**Twentieth Century Chinese Literature**

Dr. Emily Matson

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11 AM-12:20 PM

Class Location: Wren Building 2

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Office: James Blair Hall 313

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:30 AM, and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

China’s 20th century can be described as one of the most tumultuous periods in human history. First, the Qing Dynasty fell to revolutionaries, marking an end to the Confucian-based imperial system that had been in place effectively for several thousands of years. Shortly thereafter, a fledgling republic was established, but it had to deal with warlords, civil war, and foreign incursions. In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power and founded the People’s Republic of China (PRC), while the Republic of China (ROC) was reestablished on Taiwan. The next few decades brought a mixture of stability and experimental policies on the mainland, leading to both improved standards of living and tragic loss of human life. By the 1980s, China had begun to embark on a course of “Reform and Opening Up,” and is now the second largest economy in the world. China’s dynamism continues to be palpable as its ways of living, social structures, and mores and values continue to undergo dramatic shifts.

This class explores China’s revolutionary twentieth century (and includes the first two decades of the 21st century) through the work of its writers. These writers were strongly influenced by the time periods and cultures into which they were born, but they also supersede these limitations to teach us much about the human experience. Thus, not only can we understand China better from reading what they have to say, but we can also better understand our own humanity and issues that we face in our contemporary world. In this course, we will be exploring a variety of genres to appreciate the richness of Chinese literature: short stories, personal memoirs, theoretical works, novels, theater, and even science fiction. The semester will be loosely chronologically organized.

**COURSE FORMAT**

Although there will be lectures in this course, it will be highly interactive and largely discussion based. At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for presentations, which will be given at the start of class on a variety of literary works. Daily attendance in class is mandatory, and participation in class discussion, which includes active listening as well as speaking, is also expected.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

* Introduce students to important authors and works in 20th and 21st century Chinese literature, as they relate to larger themes in modern Chinese language and culture.
* Provide students with the disciplinary vocabulary and knowledge to engage in rigorous reading, discussion, reflection, and writing on Chinese literature that reflects training in the field of Chinese literary and cultural studies.
* Understand the major developments in 20th century Chinese history through the lens of Chinese writers.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Students are required to purchase copies of the following books for this course:

1. *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun.* Lu Xun (trans. Julia Lovell) (New York: Penguin Classics, 2009).
2. *Rickshaw Boy: A Novel*. Lao She (Harper Perennial, 2010).
3. *Love in a Fallen City*. Eileen Chang (trans. Karen Kingsbury) (NYRB Classics, 2010).
4. *To Live*. Yu Hua (trans. Michael Berry) (Anchor, 2003).
5. *The Three-Body Problem.* Cixin Liu (trans. Ken Liu) (Tor Books, 2014).

All other written course materials will be scanned and uploaded onto Blackboard. Students are required to bring reading materials to class with relevant sections noted and ready for discussion.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

**Participation** 15%

All students are expected to attend class regularly. Students are required to come to class prepared with notes and questions on the day’s readings. Participation is mandatory and speaking in class is highly encouraged. However, active listening is also a critical part of participation, and this class is intended to be an open forum for discussion amongst students. If any student is uncomfortable with speaking during section, please see me early in the semester so that we can come up with other ways to actively contribute.

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for one 5–10-minute presentation to give at the beginning of class on various works of literature. This presentation will be counted as part of the participation grade.

**Reading Quizzes** 20%

The most important homework for this course is reading the assigned works of literature. To ensure that students keep up on the readings, occasional in-class reading quizzes will be given, with an average frequency of once per week. Quizzes will take place during the first 15 minutes of class, will occur randomly during the semester, and will only cover the section of the reading assigned for that particular day. No books, notes, or computers may be used during the quizzes. Quizzes will consist of 10 true or false questions that should be easy to answer if one has completed the assigned reading.

**Response Papers** 10%

In order to encourage deeper reflection on the readings and in-class lectures and discussions, biweekly informal response papers are assigned. *These papers are due by midnight every other Monday night and deal with the previous two weeks’ materials, including readings, lectures, and in-class discussions.* They should be written in paragraph form and should deal with at least one theme, question, or passage discussed in the previous two weeks, of the student’s choice. Each response paper will be 1 page, submitted electronically on Blackboard. The papers should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins.

**Midterm Exam** 25%

The midterm exam will cover the readings and in-class lectures and discussions. It will be given in class and no notes, readings, or computers will be allowed. The exams will consist of a combination of short response questions and one essay question. The exams will test the student’s knowledge of the materials presented in readings and lectures, as well as the student’s ability to produce original analysis of the readings in light of the concepts and vocabulary presented in class discussion. Students will be provided with a study guide that includes possible essay questions for the exam, as well as a list of general content to be covered.

