The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film
Rutgers University, Spring 2015

Instructor:
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Office Hours:

Class Hours and Classroom:

Course description:
This course examines literature and film on modern and contemporary Chinese cities from the early twentieth century to the present. By discussing urban narrative structures and cinematic imaginations as evidenced in a dozen of key literary and filmic texts, this class aims to offer a new understanding of Chinese modernity as marked by its unique urban sensibilities and configurations. Readings of marginal writing, popular culture, and underground cinemas are also included in the class. The main issues to be discussed are urban awareness, historical consciousness, individual/collective memories, and nationalist perceptions regarding the old and new capital Beijing, the semi-colonial metropolis Shanghai and its remnants, the “raped” and traumatized Nanjing, the “abandoned” capital Xi’an, the British Crown Colony Hong Kong, and Taipei under Japanese colonial rule and the subsequent Nationalist Party’s dominance.

Requirements and Grading:
1) Attendance, Participation, Sakai posting and Oral presentation (40%): Since this class emphasizes focused discussions of each week’s readings, it is essential that students come to class having read all of the assigned materials carefully and prepared to engage actively in the discussion. Students should bring a copy of each week’s readings. Regular attendance is thus expected. If an absence is unavoidable, the student must consult with the instructor beforehand and make-up work will be assigned.

For each week’s readings, students will be designated to post a reading response (approximately 300-400 words) by midnight three days before each session starts. These responses should begin with a summary of the key points of the assigned theoretical and/or critical texts and comment on the relevance or usefulness of reading the literary works within the given theoretical framework. These responses may include ideas, reflections and questions that arise during the reading of the texts. They may also address larger issues or make comparison with other readings. Others are required to have read each week’s postings before class in order to participate in group discussion. Those assigned to oral presentations will also be responsible for presenting on that week’s readings at the beginning of class. The 10-minute oral presentation should summarize and elaborate on the points made in the
Sakai posting. To post a response, log into the Sakai site (https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal), choose the page for this class, click on “Discussion and Private Messages” and then click on “Class Discussions” for the relevant week.

2) Two short papers (30%): Two papers of 4 pages each are due during Week 7 and Week 11 in class. These papers should be understood as “think papers,” in which students have the opportunity to respond to the readings of a particular week in depth. These “think papers” should demonstrate a good understanding of the ideas and issues in the theoretical and critical texts and show original and careful reflection of these issues. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor about their topic in advance. Students must retain a copy of each paper.

3) Final paper (30%): 8-10 pages (double-spaced)

Learning Outcome Goals for the Course:
This course will introduce students to major Chinese cities; it will teach students to develop critical approaches to urban texts, and to formulate their own ideas to produce an academic paper about Chinese urban imagination and cultural representation.

Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:
• Acquire in-depth knowledge of Chinese literature in translation and critical scholarships in a major field of modern and contemporary Chinese literature and culture
• Analyze and interpret major texts and issues concerning Chinese urban imagination and relate them to other areas in the humanities following a comparative and interdisciplinary approach

Assessment Plan:
The assessment methods for this course are designed to evaluate student mastery of the course goals. The assignments require students to read, interpret and discuss texts related to topics and issues in Chinese urban literature, film, and culture, related scholarship, and cultural theory. Upon completion of the course, students will have learned analytical and rhetoric skills through weekly discussions of the texts and issues, as well as through individual oral presentation to the class. Students will also be able to construct a thesis argument and build support with examples through two short and one long analytical and research papers.

Academic Integrity:
Under no circumstance will behaviors that violate academic integrity be tolerated. These behaviors include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying fellow students access to information or material, helping others to violate academic integrity, or purchasing essays online or otherwise. All violations will automatically receive no grade and be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Please note that, in the case
of plagiarism, ignorance of conventions of attribution and citation is not considered a mitigating circumstance.

**Students with disabilities:**
It is the policy of Rutgers to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability and wish to request accommodations to complete your course requirements, please contact the Office of Disability Services and ask to speak with a Coordinator (848-445-6800 or dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu) about accommodations.

**Required Course Materials:**
There are two types of reading material: books to be purchased and individual articles and book chapters available for download at the course website. Students must bring a hard copy of the readings assigned for the particular class.

