

HMMA 5300 Topics in Premodern Chinese Literature and Culture

Instructor: Huan Jin

Class Time: Tuesday 9:00 a.m.–11:50 a.m.

Course description:

Through classical works and canonical authors, this course introduces to the students important concepts and knowledge in premodern Chinese literature and culture. Some topics explored in this course include authorship, narrative theory, manuscript culture, material culture, and book history.

Language of instruction: Chinese

Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation (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 Sunday (the first response is due on February 19). Please do so by replying to the 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. Class participation will be calculated and counted towards the final grade.

2. Tutorial presentation (30%)

Students will form groups of 5-6 people to present on one or two texts from one of the story collections we examine in this class. The topic needs to fall under one of our weekly themes. You may find your group in "People_Tutorial Presentation Group" on Canvas. Collaboration among group members is important. The audience should be prepared to comment on the tutorial presentation. Make sure to submit the powerpoint of your presentation, if you use any, by 7 p.m. of the Sunday before the week of your presentation.

3. Final paper (40%)

- Write a research paper of 12–15 pages (including bibliography) on a topic of your choice. The topic should fall under one of the weekly themes, and must NOT have overlap with your tutorial presentation. Choose TWO/THREE pieces of writing from ONE/TWO story collections covered in class, and engage with at least three scholarly articles/chapters already available on your topic.
- For paper format, please consult: <https://www.litphil.sinica.edu.tw/public/6-5-format.pdf>
- Final Paper Topic and 200-Word Abstract **Due 4/1 (Saturday) @ 8 p.m.**
- Final Paper Outline **Due, 4/15 (Saturday) @ 8pm** (In the following week sign up for Office hours for feedback)
- Final Paper **Due May 15 (Monday) @ NOON**

Late papers will be penalized with one grade-step deduction for each day it is late (i.e., an “A” paper will become an “A-” after one day, a “B+” after two, and so on) barring demonstrated, exceptional circumstances.

Academic Integrity: No plagiarism in ANY assignment, including responses, is tolerated in this class. A guide for good reference skills can be found via this link:

<https://libguides.hkust.edu.hk/referencing>. Please consult HKUST’s code on academic integrity by following this link: <https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-integrity>.

Readings: All reading materials could be found on the course website

Course Learning Outcomes:

1.	Have a knowledge of canonical authors and their works in premodern China
2.	Describe important concepts and trends in premodern Chinese literary and cultural history
3.	Approach premodern Chinese texts through theoretical and analytical tools
4.	Support arguments with textual evidence
5.	Engage with domestic and international scholarly discussions in the study of premodern Chinese literature and culture

Grading:

Attendance, participation, and weekly response 30%

Tutorial presentation, 30%

Final paper/creative project, 40%

** This syllabus is subject to changes.

Weekly Schedule:

Feb 7 WEEK 1 Introduction

Selected writings from *The Chronicle of Zuo* 左傳, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and *Record of the Grand Historian* 史記

Feb 14 WEEK 2 Narrative Perspectives

Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831), “The Story of Yingying” 鶯鶯傳; Bai Xingjian 白行簡 (776–826), “The Story of Li Wa” 李娃傳; Li Gongzuo 李公佐 (fl. 8th century), “The Story of Nanke” 南柯太守傳

Secondary Reading:

- Stephen Owen, “Conflicting Interpretations: ‘Yingying’s Story’” in *The End of the Chinese “Middle Ages”*
- Allen, Sarah M. “Tales Retold: Narrative Variation in a Tang Story.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66, no. 1 (2006): 105–43.

Feb 21 WEEK 3 Woodblock Printing and Commercial Culture

Ling Mengchu 凌濛初 (1580–1644), “An Alchemist Turns Half a Grain of Millet into a Nine-Cycle Pill; A Rich Man Squanders Thousands of Tales of Silver to Win a Beauty’s Smile” 丹客半黍九還 富翁千金一笑, “The Man Whose Luck Has Turned Chances upon Dinting Tangerine; the Marchant from Persia Reveals the Secrete of a Turtle Shell” 轉運漢巧遇洞庭紅, 波斯胡指破龜龍殼; Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646), “Shi Fu Encounters a Friend at Tanque” 施潤澤灘闕遇友

Secondary Reading:

- Timothy Brook, “Summer: The Last Century (1550–1644)” in *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Ariel Fox, “Precious Bodies: Money Transformation Stories from Medieval to Late Imperial China.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 76, no. 1/2 (2016): 43–85.

