

Contemporary Chinese Literature

CHI 340

32050

Fall 2019

Class Times: TTH 2:00 pm– 3:30 pm Location: CMA 3.108

Instructor: Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Professor

Office: WCH 4.124 E-mail: yvonne@austin.utexas.edu

Office Hours: Th 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm

I. Course Description

This advanced language and literature course will read selected works by writers from contemporary China in the original language. The first ten weeks of the semester will be devoted to short stories written by the modernistic *xungen* (root-seeking) and *xianfeng* (avant-garde) schools from the 1980s, including a story by the 2012 Nobel Prize winner, Mo Yan. A close-reading approach will be adopted, with emphasis on both language and aesthetic aspects of the literary texts. Two tests will be given for materials covered in this period.

In the last five weeks or so, we will introduce some significant popular genres that have emerged within China's rapidly commercializing cultural environment since 1992, when Deng Xiaoping made his famous South China tour. These include the politically provocative blogs of Han Han, a "post-80s" generation novelist, popular icon, and race car driver, and the futuristic novelette, *Beijing zhedie* (Folding Beijing), winner of the 2016 Hugo Awards, the top international prize for science fiction and fantasy.

The course is designed to meet the dual objective of advanced Chinese language learning and deeper understanding of the dramatic cultural transformations in contemporary China through the study of literature. Class time will be divided between a). translation and linguistic analysis of the selected texts and b). discussion of the cultural and sociopolitical implications of them as works of literature. An oral report on a single text and a term paper on a broader topic will be required.

The official pre-requisite for the class is currently CHI 320L in residence or instructor's consent. Please note that since we are in the process of changing the pre-requisite to CHI 320K, students who have already completed CHI 320K at UT may consult the Academic Advisor in Asian Studies Department for a special permission to take the class.

II. Structure, Format, and Procedures

Given that students in this most advanced CHI course offered at UT tend to come with

different levels of Chinese language proficiency as well as ethnic and cultural backgrounds, you should not be overly concerned if you feel that your Chinese level is lower than some other students in the class. The actual progress students make during the semester will be taken into serious consideration in the calculation of final grades. In other words, you will be essentially competing with yourself rather than with your classmates.

Close Reading

- Specific passages from the texts will be assigned for close linguistic analysis and verbal translation in class. Typically, the Chinese text of the entire story will be posted on Canvas in the Files section, with the assigned passages placed within brackets ([]). The students are expected to prepare only those bracketed passages for translation in class. Please look up every single word that you do not already know and get its dictionary definition as well as the correct pronunciation before coming to class. Be prepared to read aloud and translate the sentences into English in a somewhat fluent fashion.
- English translations of the majority of the stories will also be posted in the Files section of Canvas. While you may consult the English translations when preparing the assigned passages at home, you should always try to understand each word and its usages, as well as the grammatical pattern of the sentences. It is unacceptable if one simply reads off from the English translation when called upon to translate in class.
- When a new story is introduced, the students are required to read the English translation of the text (whenever available) in its entirety before coming to the first period of class meetings scheduled for that story. It is important that everyone performs this task without being further reminded. The contents of the story will serve as a primary basis for class discussion and essay questions given in the tests.

Tests

- Two tests will be given to cover the materials studied in the first ten weeks, each containing two parts: translation, and essay questions. Questions for translation will only cover passages that have been closely examined in class.

Oral Report

- Every student in the class will be asked to pick a story and give an oral report in one of the designated class periods. The presenters should prepare a polished written draft of their reports for the benefit of the audience, make enough copies for everyone in class, and distribute the drafts before the presentation.

- The presentation should run between 6 and 8 minutes. The presenter is strongly encouraged to speak naturally about the subject, instead of reading from the draft in a word-by-word fashion. Everyone in the audience is expected to prepare at least two “intelligent” questions about each of the reported stories, and to actively participate in the Q&A session following the reports.

Term Paper

- A term paper of 4-5 pages, written in either Chinese or English, is due on the last day of class. A tentative paper topic should be submitted before Thanksgiving Holiday.

III. Grading Policies

Grades will be based on:

- a). Class preparation and participation in discussion (30%)
- b). Two tests (40%; 20% each)
- c) Term paper (20%)
- d). Oral report (10%)

Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade. Absences exceeding the allowed quota, i.e. three times in the entire semester, with the exception of the first week of the semester, may result in automatic dropping of the final grade by one level (e.g. from A- to B+).

IV. Course Materials

All reading materials are posted on Canvas, in the Files section.

****Documented Disability Statement:**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice), 512-410-6445 (video phone) or <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

Schedule (subject to change)

****Texts marked with “*” do not have English translations.**

Week 1	Aug. 29	Introduction	
Week 2	Sept. 3	棋王	阿城
	5	棋王	阿城
Week 3	10	棋王	阿城
	12	树王	阿城
Week 4	17	树王	阿城
	19	树王	阿城
Week 5	24	树王	阿城
	26	枯河	莫言
Week 6	Oct. 1	枯河	莫言
	3	Reports	
Week 7	8	First Test	
	10	爸爸爸	韩少功
Week 8	15	爸爸爸	韩少功
	17	爸爸爸	韩少功
Week 9	22	现实一种	余华
	24	现实一种	余华
Week 10	29	*道士塔	余秋雨
	31	*道士塔	余秋雨
Week 11	Nov. 5	Reports	
	7	Second Test	
Week 12	12	*韩寒博客选读	
	14	*韩寒博客选读	
Week 13	19	北京折疊	郝景芳
	21	北京折疊	郝景芳
Week 14	26	北京折疊	郝景芳

		28	Thanksgiving
Week15	Dec.	3	General Review
			Course Instructor Survey
		5	Term paper due