A) E-files are available on Sakai, under “Resources.”
B) The following text books are available at the Rutgers University Bookstore and on reserve at the Alexander Library:

C) Recommended books on literary and cultural theory:


**Week 1. Introduction and Organization:**
Urban Imaginations, Modern Experiences, and Historical Memories in Chinese Literature and Film

**Film screening:** Ling Zifeng 凌子风, *Camel Xiangzi 骆驼祥子*
(adopted from Lao She 老舍, *Rickshaw: The Novel of Lo-t’o Hsiang Tzu 骆驼祥子*)

**Week 2. Man, Metropolis, and Beijing Modern**


• Lydia H. Liu 刘禾, “*Homo Economicus and the Question of Novelistic Realism*” (*Translingual Practice*), 103-127.


**clips from TV series:** *Four Generations under One Roof* 四世同堂

**Week 3. A One-Way Journey from Beijing to Shanghai: The Sentimental and Unsentimental Educations**


Week 4. In the Enchanting and Disenchanting World

Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang) 张爱玲, Love in a Fallen City 倾城之恋,
Red Rose, White Rose 红玫瑰与白玫瑰,


** Film clips: Stanley Kwan 关锦鹏, Red Rose, White Rose
(adopted from Zhang Ailing’s Red Rose, White Rose 红玫瑰，白玫瑰)

Week 5. The Rape of Nanjing: Trauma, Romance, and Nostalgia

Ye Zhaoyan 叶兆言, Nanjing, 1937 一九三七年的爱情, Trans. Michael Berry.


** Film clips: Yim Ho 严浩, Pavilion of Women 庭院里的女人 (adopted from Pearl S. Buck’s Pavilion of Women)
Chuan Lu 陆川, City of Life and Death 南京！南京！

Week 6. Xi’an: Urban Imagination and Historical Memory

Jia Pingwa 贾平凹, Old Xi’an 老西安: Evening Glow of an Imperial City,


**Week 7. Nostalgia, Nightmare, and Ghost among Cities: Taipei, Beijing, and Beyond**


** Film screening: Wu Yigong 吴贻弓, *Memories of Peking* 城南旧事 (adopted from Lin Hai-yan's 林海音 *Memories of Peking: South Side Stories*)

**Week 8. Beijing, Socialist Sunshine or Urban Darkness?**

- David Der-wei Wang 王德威, “Patriotism as a Problematic”, Fictional Realism, 159-167.

Week 9. Alternative Enlightenment and Decadence: Body, Eroticism, and Politics

Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang) 张爱玲, Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film, 色，戒 Pantheon, 2007.

- Haiyan Lee, "Enemy under My Skin: Eileen Chang’s 'Lust, Caution' and the Politics of Transcendence,” PMLA 125, 3 (May, 2010), 640-656.

** Film clips: Ang Lee 李安, Lust, Caution 色，戒

Week 10. Silence, Articulation, and Repressed Memory in Taipei: Approaching to Our Fin-de-Siècle Urban Experiences


** Film clips: **Tsai Ming-liang 蔡明亮, *Vive L'Amour* 爱情万岁
Edward Yang 杨德昌, *Bright Summer Day*

**Week 11. Identity Crisis and Formation in Hong Kong**

Xi Xi 西西, *Marvel of a Floating City* 浮城志异, “The Story of Fertile Town” 肥土镇的故事


** Film clips: **Stanley Kwan 关锦鹏, *Rouge* 胭脂扣
John Woo 吴宇森, *A Better Tomorrow* 英雄本色
Fruit Chen 陈果, *Made in Hong Kong* 香港制造
Wong Kar-wai 王家卫, *In the Mood for Love* 花样年华

**Week 12. Between Petits Récits and Grand Narratives: Life and Death in the 20th-Century Shanghai**


** Film screening: **Stanley Kwan 关锦鹏, *Song of Everlasting Sorrow* 长恨歌


**Film clips: Lou Ye 娄烨, Suzhou River 苏州河**

**Week 13. The Use and Abuse of Beijing Daily Space**

Wang Shuo 王朔, The Wild Beast 动物凶猛

**Film screening: Jiang Wen 姜文, In the Heat of the Sun 阳光灿烂的日子(adopted from Wang Shuo’s 王朔 The Wild Beast 动物凶猛)**


**Film clips: Wang Xiaoshuai 王小帅, Beijing Bicycle 北京自行车**

Zhang Nuanxin 张暖忻, Good Morning, Beijing 北京你早
Zhang Yimou 张艺谋, Keep Cool 有话好好说
Zhang Yuan 张元, Beijing Bastards 北京杂种
Zhang Yang 张扬, Shower 洗澡

**Week 14. Thoughts on the city seminar; final presentations of your paper projects**

Jia Zhangke 贾樟柯, The World 世界

