

Department: MCL

Course No: CHIN 122

Title: Modern Chinese Culture

Credits: 3

Contact: Roger Travis, Norma Bouchard

Content Area: CA1 and CA4 International

Catalog Copy: (CHIN) 122. Either semester. Three credits. Three class periods. Introduction to modern Chinese culture from the fall of the Qing Dynasty to the present period. Survey of institutions, philosophy, and social customs seen through literature and films.

Course Information:

a. course goals and objectives: This course introduces students to important elements of contemporary Chinese culture and complements Chinese Language instruction that is offered by the department of Modern and Classical Languages. Through literary texts and films, this course surveys contemporary Chinese culture from the Wuchang Uprising, to the Communist and the Cultural revolutions. Since the approach is both interdisciplinary and comparative, this course facilitates an appreciation of modern Chinese culture while encouraging students to move past Western conceptual categories.

b. Course requirements: Quizzes, 4 short papers, mid term and final exams. The exams are in the form of short essay questions, definitions and identifications. Exams also include background, factual information, and interpretative material presented during the lectures and class-discussions. Students are also asked to write 4 short essays on the main topics around which this course is structured.

c. List the major themes, issues, topics, etc., to be covered.

- 1) Historical Background to the fall of Qing Dynasty (1644-1911): internal and foreign influences
- 2) From Empire to the Republic: The Wuchang Uprising and the Republic of China
- 3) Revolutionaries of the May Fourth Generation: 1919
- 4) The struggle for national legitimacy
- 5) Country meets City: Urban dwellers, peasants and provincial "warlords"
- 6) The Communist Party of China (CPC) and The Nationalist Party (KMT): Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao-Zedong
- 7) The Struggle for Nation: 1936-1949
- 8) The Nation divided: People's Republic of China (PRC) and The Republic of China (ROC)
- 9) The Cultural Revolution and the rejection of traditional Chinese culture
- 10) Root-seeking: Nativist Fiction in China and Taiwan; looking at the global future: post-1978 reforms

How Meets Goals of Gen Ed.: This course is based upon a selection of a rich body of literary

and cinematic works that exemplify the varied responses of Chinese culture to the creation of the modern nation state. Hence, students will not only acquire intellectual breadth and versatility by gaining an understanding of how major political and social international developments affected the rise of modern Chinese nationalism(s) (i.e., the Eight Western Nation Alliance and the invasion of China, World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, The Soviet Revolution, The Sino-Japanese War and World War II) but will become sensitive to the variety of human responses to nation-building and state-formation encountered in their weekly readings and screening. These range from the embrace of Western modernity (i.e., the rejection of Confucianism, the rise of the vernacular, the assertion of the rights of the individual, the questioning of rigidly defined gender roles, conducts, and behaviors, etc) to the rejection of the Chinese cultural legacy (i.e., after the establishment of the People's Republic and the Cultural Revolution) and the difficult negotiation between competing Western and Eastern models of social organization. Moreover, by way of lectures, class-discussions, readings, and writing assignments, students will become more articulate while also developing the skills that are necessary for any critical, responsible, and serious assessment of the way literary and cinematic culture responds to and participates in different visions of the nation state that, in the case of modern Chinese nationalism(s), would eventually lead from a united, if problem ridden nation, to two politically and culturally distinct Republics in 1949.

CA1 Criteria: This course brings together historical, critical and aesthetic modes of inquiry. All readings/screening selected are representative of emblematic responses on the part of Chinese intellectuals to the emergence of modern Republican nationalism. As such, these texts document the varied responses of poets, novelists, and filmmakers to developments spanning from the fall of the imperial and feudal order of the Qing dynasty to the rise of leftist and rightist cultures that led to irreconcilable differences over what constitute the nation: liberalism vs. Marxism, the individual vs. the community, the city vs. the country, etc. Because of this selection, students become aware of the intricate relations between specific rhetorical and visual genres and fundamental historical, social, and cultural developments. The variety of texts that are included in this course also provide students with a deeper comprehension of verbal (i.e., narrative and lyric poetry, testimonial writing) and visual art (i.e., film genres, styles, and techniques of characterization, narrative, lighting, composition, editing, camera-work, sound track, depth-of-field, etc.)

CA4 Criteria: By placing at the center of modern Chinese culture the contested idea over the nation and Republican nationalism that ensued after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, this course "emphasizes that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values." Since a number of the ideas of the nation have their origin in both the Western encroachment in the 19th century over forms of thought developed through the centuries in traditional Chinese culture, this course introduces students to the differing conceptual categories and perspectives that developed in the East and the West as well as to the complex negotiations that always derive from multicultural encounters. The case of modern Chinese republican nationalism and its outcome in 1949, is particularly apt at illustrating how even such fundamental social configurations such as the nation-state have their origins in cultural processes and therefore are subject to a process of redefinition (i.e., the People Republic of China in 1949 vs. the same in post-1978 or the present) that cannot be separated from internal as well as transnational dynamics of social, political and economic power. Moreover, since the ideas of the nation are

examined from a variety of textual sources (i.e , film, poetry, narrative, philosophical texts, cultural behaviors, etc.), this course also facilitates students' understanding and appreciation of the varieties of modes of human thought, values, and creativity.

