

Syllabus

The Formation of the Nation-State and the Pursuit of Individual Rights In Modern Chinese Literature

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OBJECTIVES

This special-topic course is offered to students who are interested in Chinese literature or concerned with the human rights issues raised by the Chinese human rights situation. No knowledge of the Chinese language is required.

Throughout the twentieth century, Chinese culture was dominated by two agendas: national salvation and the liberation of the individual. The first agenda aimed to save China from the threat of Western imperialism and colonialism by revitalizing the Chinese nation. The second agenda, sustained by the belief that revitalizing the Chinese nation depended on releasing the power of each societal member from China's stifling feudal tradition, advocated the individual pursuit of liberty, equality and personal happiness. While they could be mutually enhancing in the shared vision of achieving Chinese modernity, these two historical endeavors for the most part clashed with each other. The mission of national salvation, which was primarily empowered by the Confucian ideology of an authoritarian state, entailed reducing the individual to the tool of redeeming the Chinese nationhood and compromising individual values in the name of communal and national interests. Since the early decades of the twentieth century, the tension between the two forces has defined the relationship between the state authority of modern China (either Nationalist or Communist) and its largely liberal intelligentsia, and informed the situation in which the violation/promotion of human rights has been conducted. Not only is such a historical process reflected in modern Chinese literature, but it has also determined the way this literature is engendered.

Integrating historical explorations with literary studies, this course enables students to approach modern Chinese literature both as an aesthetic form and as a political discourse. Upon completing this course, students will have attained 1) an overall view of the development of modern Chinese literature, 2) skills to interpret and appreciate Chinese literary works; 3) knowledge of the socio-historical conditions for the production of modern Chinese literature and 4), more importantly, a better understanding of Chinese intellectuals' persistent struggles for the rights and dignity of the individual human being.

FOCUS AND STRUCTURE

The course will examine major Chinese writers from the early twentieth century to the post-Mao era. Although arranged in a chronological order, course materials will be organized around meaningful topics that can help students to grasp the major concern of this course in a systematic and coherent manner. Such topics include: traditional (Confucian) concepts of the individual and the state; the May Fourth New Culture Movement (1910s-1920s) calling for the emancipation of the individual; the emergence of Chinese nationalism demanding the individual to serve the cause of establishing a new China; gender inequality and women's movement; the Communist revolution and its impact on Chinese culture; neo-humanism in post-Mao China; and contemporary Chinese dissident writers in exile. The course will introduce each literary period and new topic with a lecture,

but it will place great emphasis on class discussion and on creating a dialogue of interpreting the texts covered in the course.

ATTENDANCE AND REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is mandatory. No absence will be excused unless it falls into one of these four categories: 1) religious observance, 2) university-sponsored athletic or scholastic activity (official absence form required), 3) illness (doctor's note required), or 4) death in the immediate family. A student who incurs an absence should present the written permission to be excused from class no later than two weeks from the day of the missed class and make up all work missed during the absence. After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence will lower the student's final grade by two percentage points.

Students are required to complete the weekly reading assignments, actively participate in class discussion, write two 650-word essays and one 2000-word research paper, and take a final examination.

This course adheres to the Academic Honor Code as described in the Student Handbook. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should register with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and bring a letter from the SDRC to the instructor. This should be done in the first week of class.

GRADING

Attendance	10%
Participation and presentation	20%
Short essays:	20%
Research paper:	30%
Final exam:	20%

(A = 95; A- = 90-94; B+ = 86-89; B = 82-85; B- = 80-82; C+ = 76-79; C = 72-75; etc. F = 59)

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts:

1. Chang, Eileen. *The Rice-Sprout Song : A Novel of Modern China*. U of California P, 1998 (rpt).
2. Gao, Xingjian. *Soul Mountain* New York: HarperCollins, 2000.
3. Lau, Joseph and Howard Goldblatt. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1995 (referred to as **CA** in the schedule)
4. A wide variety of additional materials will be distributed in class.

Films:

1. *China: A Century of Revolution*. PBS video.
2. *Family*, dir. Chen Xihe and Ye Ming, 1956.
3. *New Year's Sacrifice*, dir. Sang Hu, 1956.
4. *The Lin Family Shop*. Dir. Shui Hua, 1959.
5. *To Live*, dir. Zhang Yimou, 1994 (or *Blue Kike*, dir. Tian Zhuangzhuang, 1993)
6. *Xiu Xiu: The Sent-Down Girl*, Joan Chen, 1998.

