

Fall 2019

Special Topics in East Asian Languages and Cultures (16:217:598)

Tuesday 9:50 am-12:50 pm

Location: HC-S126

Instructor: Peng Liu

Course Description

This graduate seminar concentrates on various strange beings, places, and relationships that are represented in works written in premodern China and are usually categorized as the supernatural by modern readers. Presenting students with a picture different from the rational world, we ask the following questions: How does the supernatural constitute the human experience? In what sense is the supernatural real to us? And how does our view of the supernatural resemble or conflict with views established in premodern society? This seminar deals with these questions in hopes of deepening the understanding of the supernatural in contrast to our material reality.

We will use English translations of ancient geographical classics, medieval miracle tales, and late imperial vernacular plays as primary readings. These primary sources will familiarize students with the essentials of the supernatural world in premodern China. They concern a wide variety of themes, including strange animals, ghosts, demons, Buddhist deities, and Daoist immortals. We will also read relevant articles and book chapters written by scholars in the fields of literary studies, religious studies, and history. These secondary readings will help students discover the forces that propelled the writing and circulation of supernatural narratives in China.

Requirements and Grades:

1. Attendance and class participation – 20%
2. Presentation – 20 %
3. Canvas postings – 15%
4. Midterm paper (6–8 pages) – 20%
5. Final research paper (12–15 pages) – 25%

Attendance and class participation: All students are expected to read assigned materials before class and participate actively in classroom discussions.

Presentation: Each student should make a presentation for each session. The presentation should include 1) the summary of the reading materials; 2) major issues that you think important and could lead to fruitful discussions; 3) what do the materials inform us of the Chinese culture, especially the culture of the strange.

Canvas postings: Each student should write one or two paragraphs that reflect your own understanding of the readings. Postings should be posted on Canvas **by noon Monday**.

Midterm paper: Each student should write a well-crafted and clearly argued midterm essay based on the text(s) you choose. It should present a clear argument and demonstrate your skill of close reading. You may engage relevant theoretical works if you think they are helpful to your analysis. The essay will be due at the beginning of class on the due date. You should include footnotes and a bibliography according to the *MLA Style Manual* or *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Final research paper: For the final paper, students should choose one or two primary sources, different from the texts you choose for your midterm paper. You are required to dissect the text(s) more thoroughly in order to present an original 12–15 page textual analysis. It should contain a clear argument and sufficient evidence to support your argument. Please include footnotes and a bibliography according to the *MLA Style Manual* or *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Instructor's Contact Information

Peng Liu

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Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30 pm or by appointment

Statement on Academic Integrity

You are expected to demonstrate integrity in your academic endeavors. Your paper should be your own original work. If you want to use words or ideas from other sources, make sure you identified the original sources and provide footnotes or parentheses. If you cite from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short, please place it in quotation marks; if you quote a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. Any work that has been submitted for credit in another course is generally not allowed to be submitted in this course unless you have the permission from your instructor.

Students with Disabilities

Students with any physical, psychological, or learning disability are encouraged to talk to your instructor after class or during office hours.

Required Texts:

Tang Xianzu, *The Peony Pavilion*, translated by Cyril Birch, Indiana University Press, 2002.

The Monkey and the Monk, translated by Anthony Yu, The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Pu Songling, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, translated and edited by John Minford, Penguin, 2006.

Wilt L. Idema, *The White Snake and Her Son: A Translation of the Precious Scroll of Thunder Peak, with Related Texts*, Hackett, 2009.

Schedule

Week 1 (9/3), Introduction

I. Strange Places and Animals

Week 2 (9/10), Outlandish Places and Strange Animals

Primary:

The Classic of Mountains and Seas (Penguin, 1999), 105–196.

Secondary:

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, translated by Richard Howard (Cornell University Press, 1975), 24–40.

Richard E. Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (University of California Press, 2002), 1–79.

Week 3 (9/17), Fox Tales in China

Primary:

Pu Songling, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, 34–36, 102–103, 109–111, 143–149, 152–167, 235–237, 254–257, 261–263, 320–323, 366–369, 370–372.

Secondary:

Xiaofei Kang, *The Cult of the Fox: Power, Gender, and Popular Religion in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Columbia University Press, 2006), 14–71.

Rania Huntington, *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 34–86, 171–223.

Week 4 (9/24), The Legend of the White Snake and Its Movie Adaptations

Primary:

The White Snake and Her Son: A Translation of the Precious Scroll of Thunder Peak, with Related Texts (Hackett, 2009), 1–109.

