Chinese 320: General Education Requirement “World Cultures, History and Literature, History of the Arts” / Core Content Course for Chinese Studies

**Chinese Popular Culture:**
**Transformation and Exchange**

Instructor: Professor Emily Wilcox  
Fall 2012, T Th 11:00 am -12:20 pm  
Instructor Office Hours: T Th 5:00-6:00 pm and by appointment  
Email: eewilcox@wm.edu, Office: 316 Washington Hall

**Course Description**

Popular culture is that which emerges when the lenses of elite taste and textual bias are removed from the glasses of academic inquiry; it allows us to see art in the everyday and the biases of a social system in what seem to be pure art and entertainment. Popular culture allows us to take a scholarly and literary lens to the sensual textures that inhabit the mundane, revealing the many facets of reference and significance that inhabit the daily lives of regular people. Whether commercial or noncommercial, artistic or everyday, dominant or subversive, popular culture is intimately connected to history and social processes, and it changes as societies change. Precisely because it often resides in the informal and the undocumented, popular culture possesses a vitality and complexity that makes it particularly susceptible to exchange and transformation. Therefore, this class emphasizes the variability and cross-cultural encounters that have shaped the development of Chinese popular culture through time and space. Special emphasis is placed on the following four themes: 1) cross-cultural exchange and ethnic diversity in traditional China; 2) modern Chinese culture as a post-colonial phenomenon; 3) the role of socialism in reshaping Chinese popular culture in the 20th century; and 4) commercial culture, individualism, and the culture of capitalism.

Some examples of popular culture explored in this course include: Chinese folk mythology, popular ritual and religion, pulse-taking in Chinese medicine, the early Chinese film and fashion industries of cosmopolitan 1930s Shanghai, Shanxi Chinese peasant culture at the time of land reform, the popularization of Chinese communism, national revolutionary culture in the age of Mao, post-Mao Chinese rock music, and family, dating, and sex in Reform Era youth culture. While the class is organized largely chronologically, this does not imply that one type of popular culture replaced the other completely in China over time. Instead, what we often find in China over the last one hundred years is a layering of multiple forms of popular culture simultaneously. All of the historical forms of popular culture covered in this class together make up the complex mesh that is popular culture in China today.

**Course Objectives**

This is an upper level course that meets both the General Education Requirement (GER) for “World Cultures, History and Literature, History of the Arts” and the Core Content Course requirement for Chinese Studies. Therefore, this course has two sets of objectives:
1) Chinese Studies:
   - Become familiar with major themes in modern and contemporary Chinese culture;
• Practice thinking critically about major theoretical, topical, and methodological concerns in modern Chinese studies;
• Exercise and develop analytical writing skills using primary and secondary sources;
• Learn to employ theoretical and conceptual methods in the cultural reading of primary source texts, including literature, visual art, performance, film, and constructed spaces;
• Engage in meaningful discussion with one’s peers about important cultural issues in modern and contemporary China;
• Develop professional skills including formal presentations, group collaboration, and independent research on areas related to Chinese culture.

2) GER (from WM guidelines http://iae.wm.edu/GER/ger_learning_expectations_rpt.cfm):
• Students will understand important cultural and historical topics, issues, or themes in more than one period or in one critical period or in a movement or movements
• Students will understand institutions, movements, or cultural practices in historical context
• Students will understand critical historical and cultural events, institutions, ideas, or literary/artistic achievements
• Students will become conversant with at least two major forms, genres, eras, cultures, or movements; or with at least two methods of analysis of art or literature
• Students will become familiar with the vocabulary of the discipline and be able to apply the appropriate methodologies for critical analysis.

Readings

Two books are required for this course. They are available at the William and Mary Campus bookstore and on reserve in Swem library:


All other readings are available electronically via Blackboard or on the Internet. DVDs and video clips viewed in class will be put on reserve in Swem or posted on Blackboard.

Grade Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(includes in-class quizzes and assignments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper One</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Two</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Paper Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Four</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Popular Culture Presentations (2)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: All assigned readings and video viewings should be completed before class on the day they are listed, unless otherwise noted. In-class pop quizzes on the assigned readings and viewings may be held at any time during the semester, and they will contribute to your Participation grade.

Unit One: Variety and Exchange in Chinese Tradition

WEEK 1 - Introduction to the Course

Thursday, Aug 30
Introduction to the course.
No assigned readings.

