Asian Studies 215:

Androgyny and Gender Negotiation in Contemporary Chinese Women's Theater

Ying Wang
Fall, 2016
Classroom Ciruti 217
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Course Description
Yue Opera, an all-female art that flourished in Shanghai in 1923, resulted from China's social changes and the women's movement. Combining traditional with modern forms and Chinese with Western cultures, Yue Opera today attracts loyal and enthusiastic audiences despite pop arts crazes. We will focus on how audiences, particularly women, are fascinated by gender renegotiations as well as by the all-female cast. The class will read and watch classics of this theater, including Dream of the Red Chamber, Story of the Western Chamber, Peony Pavilion, and Butterfly Lovers. Students will also learn the basics of traditional Chinese opera. Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

Class Format and Assignments
The class will meet every Wednesday afternoon for two hours and fifty minutes (1:15-4:05pm). Active participation in class discussion will be expected of all students. Four online commentaries (250 words minimum for each), one short paper (5-7 pages), and one long paper (8-10 pages) are required, as listed in the following schedule. One oral project is required as the preparation of the final paper. The oral presentation will lead to finalization of the final essay. Guidelines will be discussed in class for paper topics, and students will select individual topics in consultation with the instructor.

Readings and Videos
All reading assignments and visual materials such as videos are to be completed by the dates listed in the schedule. All of the videos required for this course will be streamed and made available on the course Moodle. Please plan ahead for the E-reserved readings on Moodle and for the purchased readings required by the course. Optional readings will be suggested during the course, and you will be expected to make use of non-required materials for your papers.
Videos available on Ella or LRC

Two Actresses

Butterfly Lovers

Saving a Prostitute

Liu Yi Delivers a Letter for the Dragon King’s Daughter

Romance of the Western Bower

The Peony Pavilion (Yue Opera)

Farewell to My Concubine

Mei Lanfang/ Forever Enthralled

Following books are available in Odyssey Bookstore:


Other reading materials are placed on E-reserves on Moodle.

Grading System
Class participation 15%
Short paper 20%
Leading Discussion 10%
Online Commentaries 15%
Oral presentation 15%
Final essay 25%

Bibliography


**Weekly Schedule**

**Sept. 7**
Course Introduction
Movie: *Two Actresses* (on Moodle)

**Sept. 14**
Readings:
1) The Origins of Yue Opera (on Moodle)
2) Masculinity in Transition (on Moodle)
Video: *Liu Yi Delivers a Letter for the Dragon King’s Daughter* (on Moodle)
**Sept. 21**
Readings:
1) The Rise of Feminine Opera (on Moodle)
2) Femininity and Sisterhood (on Moodle)
Video: *The Peony Pavilion* (on Moodle)

Event: *The Beauty of Yue Opera: Appreciation and Learning to Sing*
Hosted by Jun’an Wang 王君安, Leading Artist from Fanghua Yue Opera Troupe, China
Time: 4pm-5:30pm, Tuesday, September 20, 2016
Location: Morrison Room, Willits-Hallowell Conference Center, Mount Holyoke College

Class Discussion on the Educational Function of Yue Opera, hosted by Jun’an Wang

**Sept. 28**
*Mountain Day (no class)*

**Oct. 5**
Video: *The Butterfly Lovers*

**Mid Semester Break: Oct. 8-11**

**Oct. 12**
Readings:
1) “The Performance of Classical Theater” (on Moodle)
2) “Traditional Theater in Contemporary China” (on Moodle)
3) "Patron and Patronage" (on Moodle)

**Oct. 19**
Readings:
1) Rescued by a Coquette (on Moodle)
2) Yuan Drama (on Moodle)
Video: *Saving the Prostitute*

**Online Commentary**

**First paper due (Ciruti 118)**

**Oct. 26**
Readings:
1) *The Dragon King’s Daughter*
2) “Androgyny Defined” “Androgyny in Chinese Philosophy” “Gender Ambiguity in Late Ming
and Early Qing Culture” (on Moodle)
3) “A Feminine Aesthetics” (on Moodle)
Review Video: Liu Yi Delivers a Letter for the Dragon King’s Daughter

**Nov. 2**
Readings:
1) *Romance of the Western Bower (Acts 1, 2, and 3)*
2) “The Status of Wang Shifu’s Story of the Western Wing in Chinese Literature” (on Moodle)
3) “Author and Authorship” (on Moodle)

**Online Commentary**

**Nov. 9**
Readings: *Romance of the Western Bower (Acts 4 and 5)*
Video: *Romance of the Western Bower*

**Nov. 16**
Readings:
1) “Introduction: “Mudan ting and the Theatrical Culture of Kun Opera” (on Moodle)
2) *The Peony Pavilion* (Scenes 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23 [pp.128-135], 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35)

**Online Commentary**

**Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 23-27**

**Nov. 30**
Readings:
*The Peony Pavilion* (Scenes 36, 39, 41, 44, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55)
Review Video: *The Peony Pavilion (Yue Opera)*

**Oral Presentation**

**Dec. 7**
**Oral Presentation**

**Final paper due at 5pm, Dec. 16th 2016 (Ciruti 118, yingwang@mtholyoke.edu)**

Final Paper: Hard copy is preferred. I will leave an envelope (with the AS215 on it) inside of my mailbox outside of the Asian Studies Office (112 Ciruti). You can put your final essay inside of the envelope.