Modern Chinese Literature
in English Translation

Time: 11:00am-12:15pm Tu and Th
Place: Palmer 206
Instructor: Ming Dong Gu
Instructor’s Office: Rhodes Tower 523
Office Hours: M W F 10: 30-11: 30 or by appointment
Office Phone: 843-3952

Course Description

This course is intended as an introduction to modern Chinese culture, society, and politics through literature. It has multiple aims: 1) to acquaint students with major phases of modern Chinese literature and some masterpieces of representative writers in relation to political and social changes; 2) to provide opportunities to learn about modern Chinese society through readings of chosen works; 3) to train students to read thoughtfully and critically so as to prepare them for future studies in other branches of learning. Part of the focus will be on the impact of Western literature upon the making of modern Chinese literature. Course teaching will be conducted in an interdisciplinary approach of literary, cultural, semiotic, and psychoanalytic studies. All readings are in English. No prior knowledge of Chinese language, literature, and culture is required.

Required Textbooks:

Recommended Readings:

Course Requirements
1. Two summaries of designated stories (2 pages each) 10%
2. A critical analysis of a poem (3-4 pages) 20%
3. A term paper (8-10 pages) 50%
4. Attendance and Participation in discussion 10%
5. Leading the discussion of two chosen texts 10%
Total: 100%

Note: Every student is required to pick two texts (a story or a poem) and to lead a discussion of the chosen texts in class.

Class Schedule:
Session 1  Introduction: “Social Revolution and Literary Revolution”
1/15 M Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No classes

Session 2  Fiction, 1918-1949  Lu Hsun: “Preface to Call to Arms,” “A Madman’s Diary,” “Medicine”
Session 3  “Kung I-chi,” “Tomorrow,” “An Incident,” “Storm in a Teacup,” “My Old Home,” “Village Opera,”
Session 4  “The True Story of Ah Q,” (continued)
Session 5  “New Year’s Sacrifice,” “In the Wine Shop,” “A Happy Family,” “Soap,” “The Misanthrope”
First summary due

Session 6  “Regret for the Past,” “Divorce,” “The Flight to the Moon,” “Forging the Sword,”
Session 8  Yu Dafu, “Sinking”  Second summary due
Session 9  Mao Dun, “Spring Silkworms,” Lao She, “An Old and Established Name,”
Critical analysis due

March 10-19  Spring Recess
Session 16  Wang Zhenhe, “An Oxcart for a Dowry,”
“Small-hands Chen,”
Chen Ruoxi, “The Tunnel,” Xi Xi, “A Woman Like Me,” Li Yongping,
“At Fortune’s Way,”
Session 18  Yuan Qiongqiong, “Tales of Taipei,” Li Rui, “Electing a Thief,” Li Ang,
“Curvaceous Dolls,” Xiao Sa, “Floating Leaf,”

April 5-8: Easter recess

“Song of Grey Hair,” “After the Snow,” “Geometry: River Goddess,” Xiong Hong, “The Deluded Dream,” “Fire on the Sea Floor,”
“Resume,” “Another Legend,”
Session 26  Shu Ting, “When You Walk Past My Window,” “A Roadside Encounter,”
“Assembly Line,” Wang Xiaolong, “When We Finally Turn Fifth,” “Surgery Ward,”
Session 27  Essays since 1918  Lu Xun, “Epigraph,” “The Evolution of the Male Sex,”
Ba Jin, “Remembering Xiao San,” Dong Qiao, “Musings on Things Read at Night.”
Session 28: Discuss details of the term paper

May 1  Term Paper Due