**George Mason University  
Department of Modern & Classical Languages**

**Chinese 325 – Major Chinese Writers**

Fall 2019: The Erotic in Fantastic and Historical Imagination

TR 9-10:15am Aquia 347

Instructor:                     Prof. Hongmei Sun  
Office Location:            Aquia 310  
Office Hours:                 By appointment via email  
E-mail:                          shongmei@gmu.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/ OBJECTIVES**

This course focuses on the representation of women in Chinese literature, with a special interest in the role of the erotic in folklore and literati writings. While going through a wide range of materials including poetry, drama, short stories, non-fictional writing, and film, we will address issues that women in different historical periods have to deal with in terms of sexuality, family, social class, power, and material culture. Topics of interest range from gender violence, foot binding to sexuality and love, in the works of writers from ancient times to today.

**Mason Core Learning outcomes**

* Read for comprehension, detail and nuance
* Identify the specific literary qualities of language as employed in the texts
* Analyze the ways specific literary devices contribute to the meaning of a text
* Identify and evaluate the contribution of the social, political, historical and cultural contexts in which a literary text is produced
* Evaluate a critical argument in others’ writing as well as one’s own

This course is part of the University Mason Core Program. More information about the Mason Core requirements can be found on the web: masoncore.gmu.edu

**REQUIRED READINGS**

All required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Recommended Reading**

*Dangerous Women: Warriors, Grannies, and Geishas of the Ming.* Victoria Baldwin Cass*.* Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999

*Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on gender in Chinese History.* Ed. Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001

*The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China.* Wilt Idema and Beata Grant. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004

*Empress Wu Zetian in Fiction and in History: Female Defiance in Confucian China*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003

*The Butterfly Lovers: The Legend of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai: Four Versions*. Wilt L. Idema. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2010

*Filial Piety and Its Divine Rewards: The Legend of Dong Yong and Weaving Maiden.* Wilt L. Idema. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2009

*The White Snake and Her Son.* Wilt L. Idema. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2009

*The White Snake:* *A Play*. Mary Zimmerman. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013

*Mulan: Five Versions of a Classic Chinese Legend.* Shiamin Kwa andWilt Idema. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2010

**Films:**

**(Partial) Screened in Class:**

*King of Masks*; dir. Tian-Ming Wu; Shaw Brothers, 1997

*Mulan*; dir. Barry Cook and Tony Bancroft; Walt Disney, 1999

*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; dir. Ang Lee; Sony Pictures Classics et al, 2001

*Threads in Time* (Liu Rushi)*;* dir. Gao Chang; China Film Group, 2012

**Recommended:**

*Flowers of War;* dir. Zhang Yimou; Beijign New Picture Film Co, 2011

*Flowers of Shanghai;* Dir. Hsiao-hsien Hou; 3H Productions, 1998

*The Lovers (Liang zhu, the Butterfly Lovers);* dir hark Tsui; Golden Harvest Company, 1995

*Reincarnation of Golden Lotus;* dir Clara Law; Golden Harvest Company, 1989

*Qing She*; dir Hark Tsui, Hong Kong, 1993

Hua Mulan; dir. Ma Chucheng; Bona Film Group Company, Starlight International Media Group et al, 2009

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**1. Attendance and participation** **(35%)**

Attendance of class sessions is crucial. Keep in mind that part of your grade is based on participation in class and therefore absences count against you regardless of the reasons. There will be no penalty for the first two missed classes (one 75min session count as one missed class). After that, however, your participation grade will be lowered with each absence by 2 points.

Active participation in discussion in class is expected. Quizzes and in class assignments will be given occasionally in class.  Be prepared and read BEFORE class. Quiz grade will be a part of your participation grade. No make-up quiz will be offered.

Discussion Board: Another way to participate is via Discussion Board. Post your questions about the story and your suggestions about what would be interesting to do during class discussion on the Discussion Board at least 12 hours before class. You are expected to have posted at least 10 substantial posts (250 words) by the end of the semester, each on different texts, all posted before class unless otherwise advised. We will also have occasional writing assignments on Discussion Board.

