20th CENTURY CHINESE LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Course Description:
Through reading translations of representative works from modern Chinese literature, students will get acquainted with the major intellectual currents and literary movements in the 20th century China. Students are expected to understand how the Chinese men and women react to the inner and outer crisis posed by history, and how they live, work, think, feel, love, wander, despair, endure, or die —how they build new forms of culture and society on the ruins of the old. Images, characters, gender relations, and themes will be studied as indexes to the network of beliefs, mentality and social relations, which constantly change in response to an ever changing world.

The course aims to help students to develop an understanding of and appreciation for modern Chinese literature and an enhanced knowledge of modern Chinese culture. Students are expected to adopt comparative perspectives to illuminate the relevance of the Chinese experience to the West.

Required Texts

Readings marked with * are available on D2L course website.

Course Calendar

Week 1
M 8/22 Course introduction (contents, goals, requirements, methodology)
W 8/24 Mini-lecture: “The thing in between history”
   Discussion: Lu Xun (Hsun), Preface to Call to the Arms (1922), pp. 3-7

Week 2
M 8/29 Discussion: Lu Xun, “A Madman's Diary” (1918), pp. 8-16
W 8/31 Discussion: Lu Xun, “Regret for the Past” (1925)*

Week 3
M 9/05 Labor Day, no class is scheduled
W 9/07 Mini-lecture: The city and the countryside in modern China
   Discussion: Mu Shiying, “Shanghai Foxtrot” (1932)*

Week 4
M 9/12 Discussion: Mu Shiying, “A Platinum Statue of the Female Body” (1934)*
W 9/14 Discussion: Wu Zuxiang, “Young Master Gets His Tonic” (1932), pp.147-160

Week 5
M 9/19 Discussion: Shen Congwen, "Xiaoxiao" (1929), pp. 82-94
W 9/21 Discussion: Ye Shaojun, “A Posthumous Son” (1926), pp.22-30
Week 6
M 9/26 Discussion: Shen Congwen, “Three Men and One Woman” (1930)*
W 9/28 Exam #1

Week 7
M 10/03 Mini-lecture: The birth of the psychological subject
W 10/05 Discussion: Shi Zhecun, “Spring Sunshine” (1930)*

Week 8
M 10/10 Discussion: Yu Dafu, “Sinking” (1921), pp.31-55
W 10/12 Cont. "Sinking;" instructions for 1st paper

Week 9
M 10/17 Mini-lecture: Chinese women: old and new 1st paper due
W 10/19 Discussion: Ling Shuhua, "The Night of Mid-Autumn Festival" (1928), pp.95-102

Week 10
M 10/24 Discussion: Xu Dishan, “Spring Peach” (1934)*

Week 11
M 10/31 Discussion: Ding Ling, “When I Was in Xia Village” (1940), pp.132-146
W 11/02 Clips from New Year’s Sacrifice (1956)

Week 12
M 11/07 Exam #2
W 11/09 Mini-lecture: Chinese literature in the New Period

Week 13
W 11/16 Mini-lecture: Trauma and memory

Week 14
W 11/23 Thanksgiving, no class is scheduled

Week 15
W 11/30 Discussion: Can Xue, “Hut on the Mountain” (1985), pp. 325-328

Week 16
M 12/05 Discussion: Han Shaogong, “The Leader’s Demise” (1992), pp.337-348
W 12/07 Exam #3 2nd paper due
Requirements

Attendance and Participation  10%
Attendance for each and every entire class period is mandatory. Each student is allowed 3 unexcused absences throughout the semester. Beyond that each absence will result in a lower grade by 5 points. Full attendance will be rewarded with extra credit.

Presentation 15%
Each student is required to do one presentation, either individually or with other students, on one chosen text. The schedule of presentation will be determined during our first two classes. Each presentation should last 10-15 minutes. The goal of your presentation is to help your fellow students further understand the assigned text and exchange ideas on aspects of the text that you find most intriguing.

Pop Quizzes 15%
Students should always be prepared to take pop-up quizzes on the assigned readings at the beginning of classes. These pop quizzes CANNOT be made up if you missed them due to absence or lateness.

Three Short Exams  30%
There will be three short exams, based on materials from assigned readings, lectures and discussions. The exams consist of a number of short-answer questions.

Two Short Papers  30%
Students are required to submit two short papers (4-6 pages) related to one or two required readings. The first paper is due on 10/17, the second one is due on the last day of class. You must submit your paper via D2L dropbox by the deadline. Late paper will only receive partial credit.

Grading Scale
90% and above = A  Well prepared, excellent performance
80% - 89% = B  Well prepared, good performance
70% - 79% = C  Some preparation but with some major problems in performance
60% - 69% = D  No preparation, poor performance, only present in class
59% and below = F

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else’s ideas or writing in your own work: it is stealing and lying. All cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Provost with the recommendation of expulsion from the university. https://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/plagiarism.htm

Disability
Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.