

ELC250.xxxx Chinese Literature in English Translation  
INSTRUCTOR'S\_NAME <instructor's\_email@lagcc.cuny.edu>  
<http://faculty.lagcc.cuny.edu/instructor>  
SEMESTER

### **Instructor's Information**

**Instructor:** INSTRUCTOR'S\_NAME, email, phone number

**Class Schedule:** xxx (Room: xxxx) & xxx (Room: xxxx)

**Prerequisites:** ENC/ENG101

<b>Course goals and objectives</b>
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### **Catalog Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to Chinese literature in English translation. Students will read and discuss selected philosophical and historical writings, poetry, prose fiction, and drama from the Zhou Dynasty to the modern period, including Tang poems, Yuan plays, and the modern novel. Thematic and stylistic variety of the various genres will be explored. Knowledge of the Chinese language is not required.

**Section Description:** By the end of the semester, students are expected to be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the major Chinese literary works from the different time periods (Zhou Dynasty through the Republican period, to the contemporary period) and how the works reflect the characteristics of their authors, times, places, and cultural values;
2. understand how political, philosophical and artistic traditions affect different genres of Chinese literature;
3. develop critical skills in reading literary works while analyzing, evaluating, and discussing them independently and comparatively;
4. write analytically and lucidly about the literary texts in both formal and informal assignments, such as quizzes, reader responses journals, and term papers with bibliographies; and
5. demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with peers in presentations and critical discussions, to develop collective review on Chinese literary works.

<b>Flexible Core Objectives: World Cultures and Global Issues</b>
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**The course bears 3 credits that count as Flexible Core (World Cultures and Global Issues) of the CUNY's general education curriculum (Pathways).**

In this course students will:

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.  
Students are required to interpret literary texts translated from Chinese into English holistically, in light of the historical, philosophical and political backgrounds of the time when the literary works were written. Reading translated literature requires integrative analyses of information collected from various sources such as texts, cultural knowledge, historical facts, political circumstances, geographic facts, and the writers' belief. The class exercises are designed to demonstrate their ability to synthesize and analyze information and to achieve integration of information from varieties of sources through lectures, discussions, and reflective essay writing.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.  
The class exercises focus on the development of students' analytical skills with which they read, find patterns and understand the historical and political periods in which the pieces of Chinese literature were composed. Students are expected to make systematic and critical analysis of different works of

Chinese literature, and coherently and logically present writers' perspectives with evidence from the primary texts as well as outside sources.

- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.  
Students are expected to present their ability to make cogent arguments on selected topics of the Chinese literature in the final paper and in the final presentation at the end of the semester. Students are required to cite appropriate evidence appropriately to support conclusions.
- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures and global issues.  
Through the lecture and discussion during the class, students are expected to become familiar with Chinese culture, the history of China, Chinese art, and Chinese philosophy. Methodologies and theories drawn from anthropology, history, sociology, and political science, are discussed with respect to the literary texts.
- Analyze culture, globalization, or global cultural diversity, and describe an event or process from more than one point of view.  
Students are encouraged to analyze the literary works from their own cultural perspective and also from the Chinese perspective, with which they become familiar from class exercises and discussions. Students are introduced to elements of Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist ideas in various genres of Chinese literature. The influence of different perspectives in societies on contemporary global issues will be discussed.
- Analyze the historical development of one or more non-U.S. societies.  
The major themes in Chinese literature, such as family, class, social injustices, re-evaluation of Confucian traditions, Western impacts, reformation and revolution, etc. are discussed throughout the class. Students are encouraged to interpret these socio-cultural changes in light of the contemporary life in the U.S. and in China.

