

HUMA 6001B
Fall 2025

Sentimental Republic: Emotion in Modern Chinese Literature

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Office hours: 3:00pm to 6pm (Thursday), and by appointment

Time and Classroom

Wednesday: 3:00pm to 5:50pm

Room: Rm 1026, LSK Bldg

Course description

This course will employ an interdisciplinary approach to an examination of Chinese literature and culture from the late Qing to the Republican era, with a focus on the expression and representation of emotion and affect. Linking literature with other cultural and political discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we will examine the social and cultural significance of modern Chinese sentimentalism. This course will address broadly such topics as public/private sentiment, sympathy and empathy, translations of emotions, reformulations of the senses (sight, hearing, smell, tastes and touch), suffering and trauma, negative emotions (e.g. shame, anger, and grief), and gendering the public sphere. Critical questions include: How the senses, the expression of emotion, and sensibilities transform over time or are formulated differently in different locations; how emotions and sensibilities exert their important forces and instigate major societal changes; how cross-cultural exchanges in the modern era significantly reshaped the (re)presentation of emotions and sentiments; how the media (print, visual, audio, and digital) substantially rework the senses and sensibilities; what is the relationship between feeling or sentiment with the thoughts of a given time. The primary examples that we will examine include Lin Shu's translation and late Qing Theater; the Mandarin and Butterfly School and sentimentalism; Eileen Chang and other "sentimental" female writers; War and National sentiment, etc.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Enhancing students' critical thinking abilities and writing skills;
2. Gaining an overview of Chinese literature and cultures during the late Qing and Republican eras;
3. Mastering some fundamental concepts of sentiment, emotion and affect in literature, philosophy and visual studies;
4. Gaining firsthand experience in how to approach a text, an event, or a phenomenon through productive critical lenses.

Weekly Organization and Readings (Subject to Changes)

Required and suggested readings are accessible through the course web page (Canvas). Lectures, students' presentations, and discussions will alternate in class.

Assessment:

Attendance, Pop quizzes, Presentation, and Discussion: 20% +10% (10% for excellent in-class participation and pop quizzes)
Short response papers: 20%
One group project: 10%
One final Paper: 40%

Assignments:

Course Requirements:

All students must attend classes regularly and finish readings before class.

1. Write a short response paper and post it online every OTHER week (one page), four or five in total. You will get credit as long as you turn in your assignment on time. I will send you a weekly email to remind you. **Due 5pm, Tuesday (Canvas)**
2. Students will be asked to give one or two oral presentations on the given topic. The oral presentation will not be graded.
3. Group research project on the literary/visual /cultural representation of one of the key issues relating to emotion.
4. Attendance at lectures in September is mandatory.
5. Final paper. 10-15 pages for MPhil and PhD Students, 8-12 pages for MA students.

Due @ 5pm on Dec 18th, 2025.

Policy for Using AI APP

*The use of AI apps during lectures and class discussions is strictly forbidden.

*Using AI for grammar checking is permitted for response papers, presentations, and the final paper.

*The use of AI must be acknowledged. You may use AI to develop ideas for presentations, group projects, and final papers. For your final paper, if you use an AI app for your writing, you must also submit a one-page reflection explaining how the app helped you with writing and how you adopted a critical, reflective, and analytical approach to AI. Submit the evidence with your one-page reflection.

***WARNING:** Submitting a paper that is AI-generated or contains any falsified references will result in a failing grade for this class.

Weekly Schedule (Subject to change)

WEEK 1

9/3 Introduction

William James, "What is an Emotion," *Mind* 34 (1884): 188-205.

Sara Ahmed, "Feel Your Way," in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Routledge, 2004), 1-19.

William Reddy: *The Navigation of Feeling* (Cambridge, 2001), part 1.

WEEK 2

9/10 Discourse of lyric tradition 抒情傳統

王德威、陳國球《抒情之現代性》(selection)
梁啟超、朱謙之、沈從文、高友工等

TALK 1 陳國球教授、王德威教授 夏志清與「情迷中國」(REQUIRED)
日期： 2025 年 9 月 12 日 (星期五)
時間： 下午 4 時至 6 時
地點： 香港科技大學李兆基校園盧家驄薈萃樓佳兆業集團演講廳
(高研院演講廳)

WEEK 3

9/17 Structure of Feelings and the issue of Qing
Raymond Williams on “Structure of Feelings”; William Reddy on “Emotional regime”
Haiyan Lee: *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950*.
Stanford UP, 2006, Introduction.
《浮生六記》and other stories

TALK 2 Professor Samuel Weber, “Curious Conclusions: On the Singularity of Literature as Response and Appeal” (REQUIRED)

Date : 19 September 2025 (Friday)
Time : 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Venue : Kaisa Group Lecture Theater (IAS LT), Lo Ka Chung Building, Lee Shau Kee Campus, HKUST

WEEK 4

9/24 Sentimentalism, “public sphere,” and Popular Literature
1) Habermas on “Public Sphere”
2) Lee, Haiyan: “All the Feelings That Are Fit to Print” *Modern China*, July 2001 vol. 27 no. 3, 291-327
周瘦鵲 and other stories

WEEK 5 Oct. 1 (NO Class)

WEEK 6

Oct. 8. Romantic Emotion and Gender
Stephanie Shields: “Thinking about Gender, thinking about theory: Gender and Emotional experience,” in *Gender and Emotion*, ed. Agneta H. Fischer
Yang Lianfen: *Langman de Zhongguo* 浪漫的中國 (part1)
凌淑華、馮沅君 and other stories

WEEK 5 Oct. 1 (NO Class)

WEEK 7 Affect and Form

10/15 Raymond Williams, from “Industrial Novels,” in *Culture and Society*, 2nd (Columbia Univ. Press, 1983), 87-91.
Frederick Jamison, from *The Antinomies of Realism* (Verso, 2013), chap. 1-2
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Introduction,” in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Duke Univ. Press, 2003), 1-25.
Suzanne Keen: Empathy and Novel, Chap. 1 “Contemporary perspectives on empathy.”
Elieen Chang 張愛玲 and other stories

WEEK 8

10/22 History of Emotions: ugly feelings
Sara Ahmed, “Happy Objects,” in *The Promise of Happiness* (Duke Univ. Press, 2010).
Ann Cvetkovich, “Introduction,” in *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Duke Univ. Press, 2012).
Philip Fisher: *The Vehement Passions*, Princeton UP, 2002. (Intro, Chap. one and two)
Peter Stearns, *Shame: A Short History* (Chap 1-3)
魯迅 and other writings

WEEK 9 Oct. 29 No Class

WEEK 10

11/5 History of Emotions: Trauma and Melancholia
Freud: Mourning and Melancholia
Cathy Caruth: Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History (Introduction)
Yu Dafu and other stories

WEEK 11

11/12 Sensory experience and affect
Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995), 83-109.
Patricia Clough, *The Affective Turn: Theory, Culture & Society* 25.1 (2008): 1–22.
Selected articles from *Empire of the Senses*, edited by David Howe,
Susan Stewart: “Remembering the Senses”
New Sensationalist writings

WEEK 12

11/19 Modern Media and Affect
Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (part 1)
Bao Weihong: *Fiery Cinema*, Introduction
錢鍾書 《中國詩與中國畫》
Film: 小城之春 (1948, dir. Fei Mu 費穆)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVdQKipPGrY>

WEEK 13

11/26 Students’ presentations of group projects