

CHIN 309: Chinese Literature in English

Instructor: Paul Vierthaler (pavierthaler@wm.edu)

Office: Washington Hall 234

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12:00 and by appointment

Class Location: Washington Hall 308

Mondays and Wednesdays 5:00-6:20

This course is an introduction to the major works of Chinese literature in English Translation. This includes early philosophy (including the Confucian Classics and early Daoist texts), poetry, drama, short stories and novels, with emphasis on the cultural and historical context in which these works were written. This class is arranged chronologically, but within each period our discussions will be thematic.

We will cover Chinese literature from all points of the imperial period, from the early bronze age through the 19th century. This broad coverage does mean we will only briefly touch upon most things, and we will completely elide others. Think of this as a tasting menu of some of the greatest hits of premodern Chinese literature. If something catches your eye, feel free to delve deeper!

COLL 200

This class can be taken for COLL 200 ALV credit. As a literature class, we will deal extensively with the written tradition in China, discussing how literature functions as a window into Chinese culture in different periods. Students will analyze and evaluate works in many genres of literature through

short essays and in-class discussion. You will reflect on the values implicit in the literature we read and discuss how this helps you understand your own values. We will discuss the varied creative writing process that undergirds many forms of literary writing in imperial China, situating it in contemporary cultural practices. The course reaches out to the CSI domain. We will discuss the important role literature played as a social, and often political, act. We will discuss the complex intersection between historical narrative and literary writing. Finally, we will discuss the role that literature played in constructing Chinese culture and philosophy through close readings of philosophical documents and discussion of secondary literature.

COLL 300

This class can be taken for on-campus COLL 300 credit. Chinese literature reverberates throughout Chinese culture and continues to play an important role in lives of people living in China and the Sinophone world. Throughout the semester, two guest speakers will come and discuss their experience with premodern Chinese literature and how it has shaped their understanding of the world. We will also take the opportunity to reflect on the similarities and differences we experience through the literary traditions of the western world. Students will complete an essay reflecting on this experience at the end of the semester.

Please note that this course cannot simultaneously fulfill both COLL 200 and COLL 300 credits, so you must choose one or the other. All assignments will be required regardless of which credit you select.

Format and Expectations

Class will be divided approximately sixty percent lecture and forty percent discussion. Active participation is expected, so please come to class prepared having read the materials. After I present the lecture material, we will briefly break into small discussion groups. During this time your group should come up with two discussion questions. After ten minutes we will return and each group will present their questions, which we will then discuss.

Participation Policy:

Active participation in class is required and part of your grade. If you miss class consistently, you will do poorly in participation. If you are sick just let me know that you won't be in class, **please don't come to class if you don't feel well.**

Short Essays/Projects

Five times throughout the semester students will submit an essay responding to course readings, lecture materials, or things that come up during discussion. Think creatively about how you want to do this. You have a variety of options for format:

For example:

300-500 word essay or pastiche of a reading

5-10 minute podcast

5 minute video

5-page comic book

Feel free to think creatively and you are welcome to come up with your own option! **At least one of your essays MUST reflect on the differences between the social role the literature we discuss and the role of literature in a western context.**

*social role of
class lit vs. western lit*

I will grade these based on coherence, but what this means

varies depending on what you submit: if you make an argument, do you present adequate evidence in support it? Does your pastiche follow the original in an evident way (feel free to provide additional explanation if you think it might not be clear)? Is it clear what message you are trying to get me to take away, and so on). Presentation also matters: is the material grammatical, well structured, and so on. Finally, content is important: is there a clear relationship with course materials, does it demonstrate a mastery of them?

Reflective Essay (due at the same time as the Final Project)

All students, regardless of which attribute they take the course under, will write an 600-800 word essay at the end of the class reflecting on how the course materials shape their understanding as citizens of the world. You should reflect on the nature of your own relationship with literature, and the role that it plays in your everyday life, and how it is similar to, and different from, the experience of those who live in the Sinophone world.

Final Project/Paper and Presentation

You will finish the course with a final project of 2,750 words (+/- 10 percent, this should be roughly ten to twelve double-spaced pages). This can be a paper, a website, or a multimedia project with content roughly equivalent to the paper. If you would like to do something that does not easily translate to a word-count, please speak with me!