### **Textbook, grading, and other class logistics**

**Textbook:** The following textbook is required for this class.

The Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature. Paperback, 2000, by Victor H. Mair (Editor), New York: Columbia University Press.  
ISBN-13: 978-0231119993, ISBN-10: 0231119992

#### Bi-Weekly Reading Response: 20%

Students will be asked to interpret the literature in relation to significant cultural, historical, and political context, and/or author's personal background information when the work was written. They will be required to examine the content, ideas and techniques. In addition, students will be required to make personal response to the literature, bringing in their own world perspectives. They can also compare their values with the author's, make comments on the plot, characters, settings, and so on. These essays will be collected every two weeks. Based on the progress of the semester, students will have an opportunity to pick Chinese literature pieces in poetry, drama, novel or non-fiction for these journals.

#### Midterm Exam: 25%

A take home exam is given around the 7<sup>th</sup> week, which covers works from the ancient era to early Qing Dynasty. Students are required to demonstrate their understanding of characteristics of different eras and how Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist ideas are represented in poems and verses.

#### Oral Presentations: 10%

As part of the process of preparing the final paper, students are required to make oral presentations of an outline of their work, to report on the research they have conducted, and to discuss how they formulate their thesis for the paper.

### Final Paper: 30%

This paper will be an interpretive/critique essay on an author, a literary genre or a historical period in Chinese literature. Emphasis is placed on how an individual writer or a certain art form in writing reflects the social, cultural and political context of the time that it was written.

The analytical methods include, but are not limited to, analyzing the language and literary techniques, and/or story elements found in the work of literature with respect to one or more of the following: 1) literary conventions; 2) other works of Chinese or world literature (either fiction or nonfiction), art, film, and/or music; 3) Chinese history of either the era the work was produced in, or earlier or later eras; 4) world history of either the era the work was produced in, or earlier or later eras of world history; 5) the student's own life experiences. Possible paper topics will be discussed in class.

### Class Participation: (15%)

Participation includes taking an active part in class discussions, attendance, and arriving to class on time. Absences and lateness will affect the student's participation grade.

CATEGORY	%
5 reader response journals at 4% each. Due in week 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10.	20%
Take home midterm Exam. Due in week 7.	25%
In-class presentation (Students report on their preparation and progress of the final papers.)	10%
Final paper (6 to 8 pages)	30%
Class participation	15%
TOTAL	100%

• Grade distributions: A: 95-100%, A-: 90-94%, B+: 86-89%, B: 83-85%, B-: 80-82%, C+: 76-79%, C: 73-75%, C-: 70-72%, D+: 66-69%, D: 63-65%, D-: 60-62%, F: -59%,

WU: Unofficial withdraw ( $\approx$ F), W: Withdraw

### Weekly Schedule

Week 1	- Course introduction - Overview of the Chinese literary tradition - Zhou Dynasty: Confucian classics (selections from the "Book of Songs" and "Spring and Autumn Annals")
Week 2	- Han Dynasty: Biographies by Sima Qian (selections) - Period of Division: Poetry of the recluse (selected verse of Tao Qian and excerpts from Han-shan's "Cold Mountain Poems") - Reader response # 1 due [4% of course grade]
Week 3	- Tang Dynasty: The Golden Age of Chinese Poetry (selections by Wang Wei, Li Bo, Du Fu, Bo Ju-yi, and Li Shang-yin). Poetry as artistic and emotional expression.

