Graduate Seminar Course Syllabus
University of Michigan, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures
Winter 2020

ASIAN 585 Seminar in Chinese Studies
Sinophone Studies:
Borderlands and Border Crossing in the Chinese World

Instructor: Dr. Emily Wilcox (eewilcox@umich.edu)
Course Time: Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM, 1155 North Quad
Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4 PM, 5159 South Thayer Building (5th floor)

Course Description: This course takes as its departure the emergent field known as “Sinophone Studies,” defined by Shu-mei Shih as the study of Sinitic-language cultures outside and on the margins of China. In Shih’s definition, this includes Sinitic-language communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and other overseas diasporic sites, as well as non-Han groups within the borders of mainland China. Rather than taking Shih’s definition for granted, the course seeks to investigate and reconsider what Sinophone studies is and could be, including the many ways in which it might inform and enrich the broader field of Chinese studies. We will read and discuss canonical works of scholarship in Sinophone studies, as well as more recent work that contributes to rethinking this field. In the process, we will gain a basic foundation in historical and cultural issues related to the major communities addressed in Sinophone studies. Border-crossing and borderlands will serve as important themes throughout this course, and students will be encouraged to bring their own research and expertise into the course content. Students will also have an opportunity to present and receive feedback on their own ongoing research and writing.

Enrollment Requirements: This course is designed for UM graduate students. Advanced undergraduates or students from other institutions may enroll if spaces are available and with permission of the instructor. There is no language requirement for this course. All required readings will be in English.

Assignments/Grading:
The following components will contribute to students' overall course grade:

- Attendance and participation 30%
- Weekly response papers 30%
- In-class presentations (2) 15%
- Final research paper 25%

Attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend all class meetings, to come to class prepared by having read and brought the assigned readings, and to actively participate in class discussions by contributing their own questions, ideas, and perspectives on the assigned readings and related topics. Students are encouraged to speak with me to receive feedback on your in-class participation during the course of the
semester. If you need to miss class for some reason, you may make up the missed class by submitting a 3-4-page reflection paper on the assigned readings for that week. This should be submitted via email before the next class meeting.

**Weekly response papers:** Reading responses will be submitted to a group email list and are due by noon on Wednesdays. Students are encouraged to read each other’s essays and to bring their own responses to class either in hard copy or electronic format to use as reference during the class discussion. Reading responses should be a minimum of 600 words and should address the following questions:

- What is the topic and scope of the weekly readings?
- What are the main themes and arguments presented by the author(s)?
- What are some important examples or cases the author(s) use to develop these themes and arguments?
- What would you say are the main strengths and shortcomings of the readings?
- How does this week’s reading contribute to Sinophone studies?

Your reading responses should address the readings as a whole. However, when an entire book is assigned, you are not expected to have read every page of the book from cover to cover every week. We will discuss effective reading practices and expectations for how to approach large reading assignments throughout the class. In some cases, we will divide up longer readings so that different students are responsible for different sections.

**In-class presentations:** Students will give two in-class presentations over the course of the semester. The first presentation will be about one of the weekly reading assignments and will take place during Weeks 2-13. Students will sign up for these on the first day of class. The second presentation will be on the student’s own research project and will take place during Weeks 14-15. Students will sign up for these later in the semester. Each student presentation should be approximately 20 minutes. They should be prepared as follows:

**Presentation 1:**

1) Introduce the author(s) of this week’s readings. Provide a photo, tell us about their educational background, employment, other publications, disciplinary affiliation, and your impression of their overall interests and specialties;

2) Figure out and explain what you understand to be the research materials and process/method the author(s) used to conduct their research for this week’s readings. Provide a list of the major types of sources used for each reading, with examples. Explain briefly how the author(s) use these sources.

3) Discuss how you see the readings for this week providing a model for Sinophone studies, and explain how this approach to Sinophone studies can expand, challenge, or rethink the field of Chinese studies.

4) Provide three discussion questions for approaching this week’s readings.

You should prepare slides for your presentation and set these up on either on your own laptop or the classroom computer at the start of class. Presentations may have a participatory component and should naturally lead into discussion by the end.

**Presentation 2:** Share your preliminary research for your final paper with the class. These presentations will be more informal and discussion-based. It will be a chance
for you to tell the class about the research you have conducted so far and get feedback and questions to help you develop your project further. Slides should be used to illustrate the primary source material being analyzed and to introduce any key people, places, cultural texts, institutions, or historical events relevant to your project. We will discuss this further later in the semester.

**Final Paper:** The final assignment will be a research paper of 20-25 pages (double-spaced) on a topic of your choice. Ideally, the paper should examine a topic within the broader field of Sinophone studies and should engage methodologically with some issue or concern addressed in the course. When organizing your paper, use the following as a general guide: 1) about 10-12 pages should contain your own original analysis of a set of primary source materials; 2) about 5-7 pages should be spent framing your analysis within the context of relevant secondary sources; 3) about 4-5 pages should be spent considering how this research might be developed into a larger project that would contribute to concerns or questions of Sinophone studies as discussed in this course.