**Final Exam** 30%

The final exam will take place during the Exam Period, according to the time designated by the official College of William and Mary exam schedule. It will look much like the midterm essay, with a combination of short response questions and one essay question that is based on the latter part of the semester. However, there will also be another, longer essay question that requires students to reflect upon materials from the entire semester. As with the midterm exam, a study guide will be provided.

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**CLASSROOM POLICIES**

*Electronic devices:* Cellphones and other hand-held electronic devices must be turned off during class. Laptops are allowed for taking class-related notes and accessing assigned readings online. However, there is to be no web surfing during class. The instructor also reserves the right to revoke laptop use at any time for all students (except those who require laptops for notetaking and can provide documentation from the Coordinator of Disability Services stating this).

*Student athletes:* Please let me know your sports schedule ahead of time, and you will be able to miss up to two classes for athletic competitions with no penalty. However, you are still responsible for any missed work. If your sports schedule conflicts with more than 3 class meetings, please meet with me during my office hours early in the semester to make alternate arrangements. In accordance with NCAA regulations, you are not allowed to miss class for practices. If you must miss class for a competition you are advised to minimize any further absences from this class.

*Plagiarism*: Plagiarism is a serious honor violation for which there are severe penalties. In short, in your papers you must provide notes giving credit for all ideas of other authors that you use. In addition, when you use direct quotation from a source, you must both include a note citing your source and enclose the quoted matter in quotation marks (unless you are dealing with a long quotation, in which case the quote is put in blocked form, indented from the left margin, without quotation marks). Most of the time you should avoid quotation, instead paraphrasing the source you are using—and, of course, giving credit to your source in a note. It is not enough to substitute a few words or change them around in order to make a paraphrase; a paraphrase must be in your own words—and sentence structure. A true paraphrase does not require quotation marks, but it does require a note. Please feel free to ask me if you have questions about any of this.

**COVID-19**

This semester, the world will enter its third year with COVID. As we experience a fifth surge of pandemic with the highly transmissible omicron variant, it is reasonable to expect significant levels of infection at W&M. As an academic community based on faculty and students *convening*, spring 2022 courses will largely consist of in-person instruction. All of us will follow W&M requirements - vaccinations and boosters, indoor masking, as well as quarantine and isolation when ill. That last is really important: for those who have tested positive, W&M’s requirements must be fulfilled before class can be attended in person, and, out of an abundance of caution, anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID – even if they don’t have a positive test – should not come to class.

Please note that testing positive for COVID or any other temporary illness is not considered a disability as defined by ADA guidelines and is not under the purview of W&M’s Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Thus, any questions should be addressed via email to the instructor.

If you cannot come to class due to a temporary illness, please email me before class so that I can arrange a make-up assignment for you. Students who do not email me before class in the case of an absence will, with the exception of extenuating circumstances, accrue an unexcused absence. If the instructor is absent due to a temporary illness, we will conduct class over Zoom in the instructor’s personal Zoom room. A reminder and the Zoom link will be emailed to you the evening before class.

**SUPPORT**

*Dean of Students Office:* If you have a personal crisis of any kind during the semester, the Dean of Students Office can provide support. They will also notify your professors while maintaining privacy. The office is located in Campus Center 109. You can also reach staff via telephone at (757)221-2510 or by email at [deanofstudents@wm.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@wm.edu).

*Student Accessibility Services:* The College of William and Mary is committed to providing learning experiences that are accessible for all students and will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities.  If you have a learning difference or a disability – mental health, medical, or physical impairment – please contact the Student Accessibility Services staff at (757)221-2512 or at [sas@wm.edu](mailto:sas@wm.edu) to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please visit [www.wm.edu/sas](http://www.wm.edu/sas).

*Counseling Center:* For mental health concerns (including stress, anxiety, and depression), the Counseling Center (WMCC) can provide consultations and connect you with support to resources both on and off campus. The center is located in Blow Hall 240, and can be reached at (757)221-3620.

*Writing Center:* The A&S Writing Resource Centers are available to work with students on their writing and communication assignments. These include the Writing Resources Center (WRC). You can find more information on the WRC here: [www.wm.edu/as/wrc](http://www.wm.edu/as/wrc).

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

The topics and readings listed on this syllabus are tentative, and the instructor may modify readings and topics at any time. Students should pay attention for any such changes. Students should come to class having read the materials listed for that date.