Role of Grad Students: None.

Supplementary Information: syllabus

Course Description:

Through a variety of literary texts and films, this course surveys Modern Chinese culture from the Wuchang Uprising, the Communist and Cultural Revolutions, and beyond. Students are introduced to the culture modern China and gain an appreciation of the values, symbols, and myths of the Chinese cultural heritage. The course also encourages students to think critically about another culture and make sense of an unfamiliar world by moving past Western conceptual categories. The approach is both interdisciplinary and comparative.

Course Requirements: Participation: 10% Quizzes: 10% 4 short papers: 40% Mid term Exam: 20% Final Exam: 20%

Textbooks:

Required Texts:

Lucien Bianco , Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949 (1971).

Week 1- Introduction, Historical Background to the fall of Qing Dynasty

Video: China in Revolution

Week 2-A Late Qing Travel Narrative as National Allegory: From the old empire to the new republic

Video: Shadow Magic, Ann Hu (2001)

The Travels of Lao Ts'an (1906)

Week 3-Literary and Political Revolutionaries of the May Fourth Generation

Video: Writers and Revolutionaries

Lu Xun , “Preface to Call to Arms” (1922) “Diary of a Madman” (1918) “Medicine” (1919) Lu Xun , “Hometown” (1921), “New Year's Sacrifice (1924),” “Mourning the Dead” (1925).

Week 4-Literary and Political Revolutionary of the May Fourth Generation

Video: The True Story of Ah Q, Cen Fan (1981)

Lu Xun , Selections from “Wild Grass” (1924-1926): “Snow,” “The Shadow's Farewell,” “Dead Fire,” “Passerby.”

Guo Moruo , “Preface to The Sorrows of Young Werther ” (1921), Ding Ling, “Miss Sophia's Diary” (1928), and Yu Dafu , “Sinking” (1921).

Week 5- The Country meets the City in Republican Era Realist and Regional Writers

Video: A Girl from Hunan , Xie Fei /U Lan (1896)

Mao Dun, "Spring Silkworms" (1932) and Shen Congwen, "Xiao Xiao" (1930)
Ling Shuhua, "Embroidered Pillows" (1925) and Zhang Ailing, "A Chronicle of Changing Clothes" (1945)

Week 6-New Sensationism : Modernist Writers in 1930's Shanghai
Shi Zhecun, "Devil's Road," "Fog," and Mu Shiying, "Five in a Nightclub" (1932)

Week 7-Life and Love during Wartime 1: Zhang Ailing on 1940's Shanghai/Hong Kong
Video: China in revolution Part 2: Fighting for the future: 1936-1949
Zhang Ailing, Love and Other Stories: "Shutdown" (1943), "Steamed Osmanthus Flower: Ah Xiao's Unhappy Autumn" (1944), "Traces of Love" (1945), "Great Felicity" (1947), along with the "Preface" and "Chronology." Zhang Ailing, Written on Water: "Writing of One's Own," "From the Ashes," and the novella "Love in a Fallen City".

Week 8-Life and Love during Wartime 2: Ba Jin on the "Great Interior" in 1940's Chongqing
Video: Yellow Earth, Chen Kaige (1984)
VBa Jin, Cold Nights (1947), Chapters 1-15, pp. 1-224
Ba Jin, Cold Nights (1947), Chapters 16-30 and Epilogue, pp. 225-512

Week 9-Taiwan Modernist Fiction: Exiles at Home
Video clips from:
The Puppetmaster, Hou Hsiao-hien (1994)
Flowers of Shanghai, Hou Hsiao-hien (1998)
Bai Xianyong, Taipei People (1968): "The Eternal 'Snow Beauty'," "New Year's Eve," and "The Last Night of Taipan Chin."
Bai Xianyong, Taipei People (1968): "Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream," and "Winter Night."

Week 10-Taiwan Nativist Fiction: The Country Meets the City Again
Video clips from:
What Time is it There?, Tsai Ming-liang (2001)
In the Mood for Love, Wong Kar-wai, 2000
Huang Chunming, The Taste of Apples: "The Fish," "The Drowning of an Old Cat," and Wang Chen-ho, "An Oxcart for a Dowry."
Huang Chunming, The Taste of Apples: "The Taste of Apples," "The Two Sign Painters"

Week 11- The Legacy of the Cultural Revolution: "Root-seeking"
Video: The Blue Kite, Tian Zhuangzhuang (1993)
Bei Dao, "In the Ruins" and Ah Cheng, "The First Half of My Life: A Boy from the City Struggling for Survival in Far-Away Yunnan," and "King of Chess"
Han Shaogong, "After the 'Literature of the Wounded' Local Cultures, Roots, Maturity, and Fatigue" and "Homecoming" (1985).

Week 12- Avant-garde Fiction after 1985
Video: So Close to Paradise, Wang Xiaoshuai (1998)

Yu Hua , “On the Road at Eighteen” (1987) “One Kind of Reality” (1988, distributed in class) and the “Translator's Afterword ” to Chronicle of a Blood Merchant (1996)

Week 13-Yu Hua's Chronicle of a Blood Merchant (1996)

Week 14- Review

Maurice Meisner , Mao's China and After , third edition (1999).