



CHINESE 220:

Chinese Popular Culture

(COLL 200 ALV/CSI or COLL 300)

Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00pm–3:20pm

Instructor: Professor/Dr. Emily Wilcox

Email: ewilcox@wm.edu

Office Hours: Wed 1-3pm & by appointment

****Office Hours Sign Up: <https://calendly.com/emilywilcox>****

Course Description

China is a diverse and multi-layered society that has changed dramatically over the past two millennia. In this course, we examine Chinese society and culture through the lens of the popular—the practices, beliefs, media, and stories that inhabit the daily lives of regular people. Whether commercial or noncommercial, religious or mundane, dominant or subversive, popular culture is intimately embedded in time and place. Thus, by learning about Chinese popular culture, we will explore the varieties of Chinese life experiences across different regions and time periods in China past and present.

Some examples of popular culture explored in this course include the following: Chinese mythology and popular stories, yin-yang philosophy, holidays, medicine, traditional theater, cosmopolitan Shanghai urban culture, crime and policing, street theater, Maoist revolutionary language and visual culture, Chinese rock music and fast food, Taiwan pop music, and the Chinese Internet and social media. 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 is a layering of multiple forms of popular culture that coexist simultaneously. Students will engage directly with class visitors whose life experience and expertise is relevant to the course content. Finally, they will have an opportunity to reflect on their position in the world at large through the lens of Chinese popular culture.

Prerequisites: None. No prior knowledge of Chinese language, history, or culture is required.

COLL 200 Requirement:

This course counts toward the COLL 200 requirement of the William & Mary College Curriculum in the Liberal Arts. It can be used for either one of two COLL 200 knowledge domains: Arts Letters, and Values (ALV) or Cultures, Societies, and the Individual (CSI). The course covers 50% content in each domain. This course meets these domain requirements in the following ways:

Arts, Letters, and Values (ALV)

- Lectures and readings require students to identify and understand values and attitudes through specific examples of Chinese popular culture;
- Interactive discussions facilitate debate and expression of values and attitudes among students in response to the assigned readings, viewings, lectures, and presentations;
- Creative responses, exams, and the final paper ask students to interpret and communicate examples of Chinese popular culture in relation to their own values and attitudes or those expressed in the assigned materials.

Cultures, Societies, and the Individual (CSI)

- Lectures and readings require students to identify and understand historical, social, and cultural issues through specific examples of Chinese popular culture;
- Interactive discussions facilitate examination of cultures, societies, and individuals as represented in the assigned readings, viewings, lectures, and presentations;
- Creative responses, exams, and papers ask students to describe, theorize, and explain aspects of cultures, societies, and individuals in their variety over time and space in relation to the assigned materials.

COLL 300 Requirement:

This course counts toward the COLL 300 requirement of the William & Mary College Curriculum in the Liberal Arts. It can be used for either COLL 200 or COLL 300 but not both. This course meets the COLL requirements in the following ways:

- Through the study of Chinese popular culture, students gain an understanding of how diverse communities and individuals in China have experienced their lives and the world across time and place;
- Students will gain a grounded understanding of Chinese history, society, politics, and culture through engagement with primary source materials from a range of mediums;
- By engaging in interpretation and debate, students will develop critical thinking abilities and learn to challenge narrow US-centered views of the world;
- Through interactions with guests, students will engage in the study of Chinese popular culture through the processes of direct experiential encounters and dialogue;
- Through the creative responses and final reflection paper, students will have an opportunity to explore a topic of their choice in Chinese popular culture and to reflect on their own role in the world in relation to the course content.

Readings and other course materials: This course takes advantage of materials available for free to students through the W&M Swem Library and other online resources. All required course readings are available to students at no cost and posted on Blackboard. Films and other audiovisual materials are also freely accessible using Internet resources and Swem.

Grade Breakdown:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Reading Quizzes	20%
Unit Reviews (3)	45%
Popular Culture Creative Response	10%
Self in the World Reflection Paper	10%

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. All students will have one free excused absence. Additional excused absences will be granted on a case-by-case basis if students email ahead of time and provide a reason for their absence. Participation during in-class activities is an essential component of the participation grade. Being distracted by technology will result in a lower participation grade. Students may use laptops, tablets, and other visual readers to consult course readings, carry out in-class activities, look up content relevant to the class discussion, and take notes. Students should avoid checking email or other non-course-related content during class time.