In the last week of class, students will present their projects (4 to 6 minutes in length).

The final paper is due during the time scheduled for the class final (**December 15th by 10 p.m. EST**). I am happy to

comment on drafts, but please send them to me at least one week before the project is due, otherwise I will be unable to provide comments.

Start thinking about what you want to do early! If you would like, you can turn in a final project plan for your third reflection.

Late essays and papers: will be penalized by a 10% reduction for each 24-hour period it is late. If you need an extension please ask before the assignment is due!

All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard

Please ensure that your papers/projects/digital files can be opened and read properly on a Mac OS X, Windows 10, or Ubuntu computer with standard software (Acrobat, Word, WordPad, etc). If you have any concerns, contact me ahead of time. Corrupted or un-openable files will be considered late.

Writing Expectations

While content is the most important component of your work, a portion of your grade on each assignment will be for style and understandability. There is a [writing resource center](#) at William & Mary. If you find yourself struggling, please feel free to avail yourself of their services! Alternatively, come speak with me and I will do what I can to help.

A Word About Plagiarism

You must document all of your source material. If you take any text from somebody else, you must make it clear the text is being quoted and where the text comes from. You must also cite any sources from which you obtain numbers, ideas, or other material. If you have any questions about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, ask! Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be treated lightly. Fortunately, it is also easy to avoid and if you are the least bit careful about giving credit where credit is due you should not run into any problems (thanks to [Alfred E Guy, Jr.](#) for this statement).

Grading Rubric:

Attendance and Participation: 10 percent

Reflection Essays: 50 percent
Final presentation: 10 percent
Final paper: 30 percent

GRADING SCALE FOR FINAL GRADES

A 93 – 100 A- 90 – 92.9
B+ 87 – 89.9 B 83 – 86.9 B- 80 – 82.9
C+ 77 – 79.9 C 73 – 76.9 C- 70 – 72.9
D+ 67 – 69.9 D 63 – 66.9 D- 60 – 62.9
F <60

A: Exceeds expectations (this is a difficult grade to get)
B: Meets expectations (if you do all the work competently, you can expect to get a B)
C: Below expectations, but represents a good-faith effort, and all work completed
D: Poor/missing work
F: Fail

Required Books

You can get all of these books online via the library.

The Analects: Confucius (Brian Bruya).
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvc77m8h.7>

Zhuangzi Basic Writings (Burton Watson)
<https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,url,shib&db=nlebk&AN=985845&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Lao Tzu (Or the Dao De Jing, DC Lau)
<https://terebess.hu/english/tao/lau.html>

Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature.
(Online via the Library)

Stories Old and New: A Ming Dynasty Collection (Shuhui
Yang and Yunqin Yang)
(Online via Library)

[https://wm-
primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/9ogbnb/01COWM
_WM_ALMA51807975010003196](https://wm-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/9ogbnb/01COWM_WM_ALMA51807975010003196)

The Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgement of the Journey
to the West

Other miscellaneous readings will be distributed through
blackboard

Accommodations:

Student Accessibility Services: William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas.

Land & Slavery Acknowledgement

William & Mary acknowledges the Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of the lands our campus is on today – the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Monacan, Nansemond, Nottoway, Pamunkey, Patawomeck, Upper Mattaponi, and Rappahannock

tribes – and pay our respect to their tribal members past and present.

William & Mary acknowledges that it owned and exploited slave labor from its founding to the Civil War; and that it had failed to take a stand against segregation during the Jim Crow Era.

Mental and Physical Well Being

William & Mary recognizes that students have many different responsibilities and can face challenges that make learning difficult. There are many resources available at W&M to help students. Asking for help is a sign of courage and strength.

Please reach out to me if you or someone you know are facing problems inside or outside the classroom, and I will do my best to guide you to appropriate resources on campus. Those resources include:

--For psychological/emotional stress, there is the W&M Counseling Center (757-221-362), 240 Gooch Dr. 2nd floor, <https://www.wm.edu/offices/wellness/counselingcenter/>. Services are free and confidential.