A **final paper proposal** will be due in place of a weekly response paper on March 4, during Spring Break. This proposal should include a minimum 500-word abstract of your proposed research project. It should also contain a list of at least one primary and five secondary sources you have located for your project.

**Readings**
Many of the readings for this class are available as e-books through the UM library and are marked in the course syllabus. Students are free to use these versions but should be sure to check in advance to learn about any barriers to access (some books only allow one user at a time, some have limited “check out” or download capacities, etc.). Some readings have also been posted on Canvas or placed on reserve in the Shapiro Library. Students are encouraged to purchase their own copies of the books when possible.

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (Jan 8)—Introduction to the Course**
No required readings

**Week 2 (Jan 15)—Literary Foundations of Sinophone Studies**
  - “Introduction: What is Sinophone Studies?” By Shu-mei Shih, pp. 1-16;
  - Intro to “Part I Issues and Controversies” by Chien-hsin Tsai, pp. 17-24;
  - Intro to “Part II Discrepant Perspectives” by Brian Bernards, pp. 125-130;
  - Intro to “Part III Sites and Articulations” by Bernards and Tsai, pp. 183-190;
  - And four other chapters of your choice from the book (select on Jan 8 in class).

Optional additional readings:
• Shu-mei Shih, “The Concept of the Sinophone,” *PMLA* 126, no. 3 (May 2011): 709–18;
• Feng Lan JAS Book Review of *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*;
• Jeffrey Mather JPW Book Review of *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*;
• Lucas Klein CLEAR Book Review of *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*;
• “华语语系文学刍议——以史书美，王德威，黄锦树为中心”;
• 黃錦樹：這樣的‘華語語系’論可以休矣！——史書美的‘反離散’到底在反甚麼？
• 李杨 “‘华语语系’与‘想象的共同体’解构视域中的‘中国’认同”《华文文学》2016（5）no 136, pp. 76-91 (on Canvas).

**Week 3 (Jan 22)—Film, Voice, and Sound in Sinophone Studies**

  - “Framing Sinophone Cinemas” by Yue and Khoo, pp. 3-12;
  - “Genealogies of Four Critical Paradigms in Chinese-Language Film Studies” by Sheldon Lu, pp. 13-25;
  - “Alter-Centring Sinophone Cinema” by Yiman Wang, pp. 26-44;
  - “Festivals, Censorship and the Canon: The Makings of Sinophone Cinemas” by Yifen T. Beus, pp. 45-61;
  - “The Voice of the Sinophone” by Song Hwee Lim, pp. 62-76.

  - “Sounding Glocal: Synthesizer Scores in Hong Kong Action Cinema by Katherine Spring, pp. 38-52.

Optional additional reading:

**Week 4 (Jan 29)—Ethnic Minorities as Sinophone Subjects I**

  - “Chapter Two: China’s Central Asian Identity,” pp. 19-36;

  - “Introduction,” pp. 1-3;
  - “The Legacy of the Tuoba Xianbei: The Tang Dynasty,” 4-38;

  

**Week 5 (Feb 5)—Ethnic Minorities as Sinophone Subjects II**

  
  “Introduction. Corrupt Lamas, Reliable Yaks: the Fictional World of Tsering Döndrup, pp. 1-16


**Week 6 (Feb 12)—Sinophone Literature in Malaysia**


**Week 7 (Feb 19)—History of Chinese Diasporas**


**Week 8 (Feb 26)—Sinophone Identities in Japanese Colonial Taiwan**

- Evan N. Dawley. *Becoming Taiwanese: Ethnogenesis in a Colonial City, 1880s to 1950s*. Harvard University Asia Center (hard copy on 4-hour reserve in Shapiro Library)

**Week 9 (March 4):** **NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK**

In place of an assigned reading, conduct research for your final papers. Submit your project proposal in place of the weekly response paper.

**Week 10 (March 11)—Writing the Borders from Yunnan, Guest: Eloise Wright**

Optional additional readings:

Week 11 (March 18):
https://search.lib.umich.edu/catalog/record/017258525

Week 12 (March 25)—Hong Kong Cinema as Sinophone Culture
❖ Jing Jing Chang. 2019. *Screening Communities: Negotiating Narratives of Empire, Nation, and the Cold War in Hong Kong Cinema*. Hong Kong University Press (access as UM Library e-book):

Week 13 (April 1)—Course Wrap Up
https://search.lib.umich.edu/catalog/record/016505621

Week 14 (April 8)
Student Research Presentations

Week 15 (April 15)
Student Research Presentations

**Final Research Papers** (20-25 pp) are due via electronic submission on Canvas by noon on Thursday, April 30th.