	- Song Dynasty: Poems in irregular meter (selections by Li Yu and the premier female poet Li Qingzhao). Women in society.
Week 4	- Yuan Dynasty: The Golden Age of Chinese Drama (Kang Jin-chi's "Li Kui Carries Thorns" and Ma Zhi-yuan's "Autumn in the Palace of Han"). Literature as social protest. - A Great Classical Novel from the Yuan Dynasty: Shi Nai-an and Luo Guan-zhong's "The Men of the Marshes" (an excerpt titled "The Plot against the Birthday Convoy") – The Boom of Colloquial Chinese Writing. - Reader response # 2 due [4%]
Week 5	- A Ming novel and hilarious Buddhist allegory: Wu Cheng-en's "Journey to the West" (an excerpt titled "The Temptation of Saint Pigsy"). The sacred versus the vulgar. - A masterpiece of Ming drama: Tang Xian-zu's "Peony Pavilion" (an excerpt). A love story in the imperial society.
Week 6	- Qing lyrics (selections by Chen Zi-long and Nara Singde) - Qing poetry (selected verse of Yuan Mei) - Tales of marvels from the Qing Dynasty (selections by Pu Song-ling, Yuan Mei, and Li Ru-zhen). . Ghost stories as a form of utopian escape. - Reader response # 3 due [4%]
Week 7	- A Great Classical Novel from the Qing Dynasty: Cao Xue-qin's "Red Chamber Dream" (an excerpt titled "How To Be Rid of a Rival"). Decline of the riches and decay of society. - Take home midterm due [25%]
Week 8	- A classic autobiographical novel from the Qing Dynasty: Shen Fu's "Six Records of a Floating Life." - Reader response # 4 due [4%]
Week 9	- The modern short story: Lu Xun's "Benediction" and Mao Dun's "Spring Silkworms" - The modern novel: Ba Jin's "Family" (excerpts). The dawn of the republic democracy. China opening to the Western world.
Week 10	- Modern drama: Yao Xin-nong's "The Malice of Empire" (excerpt) and Lao She's "Teahouse." Post-imperial literature. The depiction of everyday life. - Reader response # 5 due [4%] - Student presentations on final paper
Week 11	- The new verse (selections by Xu Zhi-mo, Wen Yi-duo, Ai Qing, and Feng Zhi). 20 <sup>th</sup> century Chinese literature. Influence of Western literary movements. - New poets of Taiwan (selections by Chou Meng Tieh, Lo Fu, Shang Ch'in, Ya Hsien, Yip Wai-lim, and Yeh Shan). Literature of the other continent. - Student presentations on final paper
Week 12	- Works of Gao Xin-jian and Mo Yan, Nobel Prize of Literature winners. Chinese literature in the global arena. - Student presentations on final paper
Week 13	- Final paper due [30%]

**Valuing LaGuardia's Diversity:** As a college community, we represent a world of perspectives on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and nationality. Everyone is expected to adhere to the college's policies on diversity.

**Rules for Personal Conduct:** You are expected to obey the rules and regulations of the College about conduct. Disorderly or indecent behavior is not appropriate in a college setting. It is a violation of college rules and is not acceptable.

**The student attendance policy:** As stated in the college catalog: "Attendance in class is a requirement and will be considered in the evaluation of student performance. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance. The maximum number of unexcused absences is limited to 15% of the number of class hours. Note: Absences are counted from the first day of class even if they are a result of late registration or change of program" (117).

**The academic dishonesty policy:** As stated in the catalog: "Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties ranging from a grade of 'F' on a given test, research paper or assignment, to an 'F' in the course or suspension or expulsion from the College. Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Cheating, • Plagiarism, • Internet Plagiarism, • Obtaining Unfair Advantages
- Falsification of Records and Official Documents, • Misconduct in Internships (117)

**Policy on assigning the grade of Incomplete:** As stated in the college catalogue: "The Incomplete grade may be awarded to students who have not completed all of the required course work but for whom there is a reasonable expectation of satisfactory completion. A student who is otherwise in good standing in a course defined as complying with the college attendance policy and maintaining a passing average but who has not completed at most two major assignments or examinations by the end of the course may request an incomplete grade. To be eligible, such a student must provide, before the instructor submits grades for the course, a documented reason, satisfactory to the instructor, for not having completed the assignment on time. Instructors giving IN grades must inform students in writing of the conditions under which they may receive passing grades. Departments may designate certain courses in which no incomplete grades may be awarded." (120).

**Declaration of pluralism:** The Education and Language Acquisition Department embraces diversity. We respect each other regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability and social class. For detailed information regarding the policy, please refer to Student Handbook 2011-2012 (p.89).