



# The Beijing Center

北京中国学中心

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## TBC 1141 Classical Chinese Literature in Translation

*Please Note: This is a sample syllabus, and the course schedule is subject to change. Students will receive the updated syllabus prior to the start of first class.*

### Course Description

This course is a survey of the classical Chinese literature from ancient time to the fall of Qing Dynasty (1911). Starting with *Classic of Odes (shih ching)*, the most ancient anthology of Chinese poetry which includes 305 poems, the classical Chinese literature bases its development on the features of a language characteristic of ideography, a philosophy combining Confucianism with Taoism and Buddhism, and a history based on centralized imperial reign and literati officialdom, as well as small scale peasant economy. The classical Chinese literature developed different forms and genres during its long history, e.g. classical poetry, lyric, aria, elegy, rhapsody, folk song, narrative verse, parallel prose, classical-language short story, vernacular short story, novel, drama, etc. Through a close study of the important classical Chinese literary works, represented by famous poets and writers such as Ch'ü Yüan, Li Po, Tu Fu, Po Chü-yi, Su Shih, Yüan Chen, Feng Meng-lung, Lo Kuan-chung, Shih Nai-an, Wu Cheng'en, Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in, Kuan Han-ch'ing, T'ang Hsien-tsu, etc., students will be able to explore their own ideas of what the wide variety of the classical Chinese literature is like, as well as, to understand the traditional Chinese culture, especially the particular philosophy, aesthetics, poetics, and mentality of the Chinese, contained in the classics. They will also find out the different styles and artistic ways used by the poets and writers in their literary creation.

### Course Outcomes

Lectures, readings, paper assignments, and discussions are designed to help you develop the skills to:

- Think aesthetically, read critically, and write and speak persuasively.
- Connect and integrate aesthetic appreciations and cultural understandings of the classical Chinese literature and grasp the styles and creative skills of different Chinese poets and writers.
- Develop the skill of literary criticism in a combination of both Western and Chinese literary theories.
- Develop the practice of reading literary texts within their peculiar Chinese social, historical, cultural and mental contexts.
- Use primary and secondary sources to construct original, complex, logical and aesthetical interpretations of the classical Chinese literary works.

### Course Requirements and Form of Assessment

During the course, at least two presentations, including a relatively detailed one about one of the four great famous novels, should be made by each student. There will be two short

papers (at least 4 pages each) based on the presentations, and one longer final paper (at least 8 pages). The short paper average will count for 45% of the final grade. The final paper will count for 40% of the final grade, and class participation will count for 15%. Late paper policy: All students are allowed one late paper among the three short papers, provided it is not more than one week late. The second late paper will result in a full grade reduction for the course. The third late paper will result in failure for the course.

## Attendance Policy

An excused absence requires a written medical excuse or written approval from the school's administration office. All other absences are considered to be unexcused. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (see below). Arriving more than 10 minutes late for any three classes will cumulatively count as one unexcused absence, while arriving 30 minutes late for any class will count as an unexcused absence.

Penalties for unexcused absences:

- 1 absence – class participation grade drops one full letter grade (example: A- to B-)
  - 2 absences – class participation grade drops two full letter grades
  - 3 absences – class participation grade drops three full letter grades
  - 4 or more absences – class participation grade is a failing grade
- Any absence, whether excused or not, will require catch-up reading.

## Academic Integrity

Please refer to the following web link for policies on academic integrity:

[Academic Integrity – The Beijing Center](#)

## Required Text

Mair, Victor H, ed.: *The Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, Columbia University Press, 2000

## References

1. Luo, Guanzhong: *Three Kingdoms*, 3 v., Moss Roberts (trans.), Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994
2. Shi, Nai'an: *Outlaws of the Marshes* (or translated as *Men of the Marshes*), 3 v., Sidney Shapiro(trans.), Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980
3. Tsao, Hsueh-Chin and Kao Ngo: *Dream of Red Mansion*, 3 v., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1978
4. Wu, Cheng'en: *Journey to the West*, 3 v., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1982~84
5. Guan, Hanqing: *Selected Plays of Guan Hanqing*, 2 v., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2001
6. Tang, Xianzu: *The Peony Pavilion*, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Pr., 1999

## Course Schedule

### Week 1

a) Class Introduction; b) Requirements of the course; c) A short introduction to the historical and philosophical background; 4) A short survey of the classical Chinese literature

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p.xvii ~ xxvi; p. 3 ~ 58; begin to read one of the four famous classical novels: *Three Kingdoms*; *The Outlaws of the Marshes*; *Journey to the West* or *The Dream of the Red Mansion*

## **Week 2**

a) Kuan Tzu, Confucius and Meng K'o; b) Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu; c) criticism

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p. 61 ~ 96

## **Week 3**

a) Classical Poetry before T'ang Dynasty: Classic of Odes; b) Classical Poetry before T'ang Dynasty: Juan Chi, T'ao Ch'ien, etc.; c) Li Po

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p. 97 ~ 116

## **Week 4**

a) Meng Hao-jan, Wang Wei, etc.; b) Tu Fu; c) Meng Chiao, Han Yü, etc.;

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p. 116 ~ 191

## **Week 5**

a) Classical Poetry after T'ang Dynasty: Yang Wan-li, Lu Yu, etc.; b) Lyrics and Arias

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p. 192 ~ 297

## **Week 6**

a) Elegies and Rhapsodies; b) Folk and Folklike Songs, Ballads, and Narrative Verse

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p. 301 ~ 467

## **Week 7**

Prose: Documents, History, Moral Lessons, Parallel Prose, Letters and Prefaces and Postfaces; Discourses, Essays, and Sketches; Travelogues, and Scenic Descriptions.

Miscellanea; and Biographies, Autobiographies, and Memoirs

**Reading assignments:** Textbook, p. 471 ~ 565; p. 643 ~ 723

## **Week 8**

a) Rhetorical Persuasions and Allegories; Anecdotal Fiction; Tales of the Strange;

Classical-Language Short Stories; c) Vernacular Short Stories; b) Chinese Drama

**Reading assignments:** Finish reading of *Three Kingdoms* or Chapter 95 for those who do not choose to read the whole novel for their presentation

## **Week 9**

*Three Kingdoms*

**Reading assignments:** Finish reading of *The Outlaws of the Marshes* or textbook p. 581 ~ 591 for those who do not choose to read the whole novel for their presentation

## **Week 10**

*Outlaws of the Marshes*

**Reading assignments:** Finish reading of *The Dream of the Red Mansion* or textbook p. 591 ~ 604 for those who do not choose to read the whole novel for their presentation

## **Week 11**

*The Dream of the Red Mansion*

**Reading assignments:** Finish reading *Journey to the West* or textbook p. 566 ~ 580 for those who do not choose to read the whole novel for their presentation.

**Week 12**

*Journey to the West*

**Week 13**

A Summary of the Classical Chinese Literature

FINAL PAPER