Reading Quizzes:

To reward students for keeping up with the weekly readings and viewings, pop quizzes will take place periodically at the beginning of class to assess students' preparation of the assigned readings and viewings for that day. Unlike assignments, there will be no prior warning. These quizzes are designed to provide incentives for keeping up with the course readings, as well as a system to identify and reward students who consistently complete the reading and viewings on time. Quizzes typically consist of ten true/false and multiple choice questions and are designed to assess completion of the reading and/or viewing for that day. At the end of the semester, the lowest reading quiz score will be dropped.

Popular Culture Creative Response:

Popular culture emerges out of the creativity of everyday people. Thus, one of the best ways to understand and engage with popular culture is to contribute to its creative transformation and reinvention. During the semester, each student will submit two creative responses to a weekly reading/viewing. This may be in the form of any mode of creative expression—a song, a cartoon, a short theater sketch, an video collage, an animation, a dance, a Tiktok video, a painting, a poem, etc. Regardless of what option you choose, the response must be something you created yourself (you cannot simply find and use a creative item found elsewhere). Students may choose to do their creative response individually or in pairs. Creative responses will be submitted via Flipgrid: <https://flipgrid.com/25ad0e1c>. Each response should be posted on the topic for the date it is due and must be uploaded before 1:59pm on the due date. Students will then have 5 minutes to present their creative response in class. During their presentation, students should play their video for the class and then orally explain the following: 1) the creative inspiration for the work,

2) their process in creating it, and 3) what they were hoping to convey or explore. As part of their Participation grade for each class, each student will be required to make one comment on each creative response using the comment function. This could be a comment about something you liked, a question about the piece, or a further creative response of your own. Students should post their comment on the thread for that submission by midnight on the day the submission was due. Students may submit comments during class, and the creators may respond to comments live to fuel in-class discussion.

Unit Reviews:

At the end of each Unit, students will complete an in-class Unit Review that asks them to synthesize and respond to the materials from that unit. Quizzes will consist of visual IDs, short IDs, fill in the blank, and short essay questions. For visual IDs and fill in the blank questions, an answer bank will be provided. Spelling will not count. The goal of the reviews is to evaluate students' comprehension and synthesis of the content of each unit. To prepare, students should review key terms and people noted in each lecture, any shared themes that run through multiple days in the unit, and the major case studies discussed in each reading and viewing. Reviews are closed book and notes free—no notes, electronic devices, or readings may be used. Reviews are designed to reflect attention and comprehension of the most important parts of the unit content; they will not be heavily focused on small details or other minor points. Lecture slides will include lists of key terms and images and will be posted for review after each class so that students know what to focus on as they review.

Self in the World Reflection Paper: Students will write a short (3-4 pages double spaced) personal paper reflecting on how this course has shaped their understanding of their relationship to the world. Students may respond to any of the following questions or additional questions of their own: How has this course changed your understanding of yourself, your identity, or your relationship to the rest of the world? How has this course made you think in new ways about China, Chinese diaspora communities, or other international communities worldwide? What aspects of this course were most surprising to you? In what way do experiences discussed in this course seem similar to your own experiences? How are they different?

Extra Credit: Students may receive up to 3 percentage points on their overall course grade by attending events on campus related to Asian culture. Events should be 1-1.5 hours in length with a connection to Asian or Asian American themes. Any event included as part of the W&M Asian Centennial automatically counts (with the exception of the two events that are already part of our class schedule). To find out if other activities can count, email a link to the professor prior to the event. Once approved, the professor will post it on Blackboard. To receive extra credit, students must submit a report about the event via Blackboard WITHIN ONE WEEK of attendance using the "Extra Credit" assignment page. A report should include the following: 1) your name; 2) description of the event attended (including date, location, and title of event); 3) a one-paragraph reflection on your experience of the event. Students will receive .5% toward the overall course grade for each event attended, with a maximum of 6 events total.

Grades: Students will receive grades on all assignments, including attendance and participation grades, via Blackboard and are encouraged to visit the professor during Office Hours to discuss any questions or concerns they may have. Grades will be posted regularly for student review and verification. Students should feel free to email the professor anytime if they see a mistake in the

posted grades or have a question about how to submit an assignment, how to view assignment comments, etc.

