

ANS 372/CL 323 SPRING 2010

Decoding Classical Chinese Poetry

W 4-7 p.m.

Mezes 1.102

Dr. C.M. Lai (Léi 雷)

WCH 5.112

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[All lectures, discussion and readings in English.]

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00-4:00 p.m., Thursdays 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Required Texts:

John Minford and Joseph S.M. Lau, eds. *Classical Chinese Literature – An Anthology of Translations*, Volume I: From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty (Columbia, 2002)

Please purchase the following required texts (custom printed) at Paradigm Books (NOT at the Co-op):

David Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Rpt. Renditions, 1995)

Michael Sullivan, *The Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry and Calligraphy*
(Revised edition: George Braziller, 1999) [out of print]

Supplementary Background Reading: Articles and book chapters will be posted on Blackboard. (See Course Documents.)

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to the classical Chinese poetic tradition and is open to all students. No previous background in Chinese language, culture or literature is required. Readings in English translation will encompass a selective sampling of poetry from as early as the seventh century B.C.E. through the 9th century. Lectures and discussions will focus on the literary, cultural, historical, social, political, philosophical, and religious background against which these representative works in poetry arose. While background reading will be assigned, the focus of lectures and discussion will be on the primary works of poetry. Course emphasis will be given to poetry of the medieval period of the Tang dynasty (618-907) which is commonly referred to as the “golden age” of Chinese poetry. Intensive focus and close readings will be given to poetry by four of pre-modern China’s greatest and most beloved poets, Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (or Tao Qian 陶潛) (365-427), Wang Wei 王維 (701-761), Li Bo 李白 (or Li Bai) (701-762), and Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770).

The poet’s response to the human condition will form the framework within which we will consider our role as readers and our interpretation of the poetic treatment of the human response. Lectures, readings and class discussion will examine these ideas and concepts in the context of the Chinese literary memory. Through this methodical process, we will begin to *decode* the literary language of classical Chinese poetry and poetic craft. It is through this process of deciphering what can be puzzling or mysterious that the reader may emerge with yet another response to the human condition. Herein

lies the allure of classical Chinese poetry – we can still find our way to the Chinese poet's world today.

Course Expectations

- **This course will be graded on the Plus/Minus system.**
- There is no written final exam for this course.
- *Late assignments will be deducted by half a grade for each day past the due date. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes (5/7/10). Your final course grade will be based on work completed up to this date.*
- **Laptop Use Policy** – Classroom Laptop use for taking notes related to this course only. Please see me for an agreement form if you are planning on using a laptop in class for “notetaking.” Laptop activities unrelated to this course will lead to dismissal from class (and marked as an absence for that day). **Repeat offenders will result in a filing of a report of academic problems.**
- **Other Electronic Devices (Cell phone, Blackberry, I-Phone, etc.) Use Policy** – **All devices must be turned off during class.** Any use of these devices, including texting, websurfing, etc. will lead to dismissal from class (and marked as an absence for that day). **Repeat offenders will result in a filing of a report of academic problems.**
- There is a class attendance policy for this course.

Your grade for this course will be based on the following:

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| 10% | Class and online discussion, participation and “preparedness” |
| 10% | Informal Writing, Lead Discussant |
| 40% | Discussion Questions/ Expanded Responses |
| 25% | Critical Writing (Response Essay, Independent Project Paper) |
| 10% | Oral Presentation and leading discussion on independent project |
| 5% | Creative Writing: imitation and matching poems (evaluated CR/NC) |

- There is a class attendance policy for this course.
- *Class attendance.*

Attendance is vital for success in this course and I value your contribution to class discussion. As well, lectures will be vital for background on historical context and schools of thought, and flesh out ideas and concepts for discussion, all of which cannot be replaced by reading on your own.

ATTENDANCE POLICY – More than 2 absences, your final class participation grade will be deducted half a grade (e.g. A- to B+); additional half grades deducted for each additional 2 absences.

Religious Holidays – Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time **after** the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that **you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.**

- *Class and online discussion, participation and “preparedness.”* (10%)

Discussion is essential for an understanding and appreciation of the literature. Both verbal and written forms of expression are emphasized in this course. Be prepared to lead on your selected piece(s) with discussion questions and/or observations for each class session. Come to class with at least two observations to discuss. Oral recitation of some pieces will be highlighted to appreciate the language. I have selected translations that read well in English as well as reflecting the Chinese original appropriately, if not always precisely.

