav Kesner, "Face as an Artifact in Early Chinese Art," in *RES* 51 (2007)

3) Wu Hung, "Negotiating Body and Face: Toward an Alternative Narrative of Figurative Representations," in Wu Hung, *On Chinese Art: Cases and Concepts, Vol. I Methodological*

Reflections (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2016), 286-304.

The Social Face

Oct 3 Anonymous Smile

- 1) Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, "Technologies and Cultures of the Song," *Chinese Art & Culture* (New York: Abrams, 2001), focus on pp. 226-251. [Overview of the Song-dynasty culture]
 - 2) Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih eds., *Early Chinese texts on painting*, "Sung Art History", 89-105. eBook available via library website.
 - 3) Jeehee Hong, "Theatricalizing Death in Li Song's The Skeletons' Illusory Performance," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 93, no.1 (2011).
 - 4) Cheng, Wen-Chien. "Drunken Village Elder or Scholar-Recluse? The Ox-Rider and Its meanings in Song Paintings of "Returning Home Drunk." *Artibus Asiae* Vol. 65, no. 2, 2005.
- *Jacque Le Goff, "Laughter in the Middle Ages." In Bremmer, Jan, and Herman Roodenburg eds. *A Cultural History of Humour: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (Cambridge, Mass. : Polity Press; Malden: Blackwell, 1997), 40-53.

: Brows figures paintings in Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting* (Freer

Gallery of Art, 1973 > to be on reserve at the library) and pay special attention to facial expressions, features, their relationship to the ways in which bodies are rendered. Bring copies of 2-3 figure paintings that you find relevant to the paintings of "Returning Home Drunk" and/or "The Skeletons' Illusory Performance" for discussion.

: How do the pictorial decisions about the facial expressions/gestures of the figures made in these paintings contribute to the construction of their social identities (e.g., class, gender, etc.)?

Additional images to examine

: Zhao Gan, "Along the River during Winter's First Snow" [*John Hay, "Along the River during Winter's First Snow: A Tenth-Century Handscroll and Early Chinese Narrative," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 114, no. 830, 1972]

: Li Tang, "Village Doctor" [For brief introduction to this painting, see *TJ Hinrichs, pp.245-246]

Oct 10 Fall Break

Oct 17 Women's Faces

- 1) Ebrey, Patricia. Three short sections from *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*. (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1993) 21-37; 114-124; 131-138.

2) Lara Blanchard, *Song Dynasty Figures of Longing and Desire Gender and Interiority in Chinese Painting and Poetry*, Chapter 3, pp. 157-207.

eBook available via library website:

<https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1039203421>

3) Short essay on Wang Juzheng's "Spinning Wheel" (mid 11th c.). TBA

: How would you categorize the distinctive facial expressions on the women's faces in *Spinning Wheel*? What kinds of questions you need to ask to begin to categorize/describe the facial expression in a historically meaningful way? Judging from the background reading (Ebrey), how would you interpret the social meanings of such expressions?

Face-making, World-making, and World-altering

Oct 24 "Foreign" Faces

- 1) Shaoyun Yang, "Introduction," in *The Way of the Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019).
- 2) Don J. Wyatt, "Introduction," in *Blacks of Premodern China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Focus on pp. 1-8.
- 3) Marc S. Abramson, (Chapter 4) "Deep Eyes and High Noses: The Barbarian Body," in *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). eBook available via library website.

Oct 27 (Friday) Proposal due, 5pm

Oct 31 The Face of the Unusual Introduction to Buddhist discourse

1) Lopez, Donald. "Introduction." In *Buddhism in Practice* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995) [Important/essential knowledge of Buddhism in general—revisit multiple time as needed]

[Case of the Luohan (Arhat)-themed paintings by Guan Xiu]

- 2) Loehr, Max. "Guan Xiu." In *The Great Painters of China* (Cambridge and London: Harper and Row, 1980), 54-59.
- 3) Kent, Richard. "Depictions of the Guardians of the Law: Lohan Painting in China." In Marsha Weidner et al. eds. *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850* (Spencer Museum of Art, 1994)

: Think about the meanings of the changing style of Luohan painting, esp. the legacy of Guanxiu style.

- 4) Xiaoshan Yang, section from *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry* (Harvard Asia Center, 2003)

Read only pp. 129-148.

*Robert Campany, “Anomaly and Cosmography in Comparative Perspective,” *Strange Writing* (SUNY, 1996)

Images to examine:

For images, see Masako Watanabe (2000). “Guanxiu and Exotic Imagery in Rakan Paintings.” *Orientalizations*, vol. XXXI, no. 4. pp. 34–42

Huizong’s painting of strange rock

: When reading the text by Xiaoshan Yang, think broadly about how medieval Chinese conceived “grotesqueness” or “strangeness” and how it was changing during the Song (beginning of the post-medieval period in China).