Feb 28 WEEK 4 Vernacular Storytelling

“Du Zichun” 杜子春 from *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646), “Du Zichun Goes to Chang’an Three Times” 杜子春三入長安; “Du Tenth Sinks the Jewelry Box in Anger” 杜十娘怒沈百寶箱; “For One Penny, a Small Grudge Ends in Stark Tragedies” 一文錢小隙造奇冤

Secondary Reading:

- Patrick Hanan, “The Making of The Pearl-Sewn Shirt and The Courtesan’s Jewel Box.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 33 (1973): 124–153.
- “Language and Narrative Model” in *The Chinese Vernacular Story*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Mar 7 WEEK 5 Authorship and Craftsmanship

Li Yu 李漁 (1611–1680), “House of Gathered Refinements” 萃雅樓; “A Tower of the Summer Heat” 夏宜樓

Secondary Reading:

- Wai-ye Li, “Elegance and Vulgarity” in *The Promise and Peril of Things: Literature and Material Culture in Late Imperial China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022.
- Sophie Volpp, “The Vernacular Story and the Hiddenness of Value” in Paula Varsano ed., *The Rhetoric of Hiddenness in Traditional Chinese Culture*, State University of New York Press, 2017.

Mar 14 WEEK 6 Drama and Fiction

Li Yu 李漁 (1611–1680), “Tan Chuyu Declares His Love in a Play; Liu Miaogu Dies for Honor’s Sake After Her Aria” 譚楚玉戲里傳情 劉藐姑曲終死節; “An Ugly Husband Fears a Pretty Wife but Marries a Beautiful One” 丑郎君怕嬌偏得豔; selected scenes from *Errors Caused by the Kite* 風箏誤

Secondary Reading:

- Patrick Hanan, “One: Making a Living” and “Two: Creating a Self” in *The Invention of Li Yu*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Mar 21 WEEK 7 Trauma and Dynastic Transition

Li Yu 李漁 (1611–1680), “The Male Heir” 奉先樓, “Father and Son” 生我樓; Aina jushi 艾衲居士, “Fan Li Drowns Xishi in West Lake” 范少伯水葬西施; “On Shouyang Mountain, Shuqi Becomes a Turncoat” 首陽山叔齊變節

Secondary Reading:

- Patrick Hanan, “Aina” in *The Chinese Vernacular Story*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Tina Lu, “Fictional Reunions in the Wake of Dynastic Fall,” in Idema, Wilt L., Wai-Yee Li, and Ellen Widmer ed., *Trauma and Transcendence In Early Qing Literature*. Harvard University Asia Center, 2006.

Mar 28 WEEK 8 Illusions and Transgressions

Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715), “Painted Wall” 畫壁, “Nie Xiaoqian” 聶小倩, “Painted Skin” 畫皮

Secondary Reading:

- Judith Zeitlin, “The Discourse on the Strange” and “Conclusion: The Painted Wall” in *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Final Paper Topic and 200-Word Abstract Due 4/1 (Saturday) @ 8 p.m.

Apr 4 WEEK 9 The World of *Qing*

Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715), “Gejin” 葛巾, “Lin Siniang” 林四娘, “Chushenrg” 褚生

Secondary Reading:

- Judith Zeitlin, “Ghosts and Historical Time” in *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007.
- Wai-yee Li, “Desire and Order in Liao-chai chih-i” in *Enchantment and Disenchantment: Love and Illusion in Chinese Literature*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Apr 11 Midterm Break

Final Paper Outline Due, 4/15 (Saturday) @ 8pm

Apr 18 WEEK 10 Knowledge and Strangeness

Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1797), “A Case of Burnt Salt Ship” 火燒鹽船一案, “A Doorless Nation” 無門國, “Plucking Ghost’s Tongue” 拔鬼舌; “Devoted Ghost Loves the Wife” 癡鬼戀妻

Secondary Reading:

- Paolo Santangelo, “An introduction to Zibuyu's concepts and imagery: some reflections and hypotheses” in *Zibuyu, “What The Master Would Not Discuss.” According to Yuan Mei (1716-1798): A Collection of Supernatural Stories*. Emotions and States of Mind in East Asia; v. 3. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Apr 25 WEEK 11 (A)Moral Solutions

Xuan Ding 宣鼎 (1832–1880), “Leper Woman Qiu Liyu” 癡瘋女邱麗玉; “Blood-Drenched Torches Illuminate Silver” 血炬照銀; Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897), “The Wife of Liu” 劉氏婦, “Selling Leprosy” 賣瘋, “Wandering Overseas” 海外壯遊

Secondary Reading:

- Zheng, Huili. “Enchanted Encounter: Gender Politics, Cultural Identity, and Wang Tao’s (1828-97) Fictional Sino-Western Romance.” *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in Early and Imperial China* 16, no. 2 (2014): 274–307.

May 2 WEEK 12 Tutorial Presentation

May 9 WEEK 13 Tutorial Presentation

Final Paper Due May 15 (Monday) @ NOON