Chinese Literature and Society

Syllabus, Fall, 2010

(The Beijing Institute of Asian Studies at Peking University)

(Lu Xun 1881-1936)

Instructor: H. R. Lan 蓝华;
Lecture and discussion: Wednesday (1:30—3:30) (two-credit)*
(*Additional work and hours for extra credit in consultation with the instructor and the Office)
Classroom: Room 105 History Department;
Email: HLAN22004@YAHOO.COM **or HLAN@AMHERST.EDU**

Course description:

Born as part of an iconoclastic revolt against traditional culture, modern Chinese literature was bestowed a dual mission: enlightenment and national salvation. It is commonly acknowledged that 20th century Chinese literature has played a unique role in the formation of a new society and creation of a new man. By reading discerning representations of literary works and related articles and examining the minds of major Chinese writers, students are expected to savor the ingenuity of modern Chinese literature, to conjure up pictures of modern Chinese history and to understand the Chinese conception of the evolving relationship between literature, politics, and society.

Assignments: 1) Close reading and active class participation (20% of the grade)
2) Mid-term paper (30%)
3) Oral presentation and book report: (10%)
4) Final project: (40%)

（**See the bottom of Page 3 for concrete assignments**）

Reading Requirements:

1) Two dozens of stories, novellas and selected poems, taken from
(1) *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature.*
Edited by J.S.M. Lau and H. Goldblatt (paperback, Feb. 2007)
(2) *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China*,
by Lu Xun, translated by Julia Lovell and Yiyun
(Penguin Classics, paperback, Jan. 26, 2010)
2) *My Country and My People* by Lin Yutang
paperback, Waiyu Jiaoxue Yanjiu Publisher, Beijing
The above are required intensive reading materials available at the Main Office or in

the Bookstore in the Wumei-mart on campus)

3) Extensive readings for background information and class discussion. Topics: Confucianism, the May Fourth Movement (1919), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), elements of literature and introduction to literary theories (New Criticism, Readers Response Theory, Feminism, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, New Historicism, etc.) **Available online**.

4) Readings for comparison: James Joyce's "The Dead" in his short story collection *Dubliners* (1914) and Johann W. Goethe 's "The Sorrows of Young Werther" (1774)

Schedule:

Week 1 (September 8): Introduction:
The Chinese mind, language, literary tradition and aesthetics

Week 2 (Sept. 15) : The New Literature
Readings on Confucianism, May Fourth Movement and **Lu Xun's *Preface***

Week 3 (Sept. 22): Lu Xun: **Madman's Diary and Kong Yiji**

Week 4 (Sept. 29) Lu Xun: **In the Tavern; New Year's Sacrifice**
Further reading: James Joyce's *The Dead*

Week 5 (Oct. 1-5) Happy National Holidays!

Week 6 (Oct. 6) : Ding Ling: **Miss Sophia's Diary** and Yu Dafu**: Sinking**
Further reading: a) What Happens after Nora Leaves Home? (by LU Xun)
b) *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* by Goethe

Week 7 (Oct. 13): "Peasant" Writers and *Root* Literature :
Shao Zhenguo: **Travelling Harvesters**, Mo Yan: **Autumn Waters**

Week 8 (Oct. 20): Taiwanese writers:
Bai Xianyong: **Winter Nights**; Li Ang: **Curvaceous Doll**

Week 9 (Oct. 27): "Wounded literature
Cai Xue**: A Hut on the Mountain,** Yu Hua: **On the Road, and** Su Tong: **Escape**

Week 10 (Nov. 3) Trans-cultural writers
Ha Jin's **In Broad Daylight and Man To Be**
Further reading: a) the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) b)Pearl S. Buck, Han Suyin,

Week 11 (Nov. 10) Veteran Writers:
Zhang Aling**: Sealed Off** and **Golden Cangue**

Week 12 (Nov. 17) Oral presentation

Week 13 (Nov. 24) : General review

Writing assignments for the semester:

1) Mid-term paper: Lu Xun: a social commentator and a writer (you can rephrase the title)
   A) Based on the four stories we cover in class and the Preface.
   B) 10 pages or so, double space, sent electronically.
   C) Due by **Oct. 6** (Wednesday)
2) Book Report/oral presentation
   A) Read Lin Yutang's *My Country and My People*
   B) Focus on what has impressed you most.
   C) Hand in a 4-page response paper by Nov. 17
   D) Oral presentation based on your own paper on **Nov. 17**
3) Final papers:
   A) Write a summary on the stories we have covered during the term, excluding Lu Xun's works.
   B) 12 pages or so,
   C) Due by **Nov. 30**
   D) Additional reading and paper for the extra credit, if you want to:
      a) Read Lao She's *"The Crescent Moon and other Stories"*(or other material in consultation with the instructor
      b) 10 pages or so. Due also by Nov. 30
4) Concrete guidelines will be sent to you for the final papers later in the semester.

"*Contemporary China, itself a huge book filled with sound and fury, abounds in extraordinary happenings and is stained with blood and tears. This constitutes a boon for Chinese writers: calling upon little imagination, they can tear any page from this book and turn it into a work of art. The line between fact and fiction, after all, is blurred---history has been read as fiction and fiction regarded as an extension of history."*

----Bei Dao