

EAC 210 (#8879)

Survey of Traditional Chinese Literature I

Spring 2009

M & W 5:45 – 7:05

Humanities 19

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People in our society, and globally, are becoming increasingly interested in issues pertaining to Chinese culture and history. This is no coincidence. We are talking about a country that hosts the largest number of people on earth (at least 1.3 billion people) and one of the largest economies of the world, based on some macroeconomic indicators. In addition, the Chinese global diaspora has left significant cultural and political imprints throughout the world. Despite the socioeconomic and cultural transformations during the last century, Chinese culture is nevertheless deeply rooted in historical legacies of this longest continuous civilization in the world. Recorded through a unique writing system that helped unify Chinese culture temporally and spatially, the wealth of literatures of this civilization should be considered as much a means to understanding Chinese culture as it is a valued asset of world heritage. This course samples literary writings of the earliest literatures of Chinese culture from the oracle bones and foundational ancient philosophies of the second and first millennia B.C., to the sophisticated poems of medieval Tang (618-907 A.D.) and pre-modern Song (960-1260 A.D.) dynasties.

Course description: The goal of this course is to survey, through their English translations, selected major works of traditional Chinese literature from the earliest period through the Song dynasty. There are no prerequisites for this course and knowledge of Chinese is not required. This is a General Education course within the modality of “Oral Discourse.” Therefore, **all** students will be required to make **two formal oral presentations**, in addition to regular contributions to class discussions. In addition, the course also fulfills the General Education Humanities requirement. Close readings of the texts will not only allow us to appreciate the aesthetics of the pieces, but also to critically examine methods and discourses employed in the analysis of Chinese literature while grasping the historical and cultural contexts of the chosen works.

Required textbook:

Victor Mair, ed., *The Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*.
New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

(The book will be available at the University Bookstore.)

Additional reading materials are available through the University Ereserve system. All you need to do is to go to the University library page from the University main page. Select “Eres,” click on “Electronic Reserves and Reserves Pages,” fill in “210” for the Course Number, click on “AEAC210” and fill in the password (eac210s09). These materials should be downloaded and used along with the textbook according to the Class Schedule.

Class format: In a literature class, we read and discuss selected works. Therefore, although I will deliver some lectures for you to understand key concepts, major aspects of certain historical periods, and the contexts of some of the literary pieces, the main activity in the class will be discussion of the assigned readings. It is extremely important that you read the assigned materials before coming to class and to be ready for discussion.

Grades: The final grade will consist of: 1) the midterm exam grade (25% of the final grade); 2) the final exam grade (25% of the final grade); 3) class attendance, preparation, and participation in class discussions (25% of the final grade); and 3) 2 formal oral presentations (10%+15%). Learning to read and discuss the readings critically is more important than rote memory in this course. Therefore, the midterm and final exams will be essay style take-home exams. Also, your engagement in class is crucial. During our class discussions, you should demonstrate that you have read the materials assigned.

Numerical scores will be converted to course grades according to the following scale: 93-100%=A; 90-92.99%=A-; 87-89.99%=B+; 83-86.99%=B; 80-82.99%=B-; 77-79.99%=C+; 73-76.99%=C; 70-72.99%=C-; 67-69.99%=D+; 63-66.99%=D; 60-62.99%=D-; 0-59.99%=E.

Class rules: 1) Class attendance is mandatory (attendance will be taken; since you cannot participate without being present, the participation grade will be affected by your absences. 2) You must purchase the textbook and download the Eres materials and bring them to class. You *must* bring the materials under discussion to our class every time we meet. They should be in front of you, and you should be able to use them in our class discussions. 3) You are responsible for reading the assignments on time and come to class prepared to discuss any part of the reading assignment. 4) You are encouraged to ask questions whenever you do not understand something. 5) It is your responsibility to take notes and review them for the exams. 6) All the evaluations (mid-term, final exam, class participation, formal presentation, etc.) are mandatory. The oral presentation component of the class must be completed in order to pass the course. Only written medical documentation or excuses documented through authorized institutions such as the Undergraduate Dean’s office or the police department, will be accepted for lateness/absences. Verbal justifications will not be enough to justify your absence to any of the components that comprises your final grade. 4) The acquisition and demonstration of good ethical standards is one of the goals at our university. Plagiarism and any other form of “cheating” are unacceptable and they will be reported to the corresponding university authorities. You are responsible for reading the undergraduate students’ manual online for greater familiarity with the university rules and regulations which also apply to our class.

Characteristics of *all* General Education Courses

1. General Education courses offer introductions to the central topics of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
2. They offer explicit rather than tacit understandings of the procedures, practices, methodology and fundamental assumptions of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
3. They recognize multiple perspectives on the subject matter.
4. They emphasize active learning in an engaged environment that enables students to be producers as well as consumers of knowledge.
5. They promote critical inquiry into the assumptions, goals, and methods of various fields of academic study; they aim to develop the interpretive, analytic, and evaluative competencies characteristic of critical thinking.

