

EAC 396/THR323 (9050): Readings in Chinese Drama

Spring 2009

M&W 2:45-4:05

Hu-115

Dr. Fan Pen Chen

Office hours: M 1:30-2:30; W 4:10-5:10; and by appointment

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Objectives of the course:

The goal of this course is to gain an appreciation for traditional Chinese theatre through a close reading of selected plays in translation. After some introductory lectures on the history and aesthetics of the Chinese theatre, this course will concentrate on reading and discussing pieces of Yuan Zaju Drama, Ming Chuanqi Drama, Peking/Beijing Opera, and Chinese Shadow Plays. Knowledge of the Chinese language is not necessary. Prerequisites: Any 200 level course from either the Department of East Asian Studies (other than 200 level language courses) or the Theater Department; or permission from the instructor.

Required textbooks:

Birch, Cyril tr., *The Peony Pavilion*. Bloomington :Indiana University Press, 1980
(for *The Peony Pavilion*).

Fan Pen Chen tr., *Visions for the Masses; Chinese Shadow Plays from Shaanxi and Shanxi*. Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series, 2004 (for shadow plays)

E-reserve for the Yuan zaju plays, "Introduction to Yuan Plays," "The Soul of Ch'ien-nü Leaves Her Body" and "The Injustice Done to Tou Ngo"; the shadow play, "The Yellow River Magic Formation"; and the Peking/Beijing Opera, "Hegemon King Says Farewell to his Queen." (eac396s09).

Class format:

Aside from introductory lectures on the history and aesthetics of Chinese theatre, the class will read and discuss assigned plays. Preparation and class participation are important parts of the course.

Grading:

The final grade will consist of a take-home mid-term exam (25%), final exam (25%), class attendance, preparation, and participation in class discussions (25%), and a presentation (25%). This course is A-E graded. Numerical scores will be converted to course grades according to the following scale: 93-100%=A; 90-92%=A-; 87-89%=B+; 83-86%=B; 80-82%=B-; 77-79%=C+; 73-76%=C; 70-72%=C-; 67-69%=D+; 63-66%=D; 60-62%=D-; 0-59%=E.

Presentation:

The aims of the presentation are at once creative and analytical. Students will work in small groups to recreate a traditional Chinese play for the modern audience. The students doing the presentation will first describe the original play and then tell the class what they've decided to keep and why (the universality of the theme; the exotic flavor of certain aspects of the original rendered; humor; depth of feeling; interest; etc.), and what they've decided to change and why (incongruence with modern sensibilities or tastes; improvement on the way the original playwright developed the theme; length; etc.). The students will then perform the rewritten play. Aside from performing together, the students are required to hand in a note indicating which students were responsible for which aspects of their presentation.

CLASS SCHEDULE for EAC396/THR323 Spring 2009

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1/21(W)	Course introduction	
1/26 (M)	History of Chinese drama	
1/28 (W)	Aesthetics of Chinese drama	Intro to Yuan Drama (Eres)
2/2 (M)	Yuan Drama: "The Soul of Ch'ien-nü (Qiannü) Leaves Her Body"	Wedge-Act II (Eres)
2/4 (W)	Yuan Drama: "The Soul of Ch'ien-nü Leaves Her Body"	Act III-Act IV (Eres)
2/9 (M)	Yuan Drama: "The Injustice Done to Tou Ngo (Dou E)"	Wedge-Act II (Eres)
2/11 (W)	Yuan Drama: "The Injustice Done to Tou Ngo"	Act III-Act IV (Eres)
2/16 (M)	NO CLASS	
2/18 (W)	NO CLASS	

2/23 (M)	Intro to Chinese shadow theatre	
2/25 (W)	Shadow Play: “The Yellow River Magic Formation”	Intro and Scenes I-VI (Eres)
3/2 (M)	Shadow Play: “The Yellow River Magic Formation”	Scenes VI-XI (Eres)
3/4 (W)	Beijing Opera: “Hegemon King Bids Farewell to His Queen”	Scenes I-V (Eres)
3/9 (M)	Beijing Opera: “Hegemon King Bids Farewell to His Queen”	Scenes VI-IX (Eres)
3/11 (W)	Film on <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	
3/16 (M)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.1-7 (Sc.1; Sc.3; Sc.7)
3/18 (W)	Midterm due. Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.8-10 (Sc.10)
3/23 (M)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.11-24 (Sc.12; Sc.24)
3/25 (W)	Meeting re presentation	
3/30 (M)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	(Sc. 23)
4/1 (W)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.25-32 (Sc.28; Sc.32)
4/6 (M)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.33-36 (Sc.35; Sc.36)
4/8 (W)	NO CLASS	
4/13 (M)	NO CLASS	
4/15 (W)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.37-52 (Sc.47; Sc.52)
4/20 (M)	Ming Ch’uan-ch’i (Chuanqi): <i>The Peony Pavilion</i>	Sc.53-55) (Sc.53; Sc.55)
4/22 (W)	Presentations	
4/27 (M)	Presentations	
4/29 (W)	Shadow Plays: “Henpecked Zhang San” and “Rotten-kid Dong Sells His Ma”	the two plays
5/4 (M)	Shadow Play: <i>The Coral Pagoda</i>	Scenes 1-6

Take-home Final Exam due May 14. Please slip the exam under my office door (Hu-246) if I’m not there. Happy summer!