Office Hours: This is a precious opportunity to get to know the professor and to get one-on-one attention and advice. Take advantage of it! You can use office hours to get feedback on a recent assignment, to brainstorm ideas for your final project, or to talk about the class and your interests in general. Times and instructions can be found at the top of this syllabus. Slots are allocated in 15-minute slots, and students can feel free to sign up for more than one slot back-to-back if they have something longer to discuss. Sign up here: <https://calendly.com/emilywilcox>.

Email: Students are responsible for regularly checking and reading all course-related emails and Blackboard announcements. The professor will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours, excluding weekends. Questions posed in email should be limited to those that can be answered within 2-3 sentences. Complex content-related questions or requests for feedback on individual assignments should be addressed during office hours or in class.

Disabilities and Special Accommodations: William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas.

Mental and Physical Well-being: William & Mary recognizes that students juggle different responsibilities and can face challenges that make learning difficult. There are many resources available at W&M to help students navigate physical/medical, emotional/psychological, material/accessibility concerns. Asking for help is a sign of courage and strength.

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these challenges, we encourage you to reach out to the following offices:

- For psychological/emotional stress, please consider reaching out to the W&M Counseling Center (757-221-362), 240 Gooch Dr. 2nd floor, <https://www.wm.edu/offices/wellness/counselingcenter/>). Services are free and confidential.
- For physical/medical concerns please consider reaching out to the W& M Health Center at <https://www.wm.edu/offices/wellness/healthcenter/> or 757-221-4386, 240 Gooch Drive.
- If you or someone you know is in need of additional supports or resources, please contact the Dean of Students by submitting a care report (<https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/caresupportservices/index.php>), by phone at 757-221-2510, or by email at deanofstudents@wm.edu.

Writing Resources Center: Students are encouraged to take advantage of one-on-one peer consultation and other forms of writing support provided by the Writing Resources Center (WRC). The WRC “help[s] you strengthen your writing and communication skills by providing resources, workshops, and individual support for all kinds of assignments and

projects that require writing: academic essays, presentations, storyboards, posters, personal statements, creative writing, applications, and more.” <https://www.wm.edu/as/wrc/>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Plagiarism will result in an automatic failing of this course and possible disciplinary action by the University. It is your responsibility to understand the rules of plagiarism and to cite your sources appropriately in assignments for this course. For more information, see the explanation of [Honor Code Violations](#).

Classroom environment: All students are of equal importance and value in this classroom. If you ever feel that your ability to participate and learn in this class is limited by the behavior of the professor or of other students, please let the professor know immediately so that change can be made. The professor welcomes student input at all times and on all aspects of the class. Humanistic inquiry acknowledges and values diversity in ideas and personal experiences. Let us join in celebrating these differences and similarities, and let us work together to make this classroom safe and respectful space for the expression of all views and all backgrounds.

Land and Slavery Acknowledgment: William & Mary occupies the ancestral lands of the Powhatan people. In 1677, near our historic campus, the Pamunkey leader, Cockacoeske, negotiated Articles of Peace, with England, on behalf of several indigenous tribes. We acknowledge the Native youths who attended the Brafferton Indian School in the eighteenth century. At present we acknowledge and honor Virginia’s seven federally recognized tribes and the Commonwealth’s four state-recognized tribes. William & Mary acknowledges that it owned and exploited slave labor from its founding to the Civil War; and that it had failed to take a stand against segregation during the Jim Crow Era.

Community Guidelines:

- Listen actively and attentively.
- Raise your hand if you wish to speak.
- Ask for clarification if you are confused.
- Do not interrupt one another.
- Be respectful of others’ preferences for their names and pronouns.
- Challenge one another, but do so respectfully.
- Critique ideas, not people.
- Try to offer opinions with supporting evidence.
- Avoid put-downs (even humorous ones).
- Take responsibility for the quality of the discussion.
- Build on one another’s comments; work toward shared understanding.
- Always have your book/readings with you.
- Do not monopolize the discussion.
- Do not let yourself be distracted by technology.
- Speak from your own experience, without generalization.
- If you are offended by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately.
- Consider anything that is said in class strictly confidential.