WEEK 2 – Mythology and Borderlands

Tuesday, Sept 4

Popular Culture Presentation: idiomatic phrases (成语)

Thursday, Sept 6

Video: Princess Wencheng (文成公主) CCTV 2000 historical drama clip (12 minutes):

Popular Culture Presentation: Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自治区)

WEEK 3 – Taoism, Buddhism, and Chinese Religion

Tuesday, Sept 11


Video: The Daoist of Mt. Lao (崂山道士) 1981 Cartoon clip (25 minutes):
http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjM5NjE1MDE=.html

Popular Culture Presentation: Dao De Jing (道德经)

Thursday, Sept 13

Popular Culture Presentation: Guanyin (观音)

**WEEK 4 – Sacred Mountains and the Chinese Body**

Tuesday Sept 18

Popular Culture Presentation: Yellow Mountain (黄山)

Thursday Sept 20

Video: *Healing and the Mind with Bill Moyers 1* - The Mystery of Chi (10 min): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c8en13CD3w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c8en13CD3w)

Popular Culture Presentation: acupuncture (针灸)

Unit Two: Urban Culture in Republican Shanghai

**WEEK 5 - Colonialism and Cosmopolitanism in Shanghai**

Tuesday Sept 25
No assigned readings.
**Paper One due at the beginning of class.
**

Documentary: *China: A Century of Revolution Disc 1* (watch in class)

Thursday Sept 27

Popular Culture Presentation: cheongsam/qipao (旗袍)

**WEEK 6 – Legal and Musical Orders in a Treaty Port**

Tuesday Oct 2

Popular Culture Presentation: The French Concession (法租界)

Thursday Oct 4

Popular Culture Presentation: simplified music notation (简谱)
WEEK 7 – Literature, Film, and Politics

Tuesday, Oct 9
Popular Culture Presentation: Zhou Xuan (周璇)
Film: Street Angel (马路天使) 1937 Film (in class)

Thursday, Oct 11
No assigned readings.
Film: Street Angel (马路天使) 1937 Film (watch in class) and discussion.
**Paper Two due Sunday, Oct 14, at noon. Electronic submission via Blackboard.

Unit Three: Communism as Popular Culture

WEEK 8 - Rural Beginnings of the Communist Revolution

Tuesday, Oct 16
Fall Break  **NO CLASS**
No assigned readings.

Thursday, Oct 18
Popular Culture Presentation: Land Reform (土地改革)

WEEK 9 - The Populist Culture of New China

Tuesday, Oct 23

Thursday, Oct 25
Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) “Foreword to the Second Edition” by Lin Biao (Piao) and Selections in Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung. 1966. All selections.
Film: China: A Century of Revolution Disc 2. (first hour)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m7YoNlkWzM
Popular Culture Presentation: The Little Red Book (毛泽东语录)

WEEK 10 – Spectacles, Public Space, and Everyday Life Under Mao
Tuesday, Oct 30
Video: The East is Red (117 min). 1964:
http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTA1NTNTEyNjEy.html
Popular Culture Presentation: yangge dance (秧歌舞)

Thursday, Oct Nov 1
Film: To Live (watch selections in class).
Popular Culture Presentation: Work Unit (单位)

WEEK 11 - Visual Media and the Cultural Revolution

Tuesday, Nov 6
Film: China: A Century of Revolution Disc 2. (second hour):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m7YoNlkWzM
Popular Culture Presentation: Large Character Posters (大字报)

Thursday, Nov 8
Popular Culture Presentation: Sent Down Youth (知青)

Unit 4: Chinese Popular Culture in the Reform Era

WEEK 12 – Commercial Culture and the Rise of Individualism

Tuesday, Nov 13
No assigned readings.
**Paper Three due at the beginning of class.
Lecture: Introducing the Reform Era
Film (selections): China: A Century of Revolution Disc 3 (watch in class).

Thursday, Nov 15
Film: Comrades, Almost a Love Story (甜蜜蜜) 1996:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=titr6EcZU3E (Watch in class)
WEEK 13 – Rock Music and Ideology in the Reform Era
Tuesday, Nov 20

Film (selections): Rock Youth (摇滚青年) (watch in class)

Popular Culture Presentation: Deng Lijun (邓丽君)
Popular Culture Presentation: Cui Jian (崔健)

Thursday, Nov 22
Thanksgiving Holiday **NO CLASS**
No assigned readings.