: How would you characterize the sense of “grotesqueness” in pictorial and textual description of Arhats’ faces and strange rocks (“Scholar’s Rock”)?

November 7 Introduction to Chan-Buddhist Discourse; Faces of the Transcendent

[review] Lopez, Donald. “Introduction.” In *Buddhism in Practice* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995) [Important/essential knowledge of Buddhism in general—revisit multiple time as needed]

- 1) Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, “Introduction,” *Zen Painting and Calligraphy* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1970), read pp. XIII-XXXVI.
- 2) James Robson, “The Truth of the Trickster: Holy Fools and Loathsome Monks in East Asian Buddhism,” Unpublished paper (Do not cite or circulate)
- 3) Yukio Lippit, “Apparition Painting,” in *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, vols. 55/56 (2010).

Intervention: Portraiture

Nov 14 “True” Faces: Portraiture of the Ideal and the Vernacular

- 1) Wang Yi, “Xie xiang mi jue (Secrets of portrait painting).” Translated in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), 271-2. eBook available on library website.
- 2) Stuart, Jan. “Realism and the Iconic Pose.” In Stuart, Jan, and Evelyn S. Rawski. *Worshipping the Ancestors* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 75-91.
- 3) Kesner, Ladislav. “Portrait Aspects and Social Functions of Chinese Ceramic Tomb Sculpture.” *Orientalizations*, Aug 1991.
- 4) Vinograd, Richard. “Introduction: Effigy, Emblem, and Event in Chinese Portraiture.” In Vinograd. *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1-27 (scanned in two files)

: Think broadly about the relationship between portraiture and individuality.

*Richard Brilliant, "The Authenticity of the Likeness," in Brilliant, *Portraiture* (1991), 23-44.

*Jas Elsner, "Physiognomics: Art and Text," in Simon Swain (ed.), *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul. Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007)

: For the portrait of Bi Shichang (MET, before 1056; accession no. 17.170.1), see http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/asian_art/portrait_of_bi_shichang_from_the_set_five_old_men_unidentified_artist/objectview_zoom.aspx?page=1&sort=6&sortdir=asc&keyword=bi%20shichang&fp=1&dd1=6&dd2=0&vw=1&collID=6&OID=60046463&vT=1&hi=0&ov=0

For the Portrait of Du Yan (Yale Univ Museum, before 1056; accession no. 1953.27.12), see <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/52412>

For the "Portrait-like" faces of figures in Five Hundred Arhats (Boston MFA, etc.), see uploaded file on MyCourses

Transferring and Transforming Eyes

Nov 21 Practices of Seeing a Painted Face

- 1) Mark Elvin, "Between the Earth and Heaven: Conceptions of the Self in China," In Michael. Et al. *The Category of the Person* (Cambridge University Press, 1985). 156-189.
- 2) Jeehee Hong, "Theatricalizing Death and Society in The Skeletons' Illusory Performance by Li Song," *Art Bulletin* 93, no. 1 (2011).

[Case study: double portrait]

- 3) Li Lintan, "The Double Portrait of Ch'ien-lung and a Song Figure Painting."
- 4) Kristina Keutghen, "*One or Two*, Repictured: Quadruplicating Nonduality in Image and Text," *Archives of Asian Art* (2012)

*Mitchell, W.J.T. "Metapictures," in *Picture Theory* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 35-82.

Images to examine closely (uploaded on MyCourses)

: *Scholar in His Study*

: *One or Two*

Nov 28 Animal Face

- 1) Sterckx, Roel. "Defining Animals" (Ch. 1), In *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: SUNY, 1982).

2) Alexander C. Soper, *Kuo Jo-Hsü's Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua chien-wên chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting* (Washington, D.C. : American Council of Learned Societies, 1951.) Excerpts on paintings of animals.

3) Cahill, James. A section from *Chinese Painting* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977)

4) Jeehee Hong, "Simian Episteme, ca. 1200." Unpublished manuscript. [*Please do not circulate*]

*Jacque Derrida, trans. by Marie-Louise Mallet, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (1997) (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008)

* Introduction and excerpts from *Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (related to paintings of fish, esp. "Pleasures of Fish")

: Can all the paintings of animals in assigned readings/images be categorized into a single type of "paintings of animals" in terms of the role of the facial expressions, especially their gazes? Why or why not?

December 5 Presentations of research papers

: Prepare a 20-minute, show-and-tell presentation of your final project.

: Include introduction to the material, main question(s), structure of your paper, and tentative thesis.

Final Paper: Graduate students: 15-20 pages, double space, with proper footnotes (plus bibliography)

Undergraduate students: 10-15 pages, double space, with proper footnotes (plus bibliography)

*Consult the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Due 5pm December 15.

Submit via email.

Please use PDF format for both text and images (make two separate files): make sure compress the file before submission.