Writing – Informal and Critical Writing, Discussion Questions (70%)

The reading of literature is incomplete without the writing about one’s understanding of the literature at a given moment. The appreciation of literature is incomplete without the experience of creating one’s own voice. In this course, we will be writing about literature and writing some literature ourselves. In addition to informal writing in class and online, there will be formal writing assignments.

On matters of research and exploration of topics, I encourage you to make use of the UT library and its many resources. Website: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/students/>

On matters of writing at any stage, I encourage you to consult with me and/or make liberal use of the University’s Writing Center. <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc>

- *Informal Writing / Leading Discussion** (10%)

*There is no make-up for in-class informal writing and discussion questions.

Informal “free-writing” and “list-writing” will jumpstart many discussions. I strongly encourage you to be on time for class as some of the informal writing will take place at the beginning of class for only a few minutes; much of informal writing will be online on Blackboard Discussion Board. These will be collected and read but not assigned a formal grade. However, these will be tabulated toward your overall informal writing grade.

- *Discussion Questions (40%)*

Each response is worth 10 points.

Formulated “Discussions Questions” based on the material covered in class and background reading will be handed out weekly. You will be expected to develop one or two of these discussion questions into a concise but thoughtful response (1 page, typed, double-space). These discussion questions/expanded responses will due by the end of the week, and submitted as .doc or .docx files on Blackboard Assignments by Sunday 11:59 p.m. **No late submissions accepted for credit.**

These discussion question responses are exercises in developing your ideas and observations – some of these will evolve into components of your independent project paper. I would like you to regard informal writing as ongoing drafts, therefore you are NOT expected to focus on PRESENTATION (organization, clarity, usage of English) nor to have formal introductions or conclusions. Rather, the focus is on thinking, analysis, and brainstorming in written form, and evaluation will be based on CONTENT.

- *Critical Writing (25%)*

Submit Essays in .doc or .docx on Blackboard under Assignments. Allow for technical problems and wait time in meeting the deadline. All Essays due at 11:59 p.m. of due date.

- Essay 1 (2 pages, typed, double-space), due Week 3 (10%)
- Essay 2 (5-6 pages, typed, double-space), due Sunday after presentation of your independent project (15%)

Analytical and critical thinking will be the focus for these essays. Develop your observations and ideas into a thoughtful review of the literature, appending relevant ideas, interpretations, information, etc. from lectures, background reading, etc. View this critique as a point of thoughtful and analytical departure, rather than as a block of mere description. Support your observations and analysis with specific examples from the texts. How you define the parameters of this framework is up to you, and should reflect you in voice and in taste. The Panel Forum presentations are designed to be a complementary piece in the process of critical thinking and essay writing.

I look to your essays to reflect thoughtful observations and clear analysis regarding your chosen theme or themes; incorporate relevant ideas and works from background reading, in-class and online discussion, and lectures; and last but not least, to reflect something of your interest and inspiration as a reader of literature.

Footnotes or endnotes are required. Citation formatting guidelines are posted under Blackboard (See Course Documents.) **Plagiarism will not be tolerated and consequences will include failure of assignment and may lead to failure of the course.**

I expect you to proof your work carefully and to hand in final essays with minimal errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Each essay will be assessed two separate grades, evaluated on the following:

Content Discussion of topic (including assimilation of research, background reading, discussion, lectures), expression of ideas and opinions, observations, etc.

Presentation Organization, clarity of expression of ideas and opinions, proper usage of English

- *Creative Writing (5%)*
No late submissions accepted.

- 1 Poem in imitation of classical Chinese poetry
- 1 Matching Poem (of a classmate's poem)

Poems will be graded Credit/No Credit. Due by 11:59 p.m. on due date:

- "Imitation" Poem Due On Blackboard: Tuesday 5/4 11:59 p.m.
- "Matching" Poem Due on Blackboard: Wednesday 5/5 11:59 p.m.*

*Matching poem "drafts" will be shared in class Weds. 5/5.

The reading of literature and criticism is incomplete without the appreciation of literature, and this appreciation is an incomplete experience without creating one's own voice. In this assignment, I would like you to go beyond imitation, original or otherwise, and apply the theory to practice. The only restriction is to stay within the parameters of the Chinese literary memory, ongoing as it is.

- *Oral Presentations / Lead Discussant on Independent Project (10%)*

ONE Oral Presentation and leading discussion on your independent project (20-30 minute presentations/discussion, depending on class size). Project topics to be determined in consultation with instructor. The process of preparing an oral presentation of one's ideas is an integral part of developing ideas and refining observations. A prepared oral presentation is an excellent exercise in abstracting the essence of one's ideas, basically "getting to the point," and supporting one's point with meaningful examples. The process in preparing the oral presentation is also designed to assist you in the refining stages of your final essay.