**2. Reading**

You are expected to read all required readings BEFORE coming to class. Required readings include the literary and historical texts that are posted on Blackboard, as well as the reading guides posted on blackboard (background information and brain-warming questions).

**3. Response Paper (10% + 10%)**

You are required to submit 2 response papers during the semester. Each of the response papers should be about 2 pages long (600-800 words), on one or two text(s) from each section of the semester. Each paper should include a statement about the reading (i.e. answering the brain-warming questions for each reading in Blackboard, or engaging with any issue of your interest), at least two examples/quotes from the text in support of your statement, and a coherent analysis to explain and support your idea. It is OK to relate to your own experience when it is relevant to the reading, but you need to explain about the relevance. See Response Paper Guideline for details.

4. **Presentation** **(15%)**

Students will work in groups of 4 for a group presentation. Each presentation should be about 20 minutes long, followed by class discussion led by the group. If your group incorporate interactive activities, you can use more time. The group is required to submit a DRAFT of the presentation (it can be an outline or a ppt draft) at least 48 HOURS PRIOR to the presentation, to ensure some communication between the presenters and the instructor. After the presentation, each student is required to submit a ONE-PAGE REPORT that includes their individual critique on the topic and the particular role they have played in the group for the presentation. Students will be given time in class to prepare for presentation. See Presentation Guideline for details.

**5. Mid-term and Final Examinations (15% + 15%)**

The mid-term exam will cover materials read till mid-term time, and the final exam will cover materials read after the mid-term, although there might be some reference to the readings from the earlier half semester in the final.

**GRADING SCALE**

A         93-100 A-        90-92   
B+       87-89 B         83-86 B-         80-82   
C+       77-79 C         73-76 C- 70-71   
D+       67-69 D 60-66 F          0 -59

**E-MAIL POLICY**:

According to university guidelines, you are required to use your MasonLive email account when corresponding with the professor and with other students in the course. You are responsible to check your Mason email regularly to make sure you are in timely communication with the class.

Mandatory E-Mail format: Emails to the professor should have a clear subject, i.e. “CHIN325- Presentation on Miaoshan.” Please always remember to address the professor at the beginning, and include your name in the end. You should expect to receive a response from the professor about your questions within one business day.

**OFFICE HOUR**

You are strongly encouraged to make appointments with the professor via email regarding any questions, comments, and suggestions you have about the class or any additional help you might need for the class.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

As in many classes, a number of projects in this class are designed to be completed within your study group. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Collaborative projects may be divided up so that individual group members complete portions of the whole, provided that group members take sufficient steps to ensure that the pieces conceptually fit together in the end product. Other projects are designed to be undertaken independently. In the latter case, you may discuss your ideas with others and conference with peers on drafts of the work; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes and reading Blackboard readings only. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g., gaming, email, chat, or working on assignments for other courses) will result in a significant deduction in your participation grade. The professor reserves the right to shut off or take away your device if you are observed to be using it for non-course related purposes.

**POLICY ON DISABILITIES**

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; http://ods.gmu.edu) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

**STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES**

Counseling and Psychological Services: (703) 993-2380; caps.gmu.edu

Student Health Services: shs.gmu.edu

Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; writingcenter.gmu.edu

Office Of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, And Questioning Resources:

SUB 1, Room 225; (703) 993-2702; lgbtq.gmu.edu/

**CAVEAT**

The syllabus is a working draft of our intellectual topics and texts during the semester. I may change the syllabus and adjust the readings given certain situations, including strong interests expressed by students.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week 1              Introduction**

8/27 Syllabus

8/29 “Ballad of Mulan” vs. Disney *Mulan*

Dien, Dora Shu-Fang, “Gender Distinctions in Traditional China,” in *Empress Wu Zetian in Fiction and in History: Female Defiance in Confucian China*, pp. 69-76