(All films are available in the Language Lab, 104 Diffenbaugh Building)

Recommended References:

1. Hsia, C. T. *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*. Bloomington: Indian UP, 1999 (third edition).
2. *A Guide to Chinese Literature*. Ed. Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, U of Michigan, 1997.

SCHEDULE

Week I

Jan. 8:

1. Administrative matters
2. Introduction to the course
3. Screening: *China in Revolution*, part one.

Jan. 10:

1. Ambrose King, "The Individual and Group in Confucianism" (handouts).
2. Zhou Zuoren, "Humane Literature" (handouts).

Week II

Jan. 15:

1. Lu Xun, "Preface," "A Madman's Diary," "Kong Yiji," CA 3-20.

Jan. 17:

1. Yu Dafu, "Sinking, CA 44-69.

Week III

Jan. 22:

1. Guo Moruo, selected poems (handouts)
2. Xu Zhimo, poems, CA 503-05.
3. Wen Yiduo, poems, CA 506-507.

Jan. 24:

1. Ba Jin, "Dog," CA 120-125.
2. Film: *Family* (available in the Language Lab, 104 Diffenbaugh Building).

Week IV

Jan. 29:

1. Xu Dishan, "The Merchant's Wife," CA 21-34.
2. Shen Congwen, "Xiao Xiao," CA 97-110.

Jan. 31:

1. Wu Zuxiang, "Young Master Gets His Tonic," CA 159-73.
2. Film: *New Year's Sacrifice* (available in the Language Lab, 104 Diffenbaugh Building).

First short essay due.

Week V

Feb.5:

1. Ding Ling, "The Diary of Miss Sophia" (handouts)

Feb. 7:

1. Ling Shuhua, "The Midautumn Festival," CA 111-19.
2. Xiao Hong, "Hands," CA 174-87.

Week VI

Feb. 12:

1. Hu Qiuyuan, "Do Not Encroach upon Literary Art" (handouts).
2. Qu Qiubai, "Freedom for Literature but Not the Writer" (handouts).
3. Mao Dun, "Spring Silkworms," CA 70-88.

Feb. 14:

1. Dai Wangshu, poems, CA 513-12.
2. Ai Qing, poems, CA 519-23.

Week VII

Feb. 19:

1. Mao Zedong, "Talk at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" (handouts)

Feb. 21:

1. Wang Shiwei, "Wild Lily" and other essays (handouts)
2. Ding Ling, "When I was in Xia Village" (CA 143-58)

Week VIII

Feb. 26:

1. Eileen Chang, *The Rice-Sprout Song : A Novel of Modern China*.

Feb. 28:

1. Eileen Chang continued.
Second short essay due.

Week IX

March 5:

1. Selected wall-poster essays during the 1957 "Hundred Flowers" movement (handouts).

March 7:

1. Liu Binyan, "At the Bridge Site" (handouts)
2. Wang Meng, "The Young Man Who Has Just Arrived at the Organization Department" (handouts).

Week X

March 11-14: Spring Break

Week XI

March 19:

1. "Red Guard Statements, 1966-1967" (handouts)
2. Mao Zedong, selected poems (handouts)

March 21:

1. Yan Geling, "Celestial Bath" (handouts)
2. Film: *Xiu Xiu* (available in the Language Lab, 104 Diffenbaugh Building).

Week XII

March 26:

1. Chen Cun, "A Story," CA 399-415.
2. Liu Heng, "Dogshit Food," CA 416-28.

March 28:

1. Li Ang, "Curvaceous Dolls," CA 360-73.
2. Tie Ning, "Octday," CA 471-84.

Week XIII

April 2:

1. Bei Dao, poems, CA 569-71.
2. Su Ting, poems, CA 572-74.
3. Gu Cheng, poems, CA 580-81.

April 4:

1. Yang Lian, poems, CA 577-79.
2. Anonymous poem, CA 582-83.
3. Bei Dao, selected poems in exile (handouts)

Week XIV

April 9:

1. Gao Xingjian, *Soul Mountain*.

April 11:

No class: Professor Lan will be out of town at a conference.

Week XV

April 16:

1. Gao Xingjian, *Soul Mountain* continued.
- Term paper due.**

April 18:

1. Catch-up reading.

Week XVI

Final Exam (to be announced)