**January 27, Session 1 – Introduction**

**February 1, Session 2 – The May Fourth Movement and Political Ideologies**

* Ebrey, “Chapter 10 Taking Action: The Early Twentieth Century”
* Chen Duxiu, “Call to Youth” (1915)
* Li Dazhao, “The Victory of Bolshevism” (1918)

**February 3, Session 3 – The May Fourth Movement and Feminism**

* Ding Ling, “Miss Sophia’s Diary” (1927)

**February 8 – No Class**

* Response paper due via Blackboard by midnight Monday night.

**February 10, Session 4 – Lu Xun and Chinese Literary Modernism**

* “Introduction,” “Kong Yi Ji,” and “The Real Story of Ah-Q” (1922) in Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*

**February 15, Session 5 – The May Fourth Movement and *Baihua***

* Hu Shi, “The Main Event in Life” (1919)
* Lu Xun, “Diary of a Madman” (1918) in Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*
* Guest Speaker: Dr. Lee Moore

**February 17, Session 6 – Lu Xun and Rejecting Tradition**

* “New Year’s Sacrifice” and “Soap” in Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*

**February 22, Session 7 – Beijing in Literary and Cultural Imagination**

* Lao She, *Rickshaw Boy* (1937)*,* pg. v-97 (Introduction, Chapters 1-8)
* Response paper due via Blackboard by midnight Monday night.

**February 24, Session 8 – Beijing in Literary and Cultural Imagination, cont.**

* Lao She, *Rickshaw Boy,* pg. 98-197 (Chapters 9-16)

**March 1, Session 9 – The Individual in Society – Class and Place**

* Lao She, *Rickshaw Boy,* pg. 198-300 (Chapters 17-24)
* Film (view in class): *Luotuo Xiangzi* (Rickshaw Boy)

**March 3, Session 10 –Shanghai in Literary and Cultural Imagination**

* Shi Zhecun,“One Evening in the Rainy Season” (1928)
* Chinese Major/Minor Information Session – 6-7 PM, <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/4158462234>

**March 8, Session 11 – The Individual in Society – Romance as Anti-Politics**

* “Introduction,” “Preface to the Second Printing of ‘Romances,’”and “Love in a Fallen City” (1943) in Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailin), *Love in a Fallen City*
* Response paper due via Blackboard by midnight Monday night.

**March 10, Session 12 – Midterm Exam**

**March 15 – Spring Break**

**March 17 – Spring Break**

**March 22, Session 14 – Socialist Realism and Communist Reforms**

* Ebrey, “Chapter 11 Radical Reunification: The People’s Republic”
* Ding Ling, “When I Was in Xia Village” (1940)

**March 24, Session 15 – Socialist Realism and Communist Reforms**

* Mao Zedong, “Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art” (1942)
* Ding Ling, “The Sun Shines Over the Sanggan River” (1948)

**March 29, Session 16 – Xiangsheng (Crosstalk)**

* Guest speaker Jesse Appell, “Make America and China Laugh Again: US-China People to People Diplomacy in the Age of the Internet”
* Response due on Blackboard by midnight Monday night

**March 31, Session 17 – Censorship and the Founding of the PRC**

* Yu Hua, *To Live,* pages TBD

**April 5, Session 18 – The Great Leap Forward**

* Yu Hua, *To Live,* pages TBD

**April 7, Session 19 – The Cultural Revolution**

* Yu Hua, *To Live*, pages TBD
* Film (view in class): *To Live*

**April 12, Session 20 – 1980s Experimental Literature**

* Can Xue, “Hut on the Mountain”

**April 14, Session 21 – Scar Literature**

* Zong Pu, “Who am I”
* Beidao (poems)
* Response paper due via Blackboard by midnight Monday night.

**April 19, Session 22 – Scar Literature and Chinese Science Fiction**

* Cixin Liu, *The Three Body Problem*, pg. 9-117 (Ch. 1-8)

**April 21, Session 23 – Chinese Science Fiction, cont.**

* Cixin Liu, *The Three Body Problem,* pg. 119-230 (Ch. 9-18)

**April 26, Session 24 – Literature in the Blogosphere**

* Cixin Liu, *The Three Body Problem*, pg. 231-390 (Ch. 19-35)
* Response paper due via Blackboard by midnight Monday night.

**April 28, Session 25 – Taiwan**

* Bai Xianyong, “Wandering in a Garden, Waking from a Dream”

**May 3, Session 26 – Taiwan, cont.**

* Huang Chunming, “The Fish”

**May 5, Session 27 – Conclusion**