

100.424

T. Meyer-Fong

Gilman 330 C

410-516-3324

tmeyerf@jhu.edu

Office Hours: Mondays, 10-12 or by appointment

Women and Modern Chinese History

This course examines the experiences of Chinese women in the twentieth century, and also how writers, scholars and politicians (often male, sometimes foreign) have represented women's experiences for their own political and social agendas. At the same time, we will also look at the ways in which female writers have written about women's issues and women's lives during this period.

Students will develop critical reading and writing skills while also engaging in civil discussion. They will practice the art of peer review through the provision of constructive and penetrating feedback. And they will attain greater facility at responding to feedback through repeated engagement with peer and faculty comments on their work.

Grading:

Weekly class preparation questions: 15%

Reading response papers (total of 5): 20%

Class Participation: 20%

Final Paper (12-15 pp): 30%

Interim assignments for final paper (including final presentation—based on peer review): 15%

The class participation grade will be based on the students' preparation for and contribution to class discussion. This class is a seminar and students are expected to provide substantial content. To that end, all students are expected to complete the assigned readings **before scheduled class meetings. A student's class participation will be evaluated not according to the amount of talking that student does, but rather according to whether that student contributes thoughtfully and constructively, based on careful consideration of the class readings. Students are also (as noted below) expected to prepare questions and comments about the reading for discussion in class. Participation in peer review activities will also be counted toward the class participation grade. Obviously, students cannot contribute to class discussion if they are absent; consequently, repeated unexcused absences will be reflected (very painfully) in the class participation grade.

**Each week, students are expected to produce at least one written question or

thought-provoking comment that they feel ought to be addressed by their *classmates* during class (in other words, not factual questions for the professor—although you are certainly welcome to bring lots of those to class as well!). **These will be graded. A good question should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the reading and strong preparation for discussion. A good question must be based on engagement with the reading—and should reference and reflect that engagement.**

Students are expected to write five short (1-2 pp) response papers over the course of the semester. A good reading response will engage critically by situating the reading in relation to the themes of the course. If multiple readings are assigned for a week, **a good reading response will posit connections or contrasts among them. A rubric for the response papers will be made available via Blackboard.

*** In thinking about the reading (and taking notes on it!), it is always a good idea to identify whether a particular reading is a primary or secondary source. If the reading is a primary source, consider its genre and whether it is **prescriptive or descriptive.** If the assigned reading is an academic article or monograph, it is always a good idea to identify the author's thesis or main idea in relation to the broader themes of the class.

****Each student will complete an original paper of approximately 12-15 pp. grounded in the close reading and analysis of primary sources. To that end, each student is expected to identify an issue related to women in modern China and either locate it in a specific historical moment—or track that issue or concept as it changed (or did not change) over time. Students may draw upon the assigned primary sources from this class but should also locate and select additional sources independently. Primary sources may include visual images, films, fiction, historical documents, letters, speeches, essays, etc.

Possible themes for the final paper include (but are not limited to) the following: work, political rights, family, marriage, free-love, sexuality, chastity, decadence, beauty, courtesans/prostitutes/sex workers, motherhood, “zhong nan qing nü” (i.e. to value sons more than daughters), writing/writer, model (as in ideal type), Modern Girl, victim, militant, foot-binding, consumer, producer, professional, activist, independent personhood, eating/speaking bitterness, suicide, women’s education, iron girls, Confucianism or “tradition”, “Women Hold Up Half the Sky,” International Women’s Day. There will be several interim assignments related to this paper requiring meetings with Professor Meyer-Fong and the peer review of written and oral presentations.

**This class does not assume any familiarity with Chinese history or Chinese language. There are no specific prerequisites. Students without any background in Chinese studies may find it helpful to consult a textbook for background information. To that end, I have asked the bookstore to order Jonathan Spence’s *Search for Modern China* as a recommended text.

** All reading questions must be submitted by email before class (by 10 am on Wednesday). All final papers should be submitted via the Turnitin Portal on Blackboard. Unexcused late papers will be penalized 3 points per day (A becomes A-). **In cases of illness, emergency, or deadline conflicts please request an extension as early as is feasible.**

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of students and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board web site (<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information.