Learning Objectives for General Education *Humanities* Courses

Humanities courses teach students to analyze and interpret texts, ideas, artifacts, and discourse systems, and the human values, traditions, and beliefs that they reflect.

1. Humanities courses enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the assumptions, methods of study, and theories of at least one of the disciplines within the humanities.

Depending on the discipline, humanities courses will enable students to demonstrate some or all of the following:

2. An understanding of the objects of study as expressions of the cultural contexts of the people who created them
3. An understanding of the continuing relevance of the objects of study to the present and to the world outside the university
4. An ability to employ the terms and understand the conventions particular to the discipline
5. An ability to analyze and assess the strengths and weaknesses of ideas and positions along with the reasons or arguments that can be given for and against them
6. An understanding of the nature of the texts, artifacts, ideas, or discourse of the discipline and of the assumptions that underlie this understanding, including those relating to issues of tradition and canon

Learning Objectives for General Education *Oral Discourse* Courses

Approved courses provide opportunities for students to develop the oral communication skills they need to participate more effectively in public and academic debates and discussions. Courses offer opportunities to participate in a variety of communication contexts and to reflect on the principles of theory relevant to specific oral communication activities. Approved courses include instruction on presentation as well as feedback and evaluation of oral performances.

Approved courses generally have a minimum of two exercises in which oral performance is required and graded. An oral performance exercise can be accomplished in any of the following activities, either live or in a crafted recording:

1. A stand-up monologue presentation or a minimum of 3-5 minutes
2. A debate where each participant speaks for a minimum of 3-5 minutes
3. A question and answer dialogic process where the student fields a succession of questions or asks a succession of questions that build on and comment on prior answers
4. A discussion within a group, where each member will be required to make 3-5 “paragraph-length” contributions in the course of the discussion.

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1/21(W)	Introduction	
1/26 (M)	Overview of Chinese history and literature. Lecture and film (China: Dynasties of Power).	
1/28 (W)	Foundations: Divination; writing system; bronze inscriptions	#1 (pp.3-4); #167 (p.350 only); #2 (pp.4-5)
2/2 (M)	Confucian Classics: Book of Changes; Classic of Documents	#3 (pp.5-6); #157 (pp.301-304)
2/4 (W)	Confucian Classic: Book of Odes/Poetry	# 16 (pp.60-73)
2/9 (M)	Confucianism: <i>The Analects</i> (Confucius); <i>Menzi</i> (Mencius)	#6 (pp.17-20); #7 (pp.20-21)
2/11 (W)	Philosophical Daoism: <i>The Daodejing</i> (Laozi)	#9 (pp.32-37)
2/16 (M)	NO CLASS	
2/18 (W)	NO CLASS	
2/23 (M)	Philosophical Daoism: <i>Zhuangzi</i>	#8 (pp.22-32)
2/25 (W)	<i>The Songs of Chu</i>	See ERes
3/2 (M)	Historical Prose: <i>The Commentaries of Zuo</i>	#159 (pp.308-311)
3/4 (W)	Historical Prose: <i>Intrigues</i>	#200 (pp.471-474) and ERes
3/9 (M)	Han dynasty poetry: rhapsody and folk songs.	#123 (pp.208-211); #128-134 (pp.241-6).
3/11 (W)	Six Dynasties: Tao Qian’s poems and “Peach Blossom Spring”	#20 (pp.77-79); #172 (pp.364-266)
3/16 (M)	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	

3/18 (W)	Midterm due ORAL PRESENTATIONS	
3/23 (M)	Six Dynasties: Folk songs and the ballad, "Mulan."	# 141 (pp.253-244); 145 (pp.267-269)
3/25 (W)	Film on Tang dynasty	
3/30 (M)	Tang dynasty poems by Wang Wei and Li Bo/Bai	#34 (pp.90-92); #35 (pp.92-96)
4/1 (W)	Tang dynasty poems by Du Fu; poems in Chinese	#37 (pp.97-100)
4/6 (M)	Tang prose, "The Story of Yingying"	#207 (pp.507-517)
4/8 (W)	NO CLASS	
4/13 (M)	NO CLASS	
4/15 (W)	Song dynasty poems and rhapsody by Su Shi	#96 (pp.158-160); #127 (pp.238-240)
4/20 (M)	Song dynasty lyrics by Li Qingzhao	#101 (165-169)
4/22 (W)	Song-Ming dynasties tale of Tang dynasty origin, "The Shrew"	#209 (pp.529-551)
4/27 (M)	Continued	
4/29 (W)	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	
5/4 (M)	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	

Take-home Final Exam due May 11. Please slip the exam under my office door (Hu-246) if I'm not there. Happy summer!