Gender and Sexuality in Traditional Chinese Literature
CHN 350

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CRN 16203
TTh 2:00-3:20
Esslinger 107

Syllabus

Course Description
Performing Women in Traditional Chinese Poetry
Women in traditional China might be most famous for their bound feet, but that is only a small part of the story. They were goddesses and empresses, nuns and prostitutes, mothers and wives, poets and scholars—and their lives changed along with the many changes of premodern Chinese society. This course will examine how women were represented in classical literature, primarily poetry, both through their own writing and in the writing of men. Beginning with a broad view of some of the many roles for women represented in early China and moving on to an examination of women as both topics and authors of poetry, we will give special attention to the way women’s own works respond to dominant notions of femininity as represented in their contemporary literary tradition.

Objectives
This course will introduce the discipline of gender studies as it has been taken up in the field of Chinese literature. Through the completion of this course students should gain familiarity with the large-scale social and ideological transformations that affected representations of gender and sexuality between the early Zhou dynasty (1046 BCE) and the late Song dynasty (1279 AD); with important particular writers, works, and topoi of that period; and with relevant gender studies methodology. The goal of this course is that students will become comfortable using the critical framework of gender theory to analyze Chinese literary works.

Required Readings
It is essential that we all use the same editions of the texts. Most of the texts are included in the course reader, which is available for purchase at the UO bookstore. The rest of the texts will be posted on the course Blackboard site. In order to participate in and contribute to a productive classroom discussion, coming to class every day with a print copy of the text under discussion in hand is absolutely necessary. Print all Blackboard readings before class—no electronic reading devices will be permitted. Bring your course reader to every class meeting. Readings must be completed before class on the day they are to be discussed (see schedule below).

Essentials
You are required to come to every class on time and prepared. Coming to class prepared means that you have completed the assigned reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. This is a four-credit
course; you should spend at least two hours preparing before every hour of class time. Write down questions and insights that occur to you as you read in the margin of your course reader or printed .pdf, and bring this annotated print version of the reading to class for discussion. Please help create a positive and inclusive classroom environment. Strive to be respectful, considerate, and open-minded. Do not bring food or electronics to class. Unexcused absences, coming to class without printed copies of the readings, and the use of cell phones, laptops, headphones, and other electronics will negatively affect your grade. If you are found using electronics in class you will be counted absent.

**Email Policy**
Check your UO email account regularly for course-related correspondence. Please use email in a professional manner; use an appropriate greeting and include your name and the name of the course. I will respond to student emails within twenty-four hours excluding nights and weekends. I do not review thesis statements and paper drafts by email; I am available during office hours to help with your papers as well as to address any questions or concerns you have about the course. If you have a class scheduled during my office hours, please email at least three days in advance to request an appointment.

**Accessibility and Intellectual Integrity**
If you have concerns about your ability to meet the requirements of this course or if you have a document from the Accessible Education Center, please talk to me in the first week of class. Exams taken through the Accessible Education Center must be planned at least two weeks in advance.

Please strive to maintain the University of Oregon’s standard of student conduct and familiarize yourself with our academic policies:
http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx
I encourage collaboration and cooperation in study. However, all the written work you turn in must be your own, and you must make citations for all references you include to other texts. Please use MLA citation style; you can find instructions for making MLA citations on the UO library website.
http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/citing/index.html
If you have any uncertainty about what counts as your own writing or about how to make use of the ideas and words of others in your writing, please do not hesitate to approach me. I will be happy to discuss this question with you further. Please be confident in the integrity of your work.

**Assessment**
Students will be graded on frequent in-class quizzes and writing assignments (30%), four 1-page reading responses (40%) and an 8-10-page research paper (proposal 5%, and bibliography 5%, outline 10%, paper 10%). Each student is required to meet with me in office hours by Friday of Week 7 (Nov. 15) to discuss the final paper and overall progress in the course; the final paper will not be graded without a meeting. Sign-up sheets for office hours will be available from Week 2.
Instructions for reading responses: A reading response should clearly present a single original argument (thesis) about one text or author; it should not summarize the reading. Use the response to engage with a problem of interpretation. At only one page, the response must be focused, precise, and to the point. Take up one significant issue or question that is relevant to the whole work and pursue it deeply. The response should demonstrate your own independent, thoughtful engagement with the totality of the primary text and a serious consideration of its details. Submit reading responses as a .doc or .docx file to the appropriate assessment on Blackboard (see “Assignments”). The first is due by Week 3, the second is due by Week 5, the third by Week 7, and the last is due by Week 10. The response must be submitted BEFORE the class meeting in which the reading is to be discussed; in other words, if you want to write about poetry by Buddhist nuns, your response is due before 10:00 am on November 25th. Read ahead!

