

TRADITIONAL CHINESE LITERATURE

Monday morning session: Philosophy and Poetry

The first two selections for this session provide a window into the Confucian tradition (*The Analects*) and the early philosophical Daoist tradition (the *Zhuangzi* or *Chuang Tzu*). Confucianism and Daoism are the most important indigenous Chinese and set the philosophical groundwork for our investigations of traditional Chinese literature. When you read these excerpts, try to locate similarities and differences between the two traditions.

- What virtues are discussed? How are they to be cultivated?
- What is the relationship between individual and society? Individual and nature? Society and nature?
- What is the role of the literati or the intellectual?

Confucianism and Daoism can be related to two different literary theories: 1) writing serves society and 2) writing serves as self-expression. When reading our selections, try to identify which type of writing is taking place.

In our poetry, look for images of nature, love, and friendship and how they may reflect the author's views about society. Think about Confucianism and Daoism and how these traditions may be reflected in the poetry. Think about connections between the poets—can we see evidence of earlier poetry influencing later poetry? Can we identify common symbols, allusions, or themes?

- Excerpts from Confucius' *The Analects*. In DeBary, William Theodore, et al. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. p. 24-30.
- Excerpts from *Chuang Tzu*. In Watson, Burton, trans. *Chuang-tzu: Basic Writings* New York: Columbia University Press, 1964. p.40-47.
- Excerpts from *Classic of Odes*. In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 121-123 (*The Great Preface*), 149-152.
- "No. 3 Green Beyond Green" from *Nineteen Ancient Poems*. In Wai-lim Yip, ed. & trans. *Chinese Poetry: An Anthology of Major Modes and Genres*. Duke UP, 1997. p. 70-1.
- T'AO Ch'ien (TAO Qian or TAO Yuanming), "The Peach Blossom Spring." In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 578-580.
- LI Po (LI Bo), "Bring the Wine." In *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. p. 207-8.
- LI Po, "Autumn Cove." In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 204.
- LI Po, "On Visiting Taoist Recluse of Tai-T'ien-Shan and Not Finding Him." In Wai-lim Yip, ed. & trans. *Chinese Poetry: An Anthology of Major Modes and Genres*. Duke UP, 1997. p. 183.
- WANG Wei, "Autumn Dusk at a Mountain Lodge." In Wai-lim Yip, ed. & trans. *Chinese Poetry: An Anthology of Major Modes and Genres*. Duke UP, 1997. p. 188.
- WANG Wei, "Deer Fence." In Owen, Stephen. *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York: Norton, 1996. p. 393.
- WANG Wei, "Lodge in the Bamboo." In Owen, Stephen. *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York: Norton, 1996. p. 395.

- TU Fu (DU Fu), “Climbing on the Double Ninth Day.” In Wai-lim Yip, ed. & trans. *Chinese Poetry: An Anthology of Major Modes and Genres*. Duke UP, 1997. p. 210-11.
- DU Fu, “The View in Spring.” In Owen, Stephen. *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York: Norton, 1996. p. 420.
- LIU Tsung-yüan (LIU Zongyuan), “River Snow.” In *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. p. 282.
- LI He, “Bring in the Wine.” In Owen, Stephen. *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York: Norton, 1996. p. 289.
- SU Dongpo, Tune: “Charms of Nian-nu: Meditation on the Past at Red Cliff.” In Owen, Stephen. *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York: Norton, 1996. p. 579-80.
- LI Qingzhao, “A Long Melancholy Tune (Autumn Sorrow) Despair.” In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 339-40.
- MA Zhiyuan, Tunes: “Heaven Pure Sand.” In Owen, Stephen. *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York: Norton, 1996. p. 740.

Monday afternoon session: Prose Narrative

Chinese prose and fiction have their origin in dynastic histories, ghost stories, and oral storytelling. Authors hooked readers (or listeners) with compelling characters and exciting plots, while also conveying moral lessons. These hooks appear to have been highly successful, as many of the stories on this list are more widely read and viewed today than ever. A casual jaunt through contemporary Chinese television at almost any time of day will bring remakes of Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Water Margin, or, most important, Journey to the West. Further considered in the context of the wide variety video-game reconfigurations, these texts have rather incredible influence and staying power.

One of the more interesting things in these stories is the glimpse into views about women in pre-modern China. Pay attention to the role of women, of men, and the nature of relationships as represented in all of these stories, but in Six Chapters of a Floating Life in particular.

As you read, think about the following:

- *In what ways do the characters represent Confucian values? Non-Confucian values? How are these values (and the decisions they lead to) rewarded and punished?*
- Anonymous, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapters 45 and 46. In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 947-965.
- Attributed to WU Ch'eng-en, *The Journey to the West*, Chapter 7. In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 966-980.
- Anonymous, "Wu Sung Fights the Tiger" from *Water Margin*, with Commentary by CHIN Sheng-t'an. In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 997-1006.
- SHEN Fu, *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, Chapters 1 and 3. In Mair, Victor. *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 709-746.

MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE

Tuesday morning session: May Fourth Tradition and Alternative Visions

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Chinese intellectuals were active in discussions of how to save China from its semicolonial state. Chinese introspection engaged questions of balancing Chinese tradition vs. Westernization, defining Chinese “essence,” and creating a strong nation. The creation of new literary forms and styles was one aspect of this exploration. Lu Xun’s “Preface” to Call to Arms served literally as a call to arms for Chinese youth of the May Fourth Movement (1919). “A Madman’s Diary” was the first work of fiction to be published in vernacular language, as opposed to classical Chinese. The strength of its message lies in part in the contrast between the stilted, classical language of the story’s introduction and the vivid, colloquial voice of the diary entries. Writings by Lu Xun, Ding Ling, and Shen Congwen fall within the May Fourth tradition, which is the canonical fiction of this period. The stories by Zhang Ailing and Shi Zhicun fall outside of this tradition—Zhang Ailing proudly labels herself a “petty urbanite” and is a popular writer, while Shi Zhicun is a so-called New Perceptionist, often labeled “decadent” by its political critics. Note the clear relationship between Dai Wangshu’s poem and Shi Zhicun’s story. The contrasts between May Fourth and alternative visions highlight the debates between art for art’s sake and art for humanity’s sake—a continuation of “writing serves as self-expression” vs. “writing serves society.”

As you read, think about the following:

- *Do Lu Xun’s writings contain a sense of hope? Or a sense of futility?*
 - *What are the links between Dai Wangshu’s poem and Shi Zhicun’s story?*
 - *How are women (and gender roles) represented in these stories? What are similarities and differences from pre-modern works?*
 - *Are there consistent messages expressed in the stories by Lu Xun, Ding Ling, and Shen Congwen? If so, what? Are there differences, as well?*
 - *In what ways are the stories of Zhang Ailing and Shi Zhicun different than works in the May Fourth tradition?*
 - *Do we see evidence of Confucianism or Daoism in these stories? Do we see continuities between these stories and any of the pre-modern works?*
- LU Xun, “Preface to *A Call to Arms*.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 3-6.
 - LU Xun, “A Madman’s Diary.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 7-15.
 - LU Xun, “Medicine.” In Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, trans. *The Complete Stories of Lu Xun*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1981. p. 19-27.
 - SHEN Congwen, “Xiaoxiao.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 97-110.
 - DING Ling, “When I was in Xia Village.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 143-158.
 - ZHANG Ailing, “Sealed Off.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 188-197.
 - DAI Wangshu, “Rainy Alley.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 513-14.
 - SHI Zhicun, “One Evening in the Rainy Season.” In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 126-35.

Tuesday afternoon session: Post-Mao Literature

With the end of the Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong's death in 1976, there was an outpouring of new literature. "Wound" literature appeared first, detailing the abuses suffered at the hands of the Red Guards and the Gang of Four. Bei Dao rose to prominence during the 1976 Democracy Wall movement and now lives in exile. In the early eighties, "root-searching" literature emerged to reflect on Chinese culture and the problems of modern China. Avant-garde or Experimental authors also explored new writing techniques. They experimented with plot, time, and voice in often-shocking stories characterized by violence, death, and decay. During the post-Mao period, writers were once more able to address issues of sexuality and subjectivity. They were able to admit to contact with the West and influence by Western literature, thus promoting new genres, styles, and themes.

As you read, think about the following:

- Do these stories express any ideologies? Are there any echoes of Confucianism? Daoism? Maoism? Others?
 - Do you find any echoes of Lu Xun? Or is there a rejection of his tradition?
 - In what ways do these stories explore subjectivity and individuality?
 - Several of these stories (and poems) deal with "gaps"—in meanings, words, memories, reality vs. dreams. What do these gaps represent? How do they relate to the meaning of the works?
- LU Xinhua, "The Wounded." In Dernberger, Robert F., et al. *The Chinese: Adapting the Past, Building the Future*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1986. p. 591-604.
 - BEI Dao, "Perfect," "Untitled," and "Landscape over Zero." In Hinton, David and Yanbing Chen, translators, *Landscape Over Zero*. New York: New Directions, 1999. p. 11, 69, 73.
 - HAN Shaogong, "Homecoming?" In Kwok-Kan Tam, et al. ed., *A Place of One's Own: Stories of Self in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 126-142. [R, 131]
 - ZHANG Jie "Love Must Not Be Forgotten." In Yang, Gladys, translator, *Love Must Not Be Forgotten*. San Francisco: China Books and Periodicals, Inc., 1986. p. 1-13.
 - CAN Xue, "Hut on the Mountain." In Lau, Joseph S. M. and Howard Goldblatt, eds. *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p. 383-86.
 - SHI Tiesheng, "First Person." In Goldblatt, Howard, ed. *Chairman Mao Would not be Amused: Fiction from Today's China*. New York: Grove Press, 1995. p. 1-17.
 - GE Fei, "Remembering Mr. Wu You." In Goldblatt, Howard, ed. *Chairman Mao Would not be Amused: Fiction from Today's China*. New York: Grove Press, 1995. p. 236-243.
 - ZHAI Yongming, "Woman." In Yeh, Michelle, ed. *Anthology of Modern Chinese Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. p. 187-189
 - YAN Li, "Give it Back to Me." In Yeh, Michelle, ed. *Anthology of Modern Chinese Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. p. 195
 - YANG Lian, "Dunhuang." In Yeh, Michelle, ed. *Anthology of Modern Chinese Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. p. 218-219.