

HIS 350L / ANS 372J / WGS 340
WOMEN AND GENDER IN CHINA

Spring 2021
Monday 5:00-8:00 p.m.
Instruction Mode: Internet, synchronous
Office Hour: Wed. & Fri. 2:00-3:30 pm

Professor Huaiyin Li
Office: GAR 3.202
Phone: 475 7910
Email: hli@utexas.edu

Course description:

This course examines women and gender in China from imperial times to the present. Major themes include the changing conceptions of femininity in Chinese cultural and religious contexts; gender roles and inequalities in the patriarchal family and society; the varying discourse on women and gender in the modern period; women's dilemma in the Chinese Revolution; new challenges to women and new conceptions of gender and sexuality during the reform era since the 1980s. There is no prerequisite for attending this course, but some background in Chinese history is recommended.

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

Required readings:

Books:

- 1) Robin Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture* (Hackett, 2003);
- 2) Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*. (University of California Press, 1993);
- 3) Gail Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018);
- 4) Leta Fincher, *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (Zed Books, 2016).

Articles:

In addition to the books listed above, this course also includes a number of academic articles as required readings. For details about these articles, see the lists of readings for some of the weeks in which the articles are included.

Assignments and grading:

- 1) Weekly report (10%): This is an undergraduate seminar with a substantial writing component. You are expected to read at least two chapters/articles each week from the weekly reading assignments before class and write a one-page report on one of the readings. Your report should summarize the main points of the reading, make your own comments, and raise a question for class discussion. You are expected to write 10 reports during the semester and email each of them to the instructor by 12 pm on Monday.
- 2) Class participation (10%): You are expected to actively participate in discussions and do presentations.

- 3) Mid-term exam (40%): The mid-term on October 17 consists of IDs and short-answer questions.
- 4) Research paper (40%): You are expected to write a paper of 10-12 double-spaced pages, on a topic of your choice and with the instructor's consent. Proposal is due April 12. The paper is due and to be presented in class on May 3.
- 5) Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class meetings and are responsible for signing in on an attendance sheet during each class. You are allowed one unexcused absence; additional absences will adversely affect your final grade, 5% for each missed class and up to 20%.

Note:

- 1) Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade.
- 2) Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Schedule:

Jan. 25 Gender and Gender Roles in Early China

Lecture: Introduction

Readings and discussion:

Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters*
Chap. 1 "Separating the Sexes"

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*
2. The Book of Odes
6. Analects of Confucius
7. Daodejing

Melissa J. Brown et al., "Marriage Mobility and Footbinding in Pre-1949 Rural China: A Reconsideration of Gender, Economics, and Meaning in Social Causation," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (2012), pp. 1035-1067.

Videos: "The Three-inch Golden Lotus of My Great-grandma" (25 min., available at Youtube); or "Last Golden Lotus: The Secret of Chinese Footbinding" (1 h 12 min., available at Amazon Prime Video).

Feb. 1 Women in the Tradition of Confucianism

Lecture: Women in Confucian China

Readings and discussion:

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*

- 5. The Record of Rites
- 13. Mencius
- 22. Biographies of Women
- 23. Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn
- 24. Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall
- 25. Lessons for Women
- 31. Family Instructions to the Yan Clan
- 42. The Analects for Women

Feb. 8 Women and Religion

Lecture: Women and Religion in imperial China

Readings and discussion:

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, Part Five

- 34. The Forty-Two Chapters Sutra
- 35. The Sutra of the Teaching of Vimalakirti
- 36. The Story of Dragon King's Daughter
- 37. Guanyin Chapter of the Lotus Sutra
- 40. Tang Epitaphs for Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist Women
- 44. The Daoist Goddess, Queen Mother of the West

Feb. 15 Marriage in Traditional China

Readings and discussion:

Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters*

- Chap. 2 Meanings of Marriage
- Chap. 3 Making a Match
- Chap. 4 Rites and Celebrations
- Chap. 5 Dowries
- Chap. 11 Second Marriages
- Chap. 12 Concubines
- Chap. 13 Continuing the Family Through Women