Grading Scale for Final Grades:

A 93 – 100	A- 90 – 92.9	
B+ 87 – 89.9	B 83 – 86.9	B- 80 – 82.9
C+ 77 – 79.9	C 73 – 76.9	C- 70 – 72.9
D+ 67 – 69.9	D 63 – 66.9	D- 60 – 62.9
F <60		

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: All assigned readings and video viewings should be completed before class on the day they are listed, unless otherwise noted.

Unit One: Popular Traditions and Cultural Foundations

WEEK 1 - Introduction to the Course

Thursday, Sept 2

Introduction to the course.

No assigned readings.

WEEK 2 – Mythology and Legends

Tuesday, Sept 7

Read: Lihui Yang and Deming An, “Introduction” in *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 1-62.

Thursday, Sept 9 (Meet Online)

Zoom link: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/4158462234>

Read: Wilt Idema, ed., trans. “Preface,” “Introduction” and “The Tale of the White Snake, An Opening Section,” in *The White Snake and Her Son: A translation of The Precious Scroll of Thunder Peak with related texts*, Indianapolis : Hackett Pub. Co. 2009. Pp. vii, xi-xxiv, 1-6.

Guest Lecture: “The Global White Snake” Dr. Liang Luo, Professor of Chinese Studies, Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, University of Kentucky

WEEK 3 – Cosmology and Medicine

Tuesday, Sept 14

Read: Robin R. Wang, “Introduction,” in *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. 1-40.

Thursday, Sept 16

Read: Shigehisa Kuriyama, “Grasping the Language of Life.” *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*. New York: Zone Books, 1999. pp. 17-60.

View: *Healing and the Mind with Bill Moyers- The Mystery of Chi* (58 min):

<https://vimeo.com/33657129>

Guest Lecture: Traditional Chinese Medicine Diagnostic Techniques Lab

Guest presenter—Yong Kim, Kim's Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, Newport News

<http://www.kimsacupuncturehamptonroads.com/>

WEEK 4 – Holidays and Theater

Tuesday, Sept 21

Read: Lemei Yang, "China's Mid-Autumn Day." *Journal of Folklore Research* 43.3 (2006): 263–270.

Read: Elizabeth Bedford, "Mooncakes and the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival," in *Asian Material Culture*, Marianne Hulsbosch, ed. Amsterdam University Press, 2009. Pp. 1-20.

View: "Chinese Holidays" (26 x 3-4 min each):

https://fod-infobase-com.proxy.wm.edu/p_Search.aspx?bc=0&rd=a&q=%22Chinese%20holidays%22

Thursday, Sept 23

Read: Ruru Li, "Singing, Speaking, Dance-acting, and Combat; Mouth, Hands, Eyes, Body, and Steps – From Training to Performance in Beijing Opera (Jingju)." *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* 3(1)(2012): 4-26.

View: "Six Hundred Years of Kunqu Opera" (26 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfENuxzQI4U>

View: *Peony Pavilion—Walk in the Garden* (10 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AV1JMA1Cwrl>

WEEK 5 – Border Cultures

Tuesday, Sept 28

Read: Susan Whitfield, "The Horseman's Tale" and "The Princess's Tale" in *Life Along the Silk Road*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. Pp. 76-112.

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

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xasxxx_princess-wencheng-cctv-2000-episode_shortfilms

Thursday, Sept 30

Unit One Quiz (in class)

Unit Two: Mass Cultures of Modernity and Revolution

WEEK 6 - Colonialism and Cosmopolitanism in Shanghai

Tuesday, Oct 5

Read: Harriet Sergeant, "Chapter One: A Simple Equation: The Rise of a Great City" and

"Chapter Two: The White Russians" in *Shanghai*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1991. Pp. 10-21, 30-67.

Thursday, Oct 7

Read: John Knight, "The 'Modern Girl' Is a Communist: March 8 and China's Proletarian Women's Movement, 1925-27" *positions* 28 (3) (2020): 517-546.

WEEK 7 – Music and Theater for Social Change

Tuesday, Oct 12

Read: Andrew Jones. "The Yellow Music of Li Jinhui" in *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*, 2001. pp. 73-104.

