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The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film
Rutgers University, Spring 2017

Instructor:

Professor Weijie SONG

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Office Hours: 11:30am-12:30pm, Thursday or by appointment

Class Hours and Classroom: 4:30-7:30pm, Tuesday, HH B4

Course description:

This course examines literature and film on modern and contemporary Chinese cities from the late nineteenth 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 literary modernity, urban awareness, historical consciousness, individual/collective memories, and nationalist perceptions regarding the old and new capital, Beijing; the semi-colonial metropolis and socialist Shanghai and its remnants; the traumatized and aloof Nanjing; the abandoned capital, Xi'an; Taipei under Japanese colonial rule and the subsequent Nationalist Party's dominance; and Hong Kong from a British Crown Colony to a Special Administrative Region of China.

Requirements and Grading:

1) Attendance/Participation (15%), weekly posting on Sakai (25%) and Oral presentation (20%)

- 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 are encouraged to 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 selected week's readings, students will be designated to post a reading response (approximately 300 words for graduate students, 200 words for undergraduate students) by 10:30pm, Sunday, two days two days before each session starts. These responses should begin with a summary of the key points of the assigned texts and include ideas, reflections and questions that arise during the reading of the texts. Those assigned to oral presentations will also be responsible for presenting on that week's readings at the beginning of class.

- The oral presentation (7-10 minutes for graduate students, 5 minutes for undergraduate students) 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) Final paper (40%): 7-10 pages (double-spaced)

- The 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.

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.