

HUMA3205: Technologies of Passion: Self and Love in Chinese Literature

Spring 2022

Instructor: Huan Jin

Teaching Assistant: Lam Christie

Class Time: Thursday 12:00–14:50

Course Description:

Borrowing Foucault’s idea of “technologies of the self,” this course studies how passions, as mediated through and formed by our sense of self and what we love, constitutes themselves through collections of practices in Chinese literature and culture from premodern to modern period. “Technologies” under our discussion include sociocultural beliefs and practices as well as scientific/ technical knowledge. To unpack “passion,” the class investigate the literary transformations and ramifications of two perennial themes—love and the self— in Chinese literature across temporal and generic boundaries. How is “selfhood” philosophized, lyricized, and narrated? How is “love” represented, assessed, and contested? We examine how our understandings about subjectivity, imagination of gender and sexuality, and knowledge of historical changes are mediated through diverse “technologies” in which explorations of the self and articulations of sundry sentiments intertwine.

Topics include how “selfhood” is situated, conceptualized, and constructed in ancient poetry collections, philosophy, autobiographical accounts, and fiction; how gender and desire are expressed and disrupted in theatrical and fantastic realms; and how the moral and the political redeems, rescinds, or fortifies voices of love and intimacy. Special attention will be paid to the ethics, aesthetics, and politics in the constitution of ideas about “selfhood” and “love.” Students should have some basic background in Chinese history.

** This syllabus may be subject to changes.

Requirements:

1. Attendance, participation, and weekly response (30%)

You are expected to attend lectures and tutorial presentations. Please join the lectures via the “Zoom” tab in Canvas at least **5 minutes prior** to start time. Join with **cameras on and muted microphones**. Please be mindful about where you are focusing your attention. There will be “cold calls”.

Starting from week 3, you are also expected to respond to one of the prompts for the **next lecture** by 7 p.m. every Tuesday (the first response is due on February 22). Please do so by replying to thread of the week in the “Discussion” forum on Canvas. The posting should be around 200-250 words, with a focus on the text/issues under discussion for the relevant week. You may submit the weekly response in either Chinese or English. Class participation will be calculated and counted towards the final grade.

2. Tutorial presentation (30%)

Choose one weekly topic that interests you the most. Imagine there were an extra weekly reading/film that you think should also be incorporated into the syllabus in the future. Explain your choice and analyze the text in your presentation with tools we learned from the class. Text may be recommended if needed.

In selecting the text and forming your argument, you may want to consider the following:

- What is the larger context of the texts you are examining?
- What is the main mode of “technology” used in this text? How do you compare it with other texts we have discussed?
- How is the text written/shot and how does its style of expression contribute to its overall meaning?
- What imagery/ metaphors/ techniques/ concepts you would like to highlight in this text? How do these elements contribute to its expression of modes of feelings?

3. Final paper/ creative project (40%)

Length: 5-8 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font. Please follow [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

Choose one of the three prompts given in class and submit the paper by 11:59 p.m., May 20 (Saturday), 2022. Please submit your paper electronically via the canvas site.

Readings: All reading materials could be found on the course website. The medium of instruction for this course is English, but some readings may be available only in Chinese.

Grading:

Attendance, participation, and weekly response 30%

Tutorial presentation, 30%

Final paper/creative project, 40%

Feb 10 Week 1 What is Technology? Passion?

Feb 17 Week 2 Sound, Ballads, and *Qing*: Ancient Traditions

Selected writings from *The Book of Songs* 詩經: “Bozhou” 柏舟, “Meng” 氓, “Shuli” 黍離, “Zijin” 子衿, “Yuechu” 月出, “Biao you mei” 標有梅, “Jigu” 擊鼓, “Fengnian” 豐年, “Suguan” 素冠; Preface to *The Book of Songs* by Arthur Waley (optional)

Feb 24 Week 3 Body and Mind: Self-Cultivation

Excerpts in *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (online via HKUST lib) from *Tao Te Ching* 道德經, *Analects* 論語, and *Zhuangzi* 莊子; *Original Tao*

Mar 3 Week 4 Persona and Masking: (In)sincerity?

Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, “Master of the Five Willows” 五柳先生傳, “Returning Home” 歸去來兮辭; excerpts from *A New Account of Tales of the World* 世說新語; Michael Foucault, “Technologies of the Self”(optional)

Mar 10 Week 5 Narrativity: *Qing* and Illusions

Yuan Zhen 元稹, “The Story of Yingying” 鶯鶯傳; Li Gongzuo 李公佐, “The Governor of Nanke” 南柯太守傳 (in Chinese only); Jiang Fang 蔣防, “The Story of Huo Xiaoyu” 霍小玉傳

Mar 17 Week 6 Commercial Printing: *Qing* in Vernacular Stories

“Du Shiniang Sinks her Jewel Box in Anger” 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 from *Stories to Caution the World* 警世通言; “The Fan Tower Restaurant as Witness to the Love of Zhou Shengxian” 鬧樊樓多情周勝仙 from *Stories to Awaken the World* 醒世恆言; “An Ugly Husband Fears a Pretty Wife but Marries a Beautiful One” 丑郎君怕嬌偏得豔 in Li Yu 李漁, *Silent Operas* 無聲戲

Mar 24 Week 7 Modern Printing: Sensation of the Masses

Wu Jianren 吳趸人, *Sea of Regret* 恨海; Yan Fusun 嚴芙蓀, “The Bridal Palanquin” 花轎

Mar 31 Week 8 Multimedia Storytelling I: Woman and Gendered Gaze

Lu Xun 魯迅, “What Happens after Nora Walks Out” 娜拉走後怎樣; Ding Ling 丁玲, “Miss Sophia’s Diary” 莎菲女士的日記 and “When I was in Xia Village” 我在霞村的時候; clips of Wu Yonggang, *Goddess*, 1934

Apr 7 Week 9 Multimedia Storytelling II: Cosmopolitan Romance

Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, “Intersection” 對倒, Wong Kar-wai, *In the Mood of Love*, 2000

Apr 14 Midterm break

Apr 21 Week 10 Visual Storytelling III: Futures and Sci-Fi Stories

Ah Cheng 阿城, *King of the Children* 孩子王; Liu Cixin 劉慈欣, “The Village School Teacher” 鄉村教師; Han Song 韓松, “The Passengers and the Creator” 乘客與創造者

Apr 28 Week 11 Reflection & Frant Gwo, *The Wandering Earth*, 2019

May 5 Week 12 Tutorial Presentation

Knowledge/Content Related:

ILO 1 – Students will enhance their understanding of Chinese literature across generic boundaries.

Academic Skills/Competencies:

ILO 2 – Students will practice their close reading skills and learn to historicize the texts under discussion.

ILO 3 – Students will practice their critical thinking skills and analytical writing skills.

Other Learning Outcomes:

ILO4-- Students will have an opportunity to collaborate with each other and engage in team work.