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, Part Five:

- 30. New Songs from a Jade Terrace
- 32. The Ballad of Mulan
- 47. The Story of Yingying
- 48. The Story of Miss Li

Feb. 22 Women in the Traditional Family

Readings and discussion:

Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters*

- Chap. 6 Upper-Class Wives as Inner Helpers
- Chap. 7 Women's Work Making Cloth

- Chap. 8 Husband-Wife Relations
- Chap. 9 Motherhood
- Chap. 10 Widowhood
- Chap. 12 Concubines
- Chap. 13 Continuing the Family Through Women
- Chap. 14 Adultery, Incest, and Divorce
- Chap. 15 Reflections on Women, Marriage, and Change

Mar. 1 Women in Traditional China

Movie: "Raise the Red Lantern"

Mar. 8 Women in Late-Qing China

Lecture: Women in late-Qing China

Readings and discussion:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*

- Chap. 1 The Gendered Labor of Empire, 1800-1840
- Chap. 2 Disturbances, 1840-1912
- Chap. 3 Revolutionary Currents, 1895-1912

Mar. 15 (Spring break)

Mar. 22 Mid-term

Mar. 29 Women under the Republic

Lecture: Women in Republican China

Readings and discussion:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*

- Chap. 4 Imagined Futures, 1912-27
- Chap. 5 Regulatory Regimes, 1928-37
- Chap. 6 Wartime Women, 1928-41
- Chap. 7 Wartime Women, 1935-49

Philip Huang, "Women's Choices under the Law: Marriage, Divorce, and Illicit Sex in the Qing and the Republic," *Modern China*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2001), pp. 3-58.

Apr. 5 Women and the Communist Revolution

Lecture: Women and the Communist Revolution

Readings and discussion:

Zheng Yangwen, "Women's Revolution Embodied in Mao Zedong Era Ballet," in Bryan S. Turner and Zheng Yangwen (eds.), *The Body in Asia* (Berghahn, 2009)

Video: "The Red Detachment of Women" (movie) or "The Red Detachment of Women" (ballet).

Apr. 12 Women and Family in Maoist China

Lecture: Women and Family under Mao

Readings and discussion:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*

Chap. 8 The Socialist Construction of Women, 1949-78.

Wang Zheng, "State Feminism? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2005), pp. 519-551.

Weiguo Zhang, "Class Categories and Marriage Patterns in Rural China in the Mao Era," *Modern China*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2013), pp. 438-471.

Kimberley Ens, "Embodied Activisms: The Case of the Mu Guiying Brigade," *The China Quarterly*, No. 204 (2010), pp. 850-869.

Huaiyin Li, "Life Cycle, Labor Remuneration, and Gender Inequality in a Chinese Agrarian Collective," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2005), pp. 277-303.

Jiping Zuo, "Women's Liberation and Gender Obligation Equality in Urban China: Work/Family Experiences of Married Individuals in the 1950s," *Science & Society*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (2013), pp. 98-125.

(Research paper proposal due)

Apr. 19 Women in the Reform Era

Lecture: Women in the reform era

Readings and discussion:

Michael Palmer, "The Re-Emergence of Family Law in Post-Mao China: Marriage, Divorce and Reproduction," *The China Quarterly*, No. 141, (1995), pp. 110-134.

Yan Hairong, "Specialization of the Rural: Reinterpreting the Labor Mobility of Rural Young Women in Post-Mao China," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2003), pp. 578-596.

Fincher, *Leftover Women*

1. China's "leftover" women

2. How Chinese women were shut out of the biggest accumulation of real-estate wealth in history

3. China's giant gender wealth gap

Apr. 26 The Reform Era

Readings and discussion:

Fincher, *Leftover Women*

4. Back to the Ming dynasty
5. Wives caught in China's web of abuse
6. Fighting back

Movie: "Lost in Beijing"

May 3 Presentation of research paper