In-Class Film, *The Sorcerer and the White Snake*

II. Ghosts and Wandering Souls

Week 5 (10/1), Ghosts, the Soul, and the Body

Primary:

Pu Songling, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, 10–14, 15–17, 28–33, 112–117, 211–228.

Chen Xuanyou, “Story of the Departing Soul,” in Stephen West & Wilt Idema eds. and trans., *Monks, Bandits, Lovers and Immortals* (Hackett, 2010), 196–198.

Zheng Guangzu, “Dazed behind the Green Ring Lattice, Qiannü’s Soul Leaves Her Body,” in *Monks, Bandits, Lovers and Immortals*, 201–236.

Secondary:

Judith T. Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 13–52.

Myron L. Cohen, “Souls and Salvation: Conflicting Themes in Chinese Popular Religion,” in James L. Watson & Evelyn S. Rawski eds., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (University of California Press, 1988), 180–202.

Week 6 (10/8), Desire, Image, and the Circulation of Consciousness: *The Peony Pavilion*

Primary:

Tang Xianzu, *The Peony Pavilion*

Secondary:

Judith T. Zeitlin, “The Life and Death of the Image: Ghosts and Female Portraits in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Literature,” in Wu Hung & Katherine R. Tsang eds., *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 229–256.

III. Buddhist and Daoist Influences

Week 7 (10/15), Buddhist Salvation: The Cults of Guanyin and Dizang

Primary:

Robert F. Campany, “The Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin,” in Donald S. Lopez, ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton University Press, 1996), 82–96.

“Scripture on the Bodhisattva Dizang,” in Zhiru’s *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 258.

Secondary:

Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (Columbia University Press, 2001), 151–194, 223–262.

Zhiru, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China*, 1–26.

Week 8 (10/22), Narratives of Hell

Primary:

Beata Grant & Wilt Idema, *Escape from Blood Pond Hell* (University of Washington Press, 2011), 3–145.

“Transformation Text on Mahāmaudgalyāyana Rescuing His Mother from the Underworld, With Pictures, One Scroll, With Preface,” in Victor Mair ed., *The Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 87–121.

Secondary:

Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in China* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 113–195.

Week 9 (10/29), no class, midterm paper due 11/5

Week 10 (11/5), The Power of Sutras: Venerations of Buddhist Scriptures in China

Primary:

Robert Ford Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm: A Translation and Study of a Collection of Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China*, 110–114, 117–120, 132–133, 136–137, 203, 251–252, 258.

Daniel B. Stevenson, “Tales of the Lotus Sutra,” in Donald S. Lopez, ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 427–451.

Secondary:

Robert F. Campany, “Notes of the Devotional Uses and Symbolic Functions of Sutra Texts as Depicted in Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tales and Hagiographies,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 14.1 (1991): 28–72.

Week 11 (11/12), Daoism and Yuan-Ming Stories

Primary:

“Zhongli of the Han Leads Lan Caihe to Enlightenment,” in *Monks, Bandits, Lovers and Immortals*, 283–313.

Quelling the Demons’ Revolt (San Sui pingyao zhuan), translated by Patrick Hanan,

Columbia University Press, 2017.

Secondary:

Paul R. Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 52–93.

Week 12 (11/19), The Three Teachings in *Jin Ping Mei*

Primary:

Chapters from *JPM*, Chapters 57–62,79,100

Secondary:

David Roy's "Introduction" to *JPM*

Naifei Ding, *Obscene Things: Sexual Politics in Jin Ping Mei*, (Duke University Press, 2002), 195–223.

Week 13 (11/26), Thanksgiving, no class

Week 14 (12/3), Religious Journeys in Ming Fiction

Primary:

The Monkey and the Monk, translated by Anthony Yu, The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

In-Class Film: *The Monkey King 2*

Week 15 (12/10), Religious Enlightenment in Qing Fiction

Primary:

The Story of the Stone, or the Dream of the Red Chamber, translated by David Hawkes, Penguin, 1973, Chapters 1–5, 47–148.

Secondary:

Jing Wang, *The Story of Stone: Intertextuality, Ancient Chinese Stone Lore, and the Stone Symbolism in Dream of the Red Chamber, Water Margin, and The Journey to the West*, Duke University Press, 1992, 35–94.

Meir Shahar, "Religion in *The Story of the Stone*", *Approaches to Teaching The Story of the Stone (Dream of the Red Chamber)*, edited by Andrew Schonebaum and Tina Lu, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2012, 133–143.

Final Paper Due 12/18