1/30

Introductory Session: The "Woman Question" and Chinese History

2/6 From Dynasty to Republic—Oppressed Traditional Woman as National Metaphor

Reading:

*"Anti-Footbinding (1900-1910)" in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: a Sourcebook*, pp. 341-344. (note that there is another Ebrey reading on One Child Policy filed with this on e-reserves. Please only read the anti-footbinding material for today's class!)

*Dorothy Ko, "The Body Inside Out," *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding*, 38-68

*Margaret Burton, *The Education of Women in China*. 5-6, 11-51, 194-232.

* David Strand, Chapter 3, "A Woman's Republic," in *Unfinished Republic*.

This WEEK Meet with Prof. Meyer-Fong in Office Hours to Discuss Final Papers Topics

2/13 "The Woman Question"—Images of Women from the May 4 Period

Reading:

*Chen Duxiu, "The Way of Confucius and Modern Life" (1916). *Women in Republican China: A Sourcebook*, 5-8.

*Lu Xun, "My Views on Chastity," *Women in Republican China: A Sourcebook*, 8-18.

*The debate over Miss Zhao's Suicide, *Women in Republican China: A Sourcebook*, 75-88.

*Lu Xun, "Regret for the Past," and "New Year's Sacrifice," in *Selected Stories of Lu Xun*, 197-215 and 125-143.

*Susan Glosser, "The Truths I Have Learned: Nationalism, Family Reform, and Male Identity in China's New Culture Movement, 1915-1923, In Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Susan Brownell, *Chinese Femininities/ Chinese Masculinities*, pp.120-144.

This WEEK Meet with Prof. Meyer-Fong in Office Hours to Discuss Paper Topics

2/20 Women and the Chinese Enlightenment

Reading:

Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*. Read pp. 1-144 and will select ONE of the chapters from among Chapters 4-8 (i.e. will introduce their classmates to one of the career women featured in Part 2).

In addition: Choose one of the following short stories:

*Shi Pingmei, "Lin Nan's Diary," in Amy Doolittle and Kristina Torgeson, *Writing Women in Modern China: An Anthology of Women's Literature from the Early Twentieth Century*. Columbia University Press, 1998, pp.115-130.

*Lu Yin, "After Victory," in Amy Doolittle and Kristina Torgeson, *Writing Women in Modern China: An Anthology of Women's Literature from the Early Twentieth Century*. Columbia University Press, 1998, pp.135-138, 143-156.

Reference: * Ding Ling, "Miss Sophia's Diary," in Tani Barlow, *I Myself Am a Woman*, 49-81.

*Autobiographical Sketches published in the women's press during the 1920s and 1930s, *Chinese Women through Chinese Eyes*, pp. 167-191.

2/27 New Women and New Media

Required Film: *The Goddess* (starring Ruan Lingyu)

Reading:

*Kristine Harris, "The New Woman incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai," in **Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, ed.**

Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender, 1997.

Translations from *Ling long* (please also read the explanatory material associated with the on-line exhibition)

Miss Li Ying, "Being a Contemporary Girl," *Ling long*, vol. 4, issue 135 (1934), p. 583.

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/linglong/about_linglong/woman/contemporary

Shi Lili, "The Modern Girl's Appearance and Essence," *Ling long*, vol. 3, issue 99, (1932), pp. 882-3.

"Nationally Produced Female Stars and Foreign Female Stars," *Ling long*. Vol.3, issue 91(1933), page 450.

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/linglong/about_linglong/did/stars

Lu Xun, "On Gossip is a Fearful Thing (1935)," in Eileen Cheng and Kirk Denton, trans. *Jottings Under Lamplight*.

Recommended: *Michael Chang, "The good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Movie actresses and Public Discourse in Shanghai, 1920s-1930s," in Zhang, Yingjin, ed. *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 128-159.

3/6 Women and Work in Pre-War Shanghai

Reading:

Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills*. (entire)

Reference: Christina Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*.

