

SYLLABUS

LIT 3319.003

20th Century Chinese Literature

Fall 2024

Tu/Th 10:00 --11:15pm Room: ATC2.918

Professor:

Dr. Ming Dong Gu

Office: JO4.130

Office Phone: 883-2760

Email: mdgu@utdallas.edu

Office Hours:

Tu/Th 11: 30-12: 30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to modern Chinese culture and society through literary works in the 20th century amidst war, violence, and social upheavals. Focusing on selected works of poetry, fiction, drama, and essays by some of the most creative writers of modern China in the context of domestic and international crises, the course aims: 1) to acquaint students with major phases of modern Chinese literature and masterpieces of representative writers; 2) to provide an in-depth glimpse into modern Chinese society through the lens of literature; 3) to understand the close relationship between literature and social changes; 4) to train students to read thoughtfully and critically so as to develop necessary skills for the study of literature and culture; and 5) to introduce some basic ideas, concepts, and approaches of literary criticism with an emphasis on close reading skills. Part of the course will address the impact of Western literature and thought upon the making of modern Chinese literature and society. All readings are in English. No prior knowledge of Chinese language, literature, and culture is required.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students will read a considerable number of stories and novellas in relation to a variety of historical, theoretical, and critical works. Through the course, students are required not only to learn basic facts about Chinese literature and culture but also to develop skills to think critically, read thoughtfully, and write critical analysis and scholarly essays effectively. Their mastery of the course content will be assessed through the writing of summaries, a short paper, and an examination.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- 1) *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: Complete Stories of Lu Xun* (London: Penguin Books, 2010).
 - 2) *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*, edited by Joseph S.M. Lau and Howard Goldblatt, 2nd Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
 - 3) Some electronic handouts.
 - 4) A few videos to be watched in class.
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Course Activities and Grading

The course will be conducted through a mixture of lectures, instructor-led discussions, and student-led discussions. Regular attendance and participation in the classroom activities are required of all students. Students are expected to read the assigned materials before coming to class, take a mid-term exam and a final exam. The grading is based on the following:

1. Attendance and participation	10%
2. In-class presentations	10%
3. 4 summaries	20%
4. One mid-term paper	30%
5. One final exam	30%
Total:	100%

Note: Three absences without documented reasons will fail the course and frequent tardiness will lower the final grade.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1 8/20 Course Preliminaries

Introduction: “Social Revolution and Literary Revolution”

Videos: Overview of Chinese history 1911 – 1949 (11M)

8/22 Modern Literature: an Overview

Basic Literary Terms and Approaches to Reading

Week 2 8/27 **Historical and Intellectual Background**

May 4th Movement Documentary (15 m); Film on May 4th Culture Movement (11 M)

Handout: Lu Xun, “Diary of A Madman”

9/29 Handout: “The Literary Revolution,” from *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, pp. 5-27.

Week 3 9/3 **Fiction of Lu Xun:** “Lu Xun: An Introduction”; “Preface to Call to Arms,”

Handout: Ming Gu, “Lu Xun and Modern Chinese Literature in the Context of World Literature”

Film: Lu Xun: The Father of Modern Chinese Literature, Part 1 (25 m)

9/5 **Fiction of Lu Xun:** “Kung I-chi,” “Medicine,”

Film: Lu Xun: The Father of Modern Chinese Literature, Part 2 (25 m)

Week 4 9/10 “Tomorrow,” “A Passing Storm,” “My Old Home,”

9/12 Lu Xun: “The Real Story of Ah Q,” “Dragon Boat Festival,” “The White Light,”

Handout: Ming Gu, “Lu Xun’s Ah Quism”

Week 5: 9/17 Lu Xun: “Village Opera,” “New Year’s Sacrifice,”

9/19 “A Happy Family,” “Soap,” “The Lamp of Eternity,” “A Public Example,”

Week 6 9/24 Lu Xun: “Our Learned Friend,” “The Loner,” “In Memoriam,” “Brothers,” “The Divorce,”

9/26 Lu Xun: *Old Stories Retold*: “Mending Heaven,” “Flight to the Moon,” “Taming the Flood,” “Gathering Ferns,”

Week 7 10/1 Lu Xun: “Forging the Sword,” “Leaving the Pass,” “Anti-Aggression,” “Bringing Back the Dead”