--For physical/medical concerns, there is the W&M Health Center (757-221-4386), 240 Gooch Drive, <https://www.wm.edu/offices/wellness/healthcenter/>

--For other additional support or resources, please contact the Dean of Students by submitting a care report (757-221-2510) or by email at deanofstudents@wm.edu <https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/caresupportservices/index.php>

Important Dates

Monday, September 12: The add/drop deadline

Oct. 10-30: Midterm grading period

Monday, October 31st: Withdrawal deadline

Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1: Class Introduction

August 31: Cover the syllabus and introduce the required books

Week 2: *Divination, Bronze Inscriptions, Early Poetry*

Sept 5: **Labor day, no class**

Sept 7: Historical Introduction (Shang and Xia Dynasties)

Divinations and Inscriptions: Columbia pp. 3-11

Classics of Poetry and Documents

Columbia 61-73, Blackboard

Week 3: *Laozi, Confucius*

Sept 12: *Lao Tzu* Chapters 1 - 20

Sept 14: *The Analects* pp 45-130

Week 4: *Zhuangzi, Qu Yuan*

Sept 19: *Zhuangzi Basic Writings* sections 1, 2, 4, 6,7

Sept 21: Qu Yuan and the *Lisao*
Blackboard

Week 5: Early Historical Writing

Sept 26: Selections from Sima Qian's *The Records of the Grand Historian*
Blackboard

Sept 28: Selections from Ban Gu's *Book of the Han*,
Columbia, 312-315, Blackboard
Chen Shou's *Biography of Hua-t'o*
Columbia, 441-450

Sept 30: Reflection 1 due by 5pm

Week 6: Six Dynasties and Tang Tales

Oct 3: Tao Yuanming, *Columbia* 77-79, 235-237, 364-366

Xie Lingyun, *Columbia* 80, Blackboard

Oct 5: *An Account of the Governor of the Southern Branch*
Columbia, 517-528
The Story of Ying Ying

Columbia, 507-517

Week 7: Tang Poetry

Oct 10: Li Bai

Columbia, 93-96, 147, Blackboard

Du Fu

Columbia, 97-98, Blackboard


Oct 12: Bai Juyi

Columbia, 90-92, Blackboard

Wang Wei

Columbia, 91-92, Blackboard  and 270-279

Assorted Poets, *Columbia, 101-116, Blackboard*

October 14: Reflection 2 due by 5 pm  next week

Week 8: Song Poetry

Oct 16: Ou-yang Xiu and Others

Oct 18: Guest Lecture on Poetry and its Impact on Modern
Society

PENDING

**October 20: Reflection 3 due by 5pm (I encourage you
to use this for a project proposal)**

Week 8: Song Poetry

Oct 24: Su Shi, *Columbia, 158-160, 238-240*

Oct 26: Li Qingzhao and Zhu Shuzhen *Columbia* 165-168,
blackboard

Week 10: Yuan drama

Oct 31: *Master Tung's Western Chamber Romance*
Columbia, 643-672

Nov 2: *The Injustice to Dou E*
Columbia, 673- 713

Nov 3: Reflection 4 due by 5pm

Week 11: Novels

Nov 7: Wu Sung beats the Tiger
Columbia 581-604

Nov 9: "A Burial Mound for Flowers"
Columbia, 591-604, Blackboard

Week 12: *Journey to the West*

Nov 14: Journey to the West Part 1

Nov 16: Journey to the West Part 2

November 18: Reflection 5 due by 5pm

Week 13: *Ming Short Stories and Tales of the Strange*

Nov 21 (**Remote class**): Feng Menglong, “Jiang Xingge Reencounters his Pearl Shirt”

Stories Old and New, 9-47

Pu Songling, *Strange Tales from Make-Do Studio*
Columbia, 485-495

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Ming and Qing Drama

Nov 28: Peony Pavilion, on Blackboard

Peach Blossom Fan, on Blackboard

Biography of Actor Ma, *Columbia* 460-463

Nov 3: Dramatic Performance and its impact on Modern Culture

Week 15:

Dec 5: Student Presentations

Dec 7: Student Presentations, class wrap-up

Final Projects are due on December 15th at 10 p.m. EST