Preliminary bibliography for final paper due in class. See Assignment under "Course Content"

3/13 Women and War

Reading:

Xiao Hong, *Field of Life and Death*, Goldblatt, trans. (Read all of *Field of Life and Death*—**don't read *Tales of Hulan River***)

*Ding Ling, "When I Was in Xia Village" and "New Faith" in Barlow, I Myself am A Woman (pp. 298-315 and 280-297 respectively).

3/20 NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK!

3/27 Women and Revolution

Reading: Helen Young, *Choosing Revolution*. (entire)

*Ding Ling, "Thoughts on March 8" in *I Myself am a Woman*, 316-321.

Recommended Film: "Yellow Earth" (1985)

4/3 Liberation: Women's Lives in New China

Reading:

*The PRC Marriage Law, in Elisabeth Croll, *The Women's Movement in China: A Selection of Readings, 1949-1973*. pp.110-15.

*Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory*. Because this is a long book, students will read the introduction and conclusion—and will be expected to select and present individual chapters.

Optional: Susan Glosser, trans., "Li Fengjin: How the New Marriage Law Helped Chinese Women Stand Up."—a comic book pamphlet on how the marriage law ended feudal abuses.

Optional: *Teng Ying-chao, "The Women's Movement in New China," All China Women's Federation, 1952.

4/10 The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)—Model Women vs. Gendered Suffering

Reading:

*Jin, Yihong, "Rethinking the 'Iron Girl': Gender and Labor during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. *Gender & History, Vol. 18 No. 3 November 2006*, pp. 613-634.

*Wan Shan-hung, "The Iron Girl," *Chinese Literature*, 5, 1971, 59-66.

*Chou Tsung-chi, "A Ball of Fire," *Chinese Literature, Chinese Literature #6 (1974)*, pp. 50-66.

*Feng Jicai, *Ten Years of Madness*, pp. 1-4, 17-31, 49-59, 219-225.

*Plates 75, 76, 77, 91, 92 in Ellen Laing, *The Winking Owl*.

Required Viewing: *The White Haired Girl* (A Revolutionary Ballet, AV Reserve—)

One paragraph introduction to final paper including thesis statement and description of key primary sources and proposed argument due.

Five minute oral presentation interpreting one primary source. Presentations will be peer reviewed.

4/17 Women in the 1980s

Reading:

Honig and Hershatter, *Personal Voices* (entire—Out of Print and thus on reserve)

* "The One Child Family," in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization and Society*. 478-81.

Required Viewing: Carma Hinton (dir) *Small Happiness*.

In class slide presentation: Images of Women and Modernity in 1980s Political Posters

4/24 Women and Work in the 1990s and Beyond

Reading:

*Zhou Rencong, "Leaving Huaihua Valley: a Sichuan girl's own account of being a migrant worker [my life as a migrant worker]in Gaetano, Arianne M.; Jacka, Tamara, eds. *On the move: women and rural-to-urban migration in contemporary China*. New York: Columbia UP, 2004, pp. 297-304

*Wang, Zheng, "Gender, Employment and Women's Resistance," In: Perry, Elizabeth J.; Selden, Mark, eds. *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance*. London; New York: Routledge, 2000. pp. 62-82.

*Hong Zhang, "China's New Rural Daughters Coming of Age: Downsizing the Family and Firing up Cash Earning Power in the New Economy." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 32, # 3, 2007, pp. 671-698.

*Leslie T. Chang, *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China*, New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2009, pp. 1-16; 98-119, 360-376.

Fan Yusu, "I am Fan Yusu," <https://www.whatsonweibo.com/fan-yusu-%E6%88%91%E6%98%AF%E8%8C%83%E9%9B%A8%E7%B4%A0-full-translation/>

Students exchange draft papers with a classmate for peer comments and submit draft paper to Professor Meyer-Fong for comments. Peer and professorial comments will be returned on 4/29.

5/1 Presentations of Final Papers—ten minute oral presentation (peer reviewed)