Instructions for research paper: This assignment is relatively open-ended. The paper must engage with the course readings and some issue or problem relevant to Gender Studies; beyond that, I encourage you to take up a topic and approach that interests you. You may wish to formulate your research topic as a question about one of the texts, writers, or themes of the course. You will have the opportunity to help formulate your topic and approach with me in office hours. The paper must include at least two secondary scholarly sources. We will discuss scholarly sources and how to find them in class before Week 8. Research paper deadline schedule: meet with me by Week 7; proposal due Week 8; bibliography due Week 9; outline due Week 10; paper due Thursday of Finals Week. The proposal, bibliography, outline, and completed paper are to be submitted to the marked assessments on Blackboard (see “Assignments”/ “Research Paper”).

Formatting and submission guidelines for all papers: All papers of any length (including responses, bibliographies, and research papers) should use MLA style. Please refer to the Purdue Online Writing Lab website for a helpful guide to MLA style (google “Purdue OWL MLA style”). Use Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double space, and include a descriptive title and a Works Cited (even if you only refer to one text). All papers will be turned in on Blackboard. Please submit papers to Blackboard as a .doc or .docx file. If you would like to receive line comments on your papers, please submit a printed copy to me in class the day it is due. If you do not submit a printed copy, I will provide your grade and overall comments via Blackboard.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to the course

Sept. 30: Discussion: Gender Norms: What is “woman”? 
Selections from Changes, selections from Laozi and Zhuangzi (in class); Selections from Li Ji, Lotus Sutra, Vimalakirti Sutra
Week 2: Origins, Found Voices, and Questions of Authorship and Audience
  Oct. 7: Selections from *Shijing* and *yuefu*
  Oct. 9: Class meeting cancelled. Online assignment: guided response to reading assignment on Women’s Script (see Blackboard “Assignments”/ “Oct. 9 Assignment”)

Week 3: Ancestors, Goddesses, and Political Allegory
  Oct. 14: “Nine Songs” and “Li Sao”
  Oct. 16: The “Goddess fu” and its legacy. First reading response due

Week 4: Exemplary Virtuous Women (and Bad Powerful Women)
  Oct. 21: *Lienu zhuang*
  Oct. 23: Ban Zhao’s “Lessons for Women” and “Needle and Thread”; *Classic of Filial Piety for Women*

Week 5: Languishing Women, Desiring Women
  Oct. 28: Favored Beauty Ban and Cai Yan
  Oct. 30: Selections from *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*. Second reading response due

Week 6: Women of the Tang
  Nov. 4: Xue Tao, Yu Xuanji and others
  Nov. 6: Empress Wu, Shangguan Wan’er, and other court ladies

Week 7: Women in the Male Gaze: Imagining, Remembering, Desiring
  Nov. 11: Politics, Desire, Loss: Yang Guifei
  Nov. 13: Re-imagining Women and Women’s Voices: selected *ci*. Third reading response due
  Nov. 14 (Friday): Deadline for office hours meeting

Week 8: Li Qingzhao
  Nov. 18: Biography and selected writings
  Nov. 20: Comparing translations
  Nov. 21 (Friday, 5:00 pm): Research paper proposal due

Week 9: Outside the family: selected poetry by Buddhist nuns
  Nov. 25: Selections from *Daughters of Emptiness*
  Nov. 26 (Wednesday, 5:00 pm): Research paper bibliography due
  Nov. 27: Class meeting cancelled for Thanksgiving

Week 10: Later Imperial Developments: Performing Women in Fiction and Narrative
  Dec. 2: *Kunqu: The Peony Pavilion* (watch videos online)
  Dec. 4: Short story by Li Yu. Last reading response due
  Dec. 5: (Friday): Research paper outline due

 Finals Week: Research paper due Dec. 10 at 5:00 pm on Blackboard
Course Bibliography


