

EAST 303 Current Topics Chinese Studies: Chinese Literature in the World

General Information:

Term and Year: Fall, 2024

Course pre-requisite(s): There are no pre-requisites for this course

Course Schedule: Tuesdays, Thursdays, 8:35-9:55 am.

Number of Credits: 3

Instructor Information:

Name and Title: Gal Gvili, Associate Professor

Email: gal.gvili@mcgill.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:55-10:55 am; Thursdays: 9:55-10:55 am (right after class).

Office Location: 680 Sherbrooke, Room 272.

Course Overview

How do fiction and poetry produce the writing self? How do different narrative modes act on the reader? How should Chinese literature situate itself in the world? How is literature shaped by politics? can literature resist ideology? These are some of the questions that Chinese writers have grappled with since the first decade of the twentieth century. In this course, we will open these questions and more for discussion through a broad reading experience of Chinese fiction and poetry of the past 100 years.

Our discussion is structured thematically rather than chronologically. This way, we will be able to resist the urge to understand texts exclusively through their contexts, and focus on the works themselves: how they function, how they communicate with the reader, how they relate to each other.

This class involves a substantial amount of what the New Critics of the 1950's termed "Close Reading": quite literally, extracting sections of textual works and analyzing them line by line, sometimes word by word. We will run class as an open discussion. In order to free our thoughts and open up to the texts, we will not be reading secondary sources such as articles or book chapters that deal with Chinese literature. At certain interludes, I will introduce scholarship on the subject matter that we will be discussing in order to shed light on particular aspects of the text, but students will not need to read it in advance nor will they need to refer to secondary sources in their written assignments.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will: 1. Acquire familiarity with major texts of modern Chinese literature modern Chinese literature. 2. Enhance their analytical skills and develop readerly sensitivity by learning how to apply narratological methods to analyze voice, figuration and characterization and more.

Method of Instruction

This course will combine lecture and discussion. You are expected to not only attend but also actively participate in the weekly meetings. You should come to class having read and thought about the readings. Make an effort to identify key concepts and claims, and come prepared to share ideas, questions and doubts; raise issues; and provide comments.

Required Course Materials All readings are available on mycourses or as E-books in the library.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in this class is mandatory. Students who miss a session must provide evidence explaining their absence. Missing more than two sessions will incur a grade reduction of 2% of your final grade for every missed session (beyond two).

Assessment

Quizzes: 25%

One Presentation: 20%

Mid-Term exam (February 20): 25%

Final paper: 30% (deadline: April 15@23:00pm)

Please turn on update alerts on your mycourses account as we often update the announcement section.

Quizzes

Beginning in week 2, very short (5 minutes) quizzes in writing will be held **almost** every class to make sure you are arriving to class having read the materials. Those who will read will have no problem garnering 100%. Your grade (25%) will be an average of all quizzes. There will be no makeup quizzes. You are allowed to miss one quiz with no penalty. After that, every missed quiz will be calculated as a 0.

Presentations: Close Reading Analysis

Starting Week 2, each student is responsible for one weekly oral presentation to be given in the beginning of class, in pairs. Your presentation (up to 10 minutes for each student, two students per session) should select one short section (a paragraph or two) from the text we read for that day, and explain to us how the section you chose speaks to what the text is trying to do: you can discuss themes, tropes, narration, characterization of anything that comes to your mind.

Midterm and Final

The midterm will be an in-class exam to be held on February 20. The final will be a take home with prompts distributed by the professor one week before the submission deadline of April 15.

****In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of McGill University, assessment tasks in a course are subject to change, provided students are sent adequate and timely communications regarding the change****

Late assignment policy:

No extensions will be given for assignments. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 3% per day, including weekends. No assignments are accepted after one week past the due date. Exceptions are only made in extraordinary circumstances (illness, family emergency), **if arrangements are made in advance of the due date**, and appropriate documentation (e.g., a medical note or a funeral notice) is provided to the instructor.

Requests for Reread:

Appeals or requests for a re-read of written assignments, quizzes or final take-home must be made within 10 working days after the graded materials have been returned or otherwise made available for the students to view. Requests must be made according to the “Reread Policy of the Department of East Asian Studies” available on MyCourses in the content section.

Language of submission:

“In accord with McGill University’s [Charter of Students’ Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

« Conformément à la [Charte des droits de l’étudiant](#) de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté, sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue. » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009)

Academic integrity:

“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](#)” (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill’s guide to academic honesty](#) 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 procédures disciplinaires](#). » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#)).

Statement on the Use of Generative AI tools:

I prohibit using generative AI tools for any writing assignments you do for this class. The objectives of this class are for students to learn how to read and articulate their understanding and synthesis of texts in their own words. Developing analytical skills and critical thinking are this class's main objectives; using machine learning tools like ChatGPT directly goes against this goal (and these tools are prone to hallucinations and misunderstandings of texts). Using generative AI tools such as ChatGPT in writing assignments and presenting them as your own work will be considered **plagiarism** (on which, see below). However, using spelling check and grammar correction tools such as Grammarly is permitted.

A note on Chinese names:

Chinese names are preceded by the last name to be followed by a first name. For example, the protagonist of Wang Anyi's novel *Song of Everlasting Sorrow*'s name is Wang Qiyao. This means that her surname is Wang and first name is Qiyao. As is customary in China, people are usually referred to by their full name especially in writing. Please make a note of this and avoid confusing first and last names. For example, the author Yu Hua's last name is Yu and first name is Hua. You should refer to him in your writing as Yu Hua and not as "Hua" and preferably not as "Yu" either.

All Available on mycourses or as E books in the library.

SCHEDULE:

January 7: Introduction

UNIT 1: Discovering the Self

January 9 : Lu Xun, "Madman's Diary ;" and "The True Story of Ah Q"

January 14: Xiao Hong, *Market Street* (E Book)

January 16: Yu Hua, "On the Road at Eighteen" "World Like Mist"

January 21: Ah Cheng, *King of Chess, King of Trees*

January 23: Ng. Kim Chew "Fish Bones"; "Inscribed Backs"

UNIT 2: The City

January 28: Lao She, *Rickshaw Boy* first half

January 30: Lao She, *Rickshaw Boy* second half

February 4: Perhat Tursun, *The Backstreet: A novel from Xinjiang*

February 6: Mu Shiying, “Shanghai Foxtrot”, “Black Peony”

UNIT 3: The Country

February 11: Shen Congwen, *Border Town*

February 13: Ding Ling, “When I was in Xia Village”

February 18: Mo Yan, *Red Sorghum*

February 20: Wang Zengqi, “Buddhist Initiation” Chi Zijian, “In The Vast Country of the North”

February 25: Tsering Dondrup, “**The Handsome Monk**”

February 27: **Midterm Exam in Class**

UNIT 4: War and Transpacific Migration

March Break

March 11: Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia* Part I

March 13: Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia* Part II

March 18: Nie Hualing, *Mulberry and Peach*

March 20: Wu He, *Remains of life* (first half)

UNIT 6: Gender and Sexuality

March 25: Wang Anyi, *On A Barren Mountain*

March 27: Zhang Ailing, “Love in a Fallen City”, “Aloeswood Incense: First Brazier”

April 1: Qiu Miaojin, *Last Words from Montmartre*

April 3: Geling Yan, "White Snake"

April 8: wrap up.

*****Prompts for final paper to be distributed*****

April 10: No Class

New Reading for 303:

The Backstreets: A Novel from Xinjiang

Li Ang: The Secret Garden

Membranes

Qiu Maojin Monmartre

San Mao?