WEEK 14 – Gender, Sex, and Family in the Reform Era
Tuesday, Nov 27
Film: Last Train Home (2009)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udVpkE0Mm2Y

Thursday, Nov 29

Popular Culture Presentation: The Post-Eightees Generation/balinghou (八零后)
Popular Culture Presentation: The One-Child Policy (计划生育)

WEEK 15 – Socializing in New Spaces
Tuesday, Dec 4

Popular Culture Presentation: Weibo (微博)
Thursday, Dec 6
No assigned readings.
**Paper 4 due at the beginning of class.
Final Exam Review in class.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES**

**Attendance and Participation:**
Your attendance and participation is required for this course. Participation includes being an active contributor in class discussions and activities, showing respect for the instructor and other students, and being prepared by completing the required reading assignments before class. Please bring all assigned readings for that day to class, either in hard copy or electronic form. Attendance will be taken at the start of class. Two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. Excused absences will be granted provided students can show a valid reason for being absent from class, such as: doctor’s note, proof of personal emergency, College-required commitment, etc. When possible, students should inform the instructor in writing before class to receive an excused absence. Grades on in-class assignments and quizzes will be included as part of your participation grade, and these activities can be made up only for excused absences.

**Short Papers:**
A total of four short papers will be required for this course, as listed in the Course Schedule. Papers should be a minimum of 3 full pages, double-spaced in 12pt New Times Roman. Specific instructions and grading criteria for each paper will be distributed in class at least two weeks before the final due date of the paper. In general, papers will be graded on the following criteria:

- Presents a clear argument supported by vivid supporting evidence drawn from the course readings and viewings.
- Demonstrates accurate understanding of the contents of the readings and their relation to larger themes of the course as presented in course lectures and discussions.
- Expresses evidence of original reflection and insight, supported by clear explanations that draw on specific details from the assigned readings and lectures.
- Synthesizes material from all of the readings and viewings from a single unit.
- Clear and correct written style.

Papers will be submitted using Blackboard with the “Safe Assign” feature in use. Students who can show proof of using the Writing Resources Center (http://www.wm.edu/as/wrc/?svr=web) for revising a draft of Paper One will receive 5 bonus points toward the grade on that paper.

**Popular Culture Presentations:**
Each class period that a Popular Culture presentation is listed on the schedule, a group of 2-3 students will present a short presentation on the topic listed. The format of presentations is completely open. The presentation should be as creative and interactive as possible, with the goal of introducing students to the topic of the presentation, generating interest in the topic, and generating discussion on the required readings for that day based on some connection between the presentation and the required readings. The length of presentations should be $= 5 \text{ minutes} \times \text{the number of people in the group}$. For example, a group of two people should have a 10 minute presentation. Presentations will be graded on the following criteria:
• Demonstrated research into the assigned topic.
• Creative use of interactive media or activities to generate interest in and familiarity with the assigned topic.
• Accuracy of information presented.
• Evidence of group collaboration and coherency of the contributions of each group member.
• Effectiveness in generating discussion related to the required reading for the given week.
• Appropriate length (points will be deducted if the presentation is too long)

Each student will be expected to give a total of two presentations during the semester.

**Final Exam:** The final exam for this course will take place at the scheduled final exam time listed in the official William and Mary Exam Schedule. There will be no make-up exams. The final exam will contain a combination of short answer/ID questions and two essay questions and will be cumulative, covering the contents of the entire semester. A Final Exam study guide will be provided before the final week of classes, and a Review Session will be held on the last day of class.

**Academic Honesty:**
Honor Code Section 2.2 addresses both cheating and plagiarism:
[http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/documents/honorcode.pdf](http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/documents/honorcode.pdf)

The instructor will rigorously enforce standards of academic honesty, and evidence of cheating/plagiarism will automatically result in referral to the Honor Council.

Students with questions and/or concerns are expected to consult with the instructor and with the Writing Resources Center.

**Special Accommodations:**
The instructor will honor any special accommodations related to disabilities, student athletics, and other matters for which the College has established rules for such accommodations. Please submit requests for accommodations in writing with proof of College support within the first two weeks of class.

**Office Hours:**
Office hours are an important part of this course. You are strongly encouraged to attend office hours to talk with the instructor about the class and to gain one-on-one feedback on your work. If you cannot attend office hours at the scheduled time, please email the instructor to schedule an appointment outside the regular times.

**E-mail:** Be advised that I sometimes only check my e-mail once a day and that you should expect to wait about 24 hours to hear back from me. You are strongly encouraged to contact me with questions and suggestions throughout the semester. Questions that will take more than a few sentences to answer should be brought up in class or in office hours.