**Week 2              Confucian Traditions: Filial Piety and Women’s Position in the Traditional Society**

9/3 Ban Zhao (ca 45 – 116 AD), *Precepts for My Daughters*

9/5 Zheng*: Book of Filial Piety for Women*

**Week 3              Traditional Woman Poets: Writing about Traumatic Experiences**

9/10 Cai Yan (ca 177 - ?): her life and her poems, pp.112-127

9/12 Li Qingzhao (1084 - ca 1151): “Postface to *Inscriptions on Bronze and Stone*” and poems

**Week 4              From Heresy to Goddess: Localization and Feminization of Bodhisattva Guanyin**

9/17 Story of Guanyin/Miaoshan (“Biography of the Great Compassionate One of Xiangshan by Jiang Zhiqi”)

9/19 Clip in class: *King of Masks* (bian lian)

**Week 5              Female “Demon”: Domestication of Lady Fox Spirits**

9/24 Shen Chi-chi (750 - 800), “Jenshih or the Fox Lady”

9/26 Pu Songling (1640 - 1715), “Fight with Foxes”Pu Songling (1640 - 1715), “Lianxiang the Fox Girl”

**Week 6              Foot Binding: Violence and Beauty**

10/1 Wang Ping, Aching for Beauty: Foot-binding in China (pp. 3-28);

10/3 “Yexian, the Chinese Cinderella,” from Dorothy Ko *Every step a lotus* (pp.26-45)

**Week 7 Foot Binding: the Ideal Beauty**

10/8 Feng Jicai, Three Inch Golden Lotus, Chapter 8, pp. 106-125;

10/10 Feng Jicai, Three Inch Golden Lotus, Chapter 15-16, pp. 211-229

Mid-term review

**Week 8              Mid-Term**

10/15 NO CLASS owing to Fall Break

10/17 **Mid-term Exam In Class**   
**Paper One due Friday on Blackboard; a hardcopy required the following Monday in class**

**Week 9              Young Ladies from Noble Families: of Chains and Freedom**

10/22 **Paper One hardcopy due in class**  
Yuan Chen (779 – 831) “The Story of Ying-ying” (ebook pp507-517);

10/24 Tang Xianzu (1550 – 1616), *Peony Pavilion*, Scene Ten: The Interrupted Dream (ebook pp42-53)

**Week 10            Courtesans and Chinese History**

10/29 Dorothy Ko, “The Written Word and the Bound Foot: A History of the Courtesan’s Aura”

10/31 Screening: Clips from *Threads in Time* (108min)

**Week 11 Courtesans: the Entertainment Culture**

11/5 Feng, Menglong, “Du Shiniang sinks her jewel box in anger”

11/7 Feng, Menglong, “The oil-peddler wins the queen of flowers”

**Week 12           Femme Fatale**

11/12 Feng, Menglong, “Madame White Is Kept Forever under Thunder Peak Tower”

11/14 “The Beheaded Feminist: Qiu Jin,” *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China*

**Week 13            Modern Woman Writers: Race, Nation, and Female Espionage**

11/19 Ding Ling (1904 – 1986), “When I was in Xia Village”

11/21 Zhang Ailing (1920 – 1995), “Lust, Caution”

**Week 14            Traditional *Wuxia* Stories and Contemporary Martial Art Film**

11/26 Yuan Jiao (late ninth century), “Hongxian”

Pei Xing (late ninth century), “Yinniang the Swordswoman”

Pu Songling (1640 – 1715), “Lady Knight Errant”  
Cai, “Gender Imaginations in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon and the Wuxia World” (1)

Homework: Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (120min)

**Thanksgiving Recession**

**Week 15 Gender Role in the *Wuxia* World: Space for Woman Warrior?**

12/3 Cai, “Gender Imaginations in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon and the Wuxia World” (2)

Discussion: Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

**12/5 Final Review**

**Paper Two due Friday ON BLACKBOARD**

**Final Exam: Thurs. 12/12, 9-10:15am (listed as 7:30-10:15am)**