

CHINESE WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND SOCIETY (Fall 2006)
ASIAN STUDIES 282; HISTORY 282; WOMEN'S STUDIES 282

INSTRUCTOR: Paul S. Ropp
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OFFICE HOURS: WTh 10:30-11:30 AM
or by appointment

BOOKS TO BE PURCHASED:

Wilt Idema and Beata Grant, *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China*
Tsao Hsueh-ch'in, *Dream of the Red Chamber*
Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman*
Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson, eds., *Writing Women in Modern China*
Ding Ling, *I Myself am a Woman*
Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s*
Hong Ying, *Daughter of the River*
Chen Ran, *A Private Life*

In this course, through the reading and discussion of literary and historical works, we will examine gender relations and the changing role of women in Chinese society through the long course of Chinese history, with an emphasis on the sixteenth century to the present.

Our class time will focus primarily on group discussions of our weekly reading assignments. I will provide in class some general historical background for each of the assigned readings, but our classes will mostly be seminar-style discussions. Because fiction is open to an infinite variety of interpretations, and because our discussion and evaluation of Chinese society will inevitably entail discussion and evaluation of our own society, active participation of everyone in the class is extremely important.

Your grade will be based 40 % on class participation and weekly reaction papers which you will post on Blackboard each week by noon on Tuesday, so that everyone can read everyone else's reaction paper before coming to class. Other components of your grade will include two short (5-6 page) papers (15% each), and one (10-12 page) term paper (30%) on a topic of your own choice, to be completed by December 18th. In the short papers you will analyze an author, or a story, or a set of poems or other writings in the assigned readings. Your purpose will be to explain that author, story, theme, character, etc., and to suggest how it might be interpreted to illuminate gender relations and the status and role of women in Chinese society at the particular time of the author, story, poem, etc. Comparative discussions of American and Chinese societies are especially welcome, because they help make explicit the assumptions we bring to the study of a society that is different from our own.

Your final term paper may focus on any of the assigned readings from the course, but should also utilize at least four additional sources not included in the assigned readings for the course. (Graduate students will be expected to use at least eight additional sources beyond those already assigned in the course, and to write something in the range of 18-20 pages.) I have several bibliographies and bibliographical essays in my office which you can consult to help you in

picking a topic with adequate source material. I can suggest additional topics and bibliography depending on your particular interests. Please clear your topic with me before beginning work on the paper. In our last class meeting of the course, class time will be devoted entirely to oral reports on and discussion of your term papers. The due dates for the term paper are as follows: Topic and preliminary bibliography-November 14; detailed outline of the paper along with oral report to the class-December 6; first draft option (if you hand in a first draft by December 12, I will read it, make suggestions, and return it within two days); Final draft due-December 18. The final term paper will count approximately 30% of your final grade.

Weekly topics, reading assignments, and due dates for written work are as follows:

Aug. 30 Intro. to the course; background on Confucianism and the Chinese family

Patricia Ebrey, "Women, Marriage, and the Family" (Xeroxed handout)

Sept. 6 Writing Women in Early China

Idema and Grant, *The Red Brush*, pp. 1-42, and chs. 4 & 5 (pp. 204-291).

Sept. 13 Writing Women in Qing China: Poetry and Fiction

Idema and Grant, *The Red Brush*, Part III. Intro (pp. 347-358) chs. 7 and 8 (pp. 359-424), and 11 and 12 (pp. 497-566).

Sept. 20 Writing Women in Qing China: Warfare, Drama and Plucking Rhymes

Idema and Grant, *The Red Brush*, Part IV, Intro. (pp. 567-577), and chs. 13 "Poetry," 14 "Drama" and 15 "Plucking Rhymes," pp. 578-763

Sept. 27 Introduction to *Dream of the Red Chamber*: China's Greatest Novel

Hsia, "Dream of the Red Chamber" (handout);
Plot Outline of *Story of the Stone* (handout);
Tsao, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, chs. 1-6.

Oct. 4 Women in *Dream of the Red Chamber*

Tsao, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, chs. 7-40.

*****Friday Oct. 6, 4:00 PM Essay (5-6 pages) due on gender relations in women's writings or in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, utilizing the novel or any relevant section(s) of *The Red Brush* *****

Oct. 9-10 Mid-term Break

Oct. 11 A Working Class Woman in the Late-Nineteenth-Early-Twentieth Century

Pruitt, *Daughter of Han*, entire book;

Oct. 18 Qiu Jin, Radical Feminist in the Late Qing

Idema and Grant, *The Red Brush*, Epilogue, Ch. 16; Dooling & Torgeson, *Writing Women*, Intro. and ch. 1.

Oct. 25 Women's Writings, May Fourth Movement of the 1920s

Everyone will read Dooling & Torgeson, *Writing Women*, chs. 4-6, 9, 12-13 and 18. In addition, we'll divide into three groups and each group will read and report on one of the following:

- 1) Ch. 14 "Woman" by Chen Ying, pp. 275-298.
- 2) Ch. 16 "Our Mistress's Parlor" by Bing Xin, pp. 299-329.
- 3) Ch. 17 "Aunt Liu" by Luo Shu, pp. 331-341

Nov. 1 Ding Ling: from Romantic to Revolutionary

Ding Ling, *I Myself am a Woman*, Introduction (1-48), "Miss Sophia's Diary," "A Woman and a Man," "Yecao" (49-111), "Affair in East Village" (260-79), "When I Was in Xia Village" and "Thoughts on March 8" (298-321).

*****Monday Nov. 6, 4:00 PM Essay (5-6 pages) due on Women and Women's Writings, Late Qing-1930s, or on Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai, Qiu Jin or Ding Ling.*****

Nov. 8 Chinese Women in the 1980s

Honig & Hershatter, *Personal Voices*, Intro. and any 5 chapters (your choice).

*****Nov. 14 Final Paper Topics and Preliminary Bibliography due.*****

Nov. 14 A Contemporary Autobiography

Hong Ying, *Daughter of the River* (entire book).

Nov. 22 Thanksgiving Vacation

Nov. 29 A Contemporary Novel

Chen Ran, *A Private Life* (entire book).

Dec. 6 Oral Reports on Final Paper Topics

***** Monday Dec. 18, 4:00 PM: Final Papers Due *****

Xeroxed Materials for History 282

Patricia Ebrey, "Women, Marriage, and the Family in Chinese History."

C. T. Hsia, "Dream of the Red Chamber."