Presentations will allow us to read and discuss poetry not previously covered in the course. Thus, you will "assign" one piece for class discussion on the day of your presentation. This piece will form the core of your oral presentation.

Your presentation will be evaluated on **Content and Presentation** as outlined above (under *Critical Writing*). You will not be assessed on oratory skills but a well-spoken and well-timed talk will greatly contribute to a communication of your ideas. As well, oral presentations are always good practice for something you will be called upon to do at some point in your life and career, long after you leave the classroom.

*****Applies to Graduate Students Only*****

For Graduate-Level Credit:

- **Complete a Conference Course Form and turn in by the add/drop date.**
- **See me to discuss details on additional reading and assignments.**

Detailed class and reading assignments will be posted/handed out for each section and posted on Blackboard. All sections will be supplemented by lecture outlines, notes and translations by instructor.

Text Abbreviations:

CCL: *Classical Chinese Literature – An Anthology of Translations*

Primer: *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*

Three Perfections: *The Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry and Calligraphy*

**Weeks 1-3 Introduction to Chinese Poetry and Poetic Craft
Calligraphy and Painting**

Reading: *CCL* (Ch. 1), *The Three Perfections* (entire book), Readings on BB

- Essay 1 due Week 3 (Sunday 2/7 11:59 p.m.) on BB

Week 4 Ancient/Early Poetry: *Book of Songs, Songs of the South*

Reading: *CCL* (Ch. 3, 5)

- Discussion Question 1 due Sunday 2/14 11:59 p.m. on BB

Week 5 Han-Six Dynasties Poetry (Folk, Literati)

Reading: *CCL* (Ch. 8-9)

- Discussion Question 2 due Sunday 2/21 11:59 p.m. on BB

Week 6 Six Dynasties Poets: Tao Yuanming

- Discussion Question 3 due Sunday 2/28 11:59 p.m. on BB

Week 7 The Tang Poets: Wang Wei

Reading: *CCL* (Ch. 18)

- Discussion Question 4 due Sunday 3/7 11:59 p.m. on BB

Week 8 The Tang Poets: Li Bo (Li Bai)

Reading: *CCL* (Ch. 19)

- Discussion Question 5 due Sunday 3/14 11:59 p.m. on BB

Week 9 Spring Break

Weeks 10-12 The Tang Poets: Du Fu

Reading: *Primer, CCL* (Ch. 20)

- Discussion Question 6 due Sunday 3/28 11:59 p.m. on BB
- Discussion Question 7 due Sunday 4/4 11:59 p.m. on BB
- Discussion Question 8 due Sunday 4/11 11:59 p.m. on BB

Week 13 Oral Presentations/ Discussion

Reading: tba by presenters

- Essay 2 for presenters due Sunday 4/18 11:59 p.m. on BB
- Discussion Question 9 due Sunday 4/18 11:59 p.m. on BB*

*Optional for Presenters

Week 14 Oral Presentations/ Discussion

Reading: tba by presenters

- Essay 2 for presenters due Sunday 4/25 11:59 p.m. on BB
- Discussion Question 10 due Sunday 4/25 11:59 p.m. on BB*

*Optional for Presenters

Week 15 Oral Presentations/ Discussion

Reading: tba by presenters

- Essay 2 for presenters due Sunday 5/2 11:59 p.m. on BB
- Discussion Question 11 due Sunday 5/2 11:59 p.m. on BB*

*Optional for Presenters

Week 16 Imitation/Matching Poetry

- “Imitation” Poem Due On Blackboard: Tuesday 5/4 11:59 p.m.
- “Matching” Poem Due on Blackboard: Wednesday 5/5 11:59 p.m.*

*Matching poem “drafts” will be shared in class Weds. 5/5.

NOTE – There is no written final exam for this course. No assignments will be accepted after last day of classes (5/7/10).

Use of Blackboard

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Blackboard can be used to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to take online quizzes and surveys.

You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notifications of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are **not** an excuse for late work. However, if there is an unscheduled downtime for a significant period of time, I will make an adjustment if it occurs close to the due date.

- Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

The UT Library

The UT Library system offers resource help and many services in support of your course work. The following link is tools and support for Undergraduate Students: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/students/>

The Undergraduate Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center provides individual, professional advice on all aspects of writing to UT undergraduates on a drop-in basis or by appointment. Location: Flawn Academic Center 211, 471-6222.

Writer's Advice Line: free and open to everyone Email your brief query or call at 475-
VERB.

Website: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

(Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: if you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

Documented Disability Statement

Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 – voice or 471-4641 – TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. For more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>