

**UC Davis
Winter 2016**

**COM 210: Graduate Seminar in Comparative Literature
Topic: Introduction to Chinese Literary, Cultural, and Film Studies**

Instructor: Sheldon Lu

Meeting Times:
W 2:10 - 5:00 PM

Location:
Sproul Hall 822

This seminar introduces students to the major theories, approaches, and topics in the study of Chinese literature and cinema. The course covers, but is not limited to, the following topics.

- Traditional Chinese literary system, aesthetics, hermeneutics.
- Reconstruction of China, Chineseness, and Chinese studies in the modern era.
- Discourses of Chinese modernity (early, late, cosmopolitan, alternative, sustainable, and so on).
- The revolutionary tradition, Chinese Marxism, global Maoism.
- “Post-ism:” postmodernism, postcolonialism, and postsocialism in the Chinese context.
- The concept of the Sinophone.
- Theories of Chinese cinema; its local, national, transnational, and global contexts.

Students will read selected critical writings by Pauline Yu, Stephen Owen, Haun Haussy, Zhang Longxi, Andrew Plaks, and others on premodern aesthetics. The class will discuss the writings by Arif Dirlik, Tu Wei-ming, Rey Chow, Kang Liu, Shu-mei Shih, Zhen Zhang, and others on modern Chinese literature, film, and culture. In addition to reading secondary critical works, students will also look at primary texts, stories, poems, and films.

Each student is expected to participate in class discussion, make a presentation in class, and write a research paper on a topic of her/his choice at the end of the course.

Syllabus

Note: Students should be able to access all the journal articles in UC Davis' library system. PDF files of some essays and book chapters will be provided.

Week 1 (1/6)

Traditional Chinese Literary System, Aesthetics, Hermeneutics

- Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: The Omen of the World*, Chapter 1
- Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, Chapter 2
- Haun Saussy, *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic*, Chapter 1
- Zhang Longxi. "The *Tao* and the *Logos*: Notes on Derrida's Critique of Logocentrism." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 11, no. 3 (March 1985): 385-398.

Week 2 (1/13)

Narrative, Historiography, Novel, Fiction, *Xiaoshuo*

Guest Speaker, Professor Yuming He, EALC

- Andrew H. Plaks, "Toward a Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative." In *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. Andrew Plaks (Princeton UP, 1977), pp. 309-352.
- Sheldon H. Lu. *From Historicity to Fictionality: The Chinese Poetics of Narrative*. Selected chapters
- Yuming He. "Introduction," *Home and the World: Editing the "Glorious Ming" in Woodblock-Printed Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*. pdf file
- Optional: Jin Shengtan. "How to Read the Book of the Fifth Genius." In David Rolston ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton UP, 1990)

Week 3 (1/20)

Defining China, Chineseness, and Modern Chinese Literary Studies

- Tu Wei-ming. "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center." *Daedalus* 120.2 (1991): 1-32.
- Rey Chow. "Introduction: On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem." *boundary 2* 25.3 (Fall 1998): 1-24.
- Zhang Longxi. "Re-conceptualizing China in our Time: From a Chinese Perspective." *European Review* 23.2 (May 2015): 193-209.
Below optional:

- Ien Ang. "Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm." *boundary 2* 25.3 (Fall 1998): 223-242.
- Allen Chun. "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity." *boundary 2* 23.2 (1996): 111-138.

Week 4 (1/27)

Chinese Modernity: Early, Belated, Global, Uneven, Alternative

- Yü-sheng Lin. "Introduction," *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (1979), pp. 3-9.
- Suoqiao Qian. "Introduction." *Selected Bilingual Essays of Lin Yutang* (Hong Kong: the Chinese University Press, 2010).
- Sheldon Lu. "Re-visioning Global Modernity through the Prism of China." *European Review* 23.2 (May 2015): 210-226. pdf file available.
- Haomin Gong. "Introduction: China, Uneven Development, and Global Modernity." Link to pdf: <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/p-9780824835316.aspx> (click "Table of Contents" first)
- Read some stories by Lu Xun, such as "Kong Yiji;" "A Madman's Diary;" "Preface" to his collection of stories *Call to Arms*.

Week 5 (2/3)

Republican China, Shanghai, Modernism, Colonialism, Cosmopolitanism

Guest Speaker, Professor Chunjie Zhang, German

- Chunjie Zhang. "From Sinophilia to Sinophobia: China, History, and Recognition." *Colloquia Germanica* 41.2 (2008): 97-110.
- Dai Wangshu. Poem: "Rainy Alley." (1928)
- Shi Zhecun. Short story: "One Evening in the Rainy Season." (1929)
- Ailing Zhang. Short story: "Sealed Off." (1943)
- Miriam Hansen. "Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism." *Film Quarterly* 54.1 (2000): 10-22.
- Optional reading: special issue on Republican cinema, *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 9.1 (March 2015).
- Watch portions of films from the 1930s. *Goddess, Queen of Sports, Big Road*

Week 6 (2/10)

Revolution, Marxism, Maoism, Socialism, Postsocialism

- Liu, Kang. "Subjectivity, Marxism, and Culture Theory in China." *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 114-140.
- Liu Kang. "Hegemony and Cultural Revolution." *New Literary History* 28.1 (1997): 69-86.