10/3 **Anthology:** Ye Shaojun, “A Posthumous Son,” Yu Dafu, “Sinking,” Mao Dun, “Spring Silkworms,”

Handout: Ming Dong Gu, “A Chinese Oedipus in Exile,”

Week 8 10/8 **Anthology:** Lao She, “An Old and Established Name,” Shen Congwen, “Xiaoxiao,” Lin Shuhua, “The Night of Midautumn Festival”

10/10 **Anthology:** Lai He, “The Steelyard,” Ba Jin, “Dog,” Shi Zhicun, “One Evening in the Rainy Season,” Zhang Tianyi, “Midautumn Festival”

Mid-term Paper Due

Week 9 10/15 **Anthology:** Ding Ling, “When I Was in Xia Village,” Wu Zuxiang, “Young Master Gets His Tonic,” Xiao Hong, “Hands,”

10/17 **Anthology:** Zhang Ailing, “Sealed Off,” Wu Zhuoliu, “The Doctor’s Mother,” Wang Ruowang, “A Visit to His Excellency: A Five-Minute Movie,” Chen Yingzhen, “My Kid Brother Kangxiong,”

Week 10 10/22 **Poetry, 1918-1949 Anthology:** Xu Zhimu, “Second Farewell to Cambridge,” “Love’s Inspiration,” “Chance”; Wen Yiduo, “Dead Water,” “One Sentence,” “Prayer”; Li Jinfa “Woman Abandoned,” “Never to Return”; Feng Zhi, “Sonnet 2,” “Sonnet 27”; Dai Wangshu, “Rainy Alley,” “Written on a Prison Wall,” “With My Injured Hand”

10/24 **Fiction, 1949-1976 Anthology:** Bai Xianyong, “Winter Nights,” Huang Chunming, “The Fish,” Hua Tong, “Yan’an Seeds,”

Week 11 10/29 Wang Zhenhe, “An Oxcart for a Dowry,” Li Ang, “Curvaceous Dolls,”

10/31 **Fiction since 1976 Anthology:** Liu Yichang, “Wrong Number,” Wang Zengqi, “A Tail,” “Small-hands Chen,” Wang Meng, “Tales of New Cathay,” Chen Ruoxi, “The Tunnel,”

Week 12 11/5 **Anthology:** Xi Xi, “A Woman Like Me,” Yuan Qiongqiong, “Tales of Taipei,” Li Rui, “Electing a Thief,”

11/7 **Anthology:** Can Xue, “Hut on the Mountain,” Gao Xingjian, “The Accident,” Han Shaogong, “The Leader’s Demise,”

Week 13 11/12 **Anthology:** Chen Cun, “A Story,” Liu Heng, “Dogshit Food,” Mo Yan, “Iron Child,” Zhu Tianwen, “Fin de Siecle Splendor,”

11/14 **Anthology:** Zhang Dachun, “Lucky Worries About His Country,” Zheng Qingwen, “Redeeming a Painting,” Tie Ning, “Octday,” Yu Hua, “On the Road at Eighteen,”

Week 14 11/19 Su Tong, “Escape,” Qiu Miaojin, “Letters from Montmartre,” Wang Anyi, “Granny,” Alai, “Fish!” Chun Sue, “Born at the Wrong Time,”

11/21 **Poetry since 1976 Anthology:** Zhang Cuo, “Autumn Meditation,” “A Willow Leaf Double Saber,” Huang Guobin, “A Night Prayer,” “When You Are Naked, You Have Everything,” Luo Qing, “Six Ways of Eating Watermelons,” Bei Dao, “Declaration,” “Resume,” “Another Legend,” Shu Ting, “When You Walk Past My Window,” “A Roadside Encounter,” “Assembly Line,” Gu Cheng, “An Ending,” “Curriculum Vitae,” Anonymous, “Mad Woman”

Week 15 11/25-12/1: **Thanksgiving and Fall Break**

Week 16 12/3 **Handout:** **Ming Gu, “Writing Modern Chinese Literature in English”**

Some Selected Essays

Review for Final Exam

12/5 **Final Exam**

Course Policies

This course will be conducted according to strict codes of academic honesty.

Note: With regard to the university’s policies on Student Conduct & Discipline, Academic Integrity, Email Use, Withdrawal from Class, Student Grievance Procedure, Incomplete Grade Policy, Disability Services, Religious Holy Days, etc. please see the e-version of the syllabus on WebCT.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.