Thursday, Oct 14 (Meet Online)

Zoom link: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/4158462234>

Xiaobing Tang, "Street Theater and Subject Formation in Wartime China: Toward a New Form of Public Art," *Cross-Currents: East Asia History and Culture Review* No. 18 (March 2016): 21-50.

WEEK 8 – Founding a New China

Tuesday, Oct 19

Fall Break ****NO CLASS****

Thursday, Oct 21

Read: Chang-tai Hung. "Introduction" and "Devils in the Drawings" in *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010. pp. 1-21, 155-181.

WEEK 9 – Chinese Socialist Dance and Family Culture

Tuesday, Oct 26 (Meet Online)

Zoom link: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/4158462234>

Read: Emily Wilcox, "Beyond Internal Orientalism: Dance and Nationality Discourse in the Early People's Republic of China, 1949-1954." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75(2) May 2016: 363-386.

Read: Emily Wilcox, "When Folk Dance Was Radical: Cold War Yangge, World Youth Festivals, and Overseas Chinese Leftist Culture in the 1950s and 1960s." *China Perspectives* 120(1): 33-42.

View: Hundred Phoenixes Face the Sun (白凤朝阳) 1959 Dance Film (58 min):

https://www.bilibili.com/bangumi/play/ep367079/?spm=a2h0c.8166622.PhoneSokuProgram_2.dtitle

Thursday, Oct 28

Read: Jung Chang. "'Talking about Love' - A Revolutionary Marriage" and "'Father is Close, Mother is Close, But Neither is as Close as Chairman Mao' - The Cult of Mao" in *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*, 1991. pp. 115-139, 256-272.

WEEK 10 – Maoist Visual Culture

Tuesday, Nov 2

Read/View: Lincoln Cushing and Ann Tompkins, *Chinese Posters: Art From the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*. Entire book.

View: Chinese Propaganda Posters Digital Collection:

<https://chinese posters.net/>

Thursday, Nov 4

Unit Two Quiz (in class)

Unit Three: Popular Cultures of Globalization

WEEK 11 – Commercial Culture and Individualism

Tuesday, Nov 9

Read: Wang Zheng, “Conclusion: Socialist State Feminism and Its Legacies in Capitalist China,” in *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1964*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017. pp. 242-264.

Thursday, Nov 11

Read: James Farrer, “Dancing through the Market Transition” in *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. pp. 226-249.

WEEK 12 – Localizing American Culture in China

Tuesday, Nov 16

Read: Andrew Jones “Cui Jian and the Ideology of Rock Music” in *Like A Knife: Ideology and Genre in Contemporary Chinese Popular Music*. Ithaca: East Asian Program at Cornell University. Pp. 115-143.

Thursday, Nov 18

Read: Yan Yunxiang, “Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald’s in Beijing.” in *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. pp. 201-225.

WEEK 13 – Hong Kong and Taiwan in Pop Culture

Tuesday, Nov 23

Read: Marc L. Moskowitz, “Chapter 1: The Tail Wags the Dog” in *Cries of Joy, Songs of Sorrow: Chinese Pop Music and its Cultural Connotations*, 2010. pp. 1-15.

Read: Wei-Hsin Lin, “Jay Chou’s Music and the Shaping of Popular Culture in China.” In *Popular Culture in Asia: Memory, City, Celebrity*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. pp. 206-219

Thursday, Nov 25

Thanksgiving Holiday ****NO CLASS****

WEEK 14 – Social Media and the Chinese Internet

Tuesday, Nov 30 (Meet Online)

Zoom link: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/4158462234>

Shaohua Guo, “WeChat: An Inflorescence of Content Production,” in *The Evolution of the Chinese Internet: Creative Visibility in the Digital Public*. Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 199-228.

Guest Lecture: “The Evolution of the Chinese Internet” Dr. Shaohua Guo, Associate Professor of Chinese, Department of Asian Languages and Literatures, Carleton College

Thursday, Dec 2

Shaohua Guo, “Tracking Playfulness,” in *The Evolution of the Chinese Internet: Creative Visibility in the Digital Public*. Stanford University Press, 2021, 59-96.

WEEK 15 – Final Projects

Tuesday, Dec 7

Unit Three Quiz (in class)

Thursday, Dec 9

Course Wrap Up

Self in the World Reflection Paper due on Blackboard on December 14th at by 5pm EST.