- Liu Kang. "Maoism: Revolutionary Globalism for the Third World Revisited." *Comparative Literature Studies* 52.1 (2015): 12-28.
- Sheldon Lu. "Answering the Question: What is Chinese Postsocialism?"
- Ding Ling's short story: "When I was in Xia Village." (1940)
- Watch portions of the film *The White-Haired Girl* (1950) and the ballet adaptation (1960s).

Week 7 (2/17)

Postmodernism, Postsocialism, Popular Culture, the Intellectual

Guest Speakers, Professors Michelle Yeh and Xiaomei Chen, EALC

- Fredric Jameson. "Third World Literature in Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (Fall 1986).
- Xiaomei Chen. "Introduction: Propaganda Performance, History and Landscape," *Staging Chinese Revolution: Theater, Film, and Afterlives of Propaganda*, forthcoming from Columbia University Press.
- Sheldon Lu. "Postmodernity, Popular Culture, and the Intellectual: A Report on Post-Tiananmen China." *boundary 2* 23.2 (Summer 1996): 139-69.
- Sheldon Lu. "Global POSTmodernIZATION: The Intellectual, the Artist, and China's Condition." *boundary 2* 24.3 (Fall 1997): 65-97.
- Zhen Zhang (UC Davis). "Reimagining the Soviet Union in Contemporary Chinese Literature: Soviet *Ji* in Wang Meng's *In Remembrance of the Soviet Union* and Feng Jikai's *Listening to Russia*." *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 8.4 (December 2014): 598-616. pdf file available
- Watch portions of the film *In the Heat of the Sun* (directed by Jiang Wen)

Week 8 (2/24)

Postcolonialism, Orientalism, Postmodernism, the Sinophone

- Arif Dirlik. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20.2 (Winter 1994): 328-356.
- Chiann Karen Tsui and Russell A. Berman. "The Dialectic of Recognition and the Rediscovery of China: After Orientalism." *European Review* 23. 2 (May 2015): 180-192. pdf file available.
- Shu-mei Shih. "Theory, Asia and the Sinophone." *Postcolonial Studies* 13.4 (2010): 465-84.
- Optional: Sheldon Lu, review of Shih Shu-mei's *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (University of California Press, 2007) in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* (2008)
<http://u.osu.edu/mclc/book-reviews/visuality-and-identity/#fmb3>

- Sheldon Lu. "Dialect and Modernity in 21st Century Sinophone Cinema." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* no. 49 (Spring 2007). <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/Lu/>

Week 9 (3/2)

Theories of Chinese Cinema, Contemporary Chinese-language Cinema

National Cinema, Transnational Cinema, Chinese-language Cinema, Sinophone Cinema

- Sheldon Lu. "Historical Introduction: Chinese Cinema and Transnational Film Studies." Pdf Link. <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/p-338-9780824818456.aspx> (click "Table of Contents.")
- Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh. "Mapping the Field of Chinese-language Cinema." <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/p-3376-9780824828134.aspx> (Click "Table of Contents")
- Optional: Sheldon Lu. "Notes on Four Major Paradigms in Chinese-language Film Studies." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 6.1 (2012): 15-25.
- Hsiu-Chuang Deppman. "Reading Docufiction: Jia Zhangke's *24 City*." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 8.3 (November 2014): 188-208.
- Jiwei Xiao. "The Quest for Memory: Documentary and Fiction in Jia Zhangke's Films." *Senses of Cinema* no. 59 (June 2011). <http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/the-quest-for-memory-documentary-and-fiction-in-jia-zhangke%E2%80%99s-films/>
- Jiwei Xiao. "China Unraveled: Violence, Sin, and Art in Jia Zhangke's *A Touch of Sin*." *Film Quarterly* 68.4 (Summer 2015). Pdf available.
- Watch portions of Jia Zhangke's films: *Xiao Wu*, *Still Life*, *24City*, *A Touch of Sin*.

Week 10 (3/9)

New Directions in Cinema, Art, and Visual Culture

- Xiaoping Lin. "Introduction: Reading Chinese Avant-Garde Art and Independent Cinema in Context." Link to pdf. <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/p-9780824833367.aspx> (click "Table of Contents" first)
- Sheldon Lu. "Artistic Interventions in Contemporary China." *China Information* 29 (2) (July 2015): 282-297. pdf file
- Sheldon Lu. "Introduction: Cinema, Ecology, Modernity," in *Chinese Ecocinema in the Age of Environmental Challenge*, ed. Sheldon Lu and Jiayan Mi (Hong Kong University Press, 2009), pp. 1-14.
- Zhang Zhen and Angela Zito. "Introduction," in their anthology *DV-Made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformation* (University of Hawaii Press, 2015), pp. 1-25.

- Optional: Zhang Zhen, "Toward a Digital Political Mimesis: Aesthetic of Affect and Activist Video," *DV-Made China*, pp. 316-345.
- Watch portions of the documentary *My Fancy High-Heel Shoes* (directed by Ho Chao-ti, Taiwan); documentary *Manufactured Landscapes* (Jennifer Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky, 2006).