

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

Spring 2022  
Monday 3:00-6:00 p.m.  
Room: MEZ 1.208  
Office Hour: Mon. 12:30-2:30 pm & by appt.

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**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) Ping Yao, *Women, Gender, and Sexuality in China*. (Routledge, 2022);
- 3) Gail Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

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. Each week, you are expected to read at least one chapter or article from the required readings of the week and another chapter or article from the supplementary readings of the week. Write a one-page, single-spaced report on the weekly readings. Your report should summarize the main points of the readings, make your own comments, and ask two questions 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 Wednesday.
- 2) Class participation (10%): You are expected to actively participate in discussions and do presentations.

- 3) Mid-term exam (40%): The mid-term on March 7 consists of a number of 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 March 30. The paper is due and to be presented in class on May 4.
- 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. 24 Gender and Gender Roles in Early China**

Lecture: Introduction

#### Required readings:

Yao, *Women, Gender, and Sexuality in China*,  
1. "Life Course and Gender Roles"

#### Supplementary readings:

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

#### **Jan. 31 Women in the Tradition of Confucianism**

Lecture: Women in Confucian China

#### Required readings:

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*,  
5. "The Record of Rites"  
25. "Lessons for Women"  
24. "Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall"

#### Supplementary readings:

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

- 13. "Mencius"
- 22. "Biographies of Women"
- 23. "Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn"
- 31. "Family Instructions to the Yan Clan"
- 42. "The Analects for Women"
- 49. "Precepts for Family Life"

## Feb. 7 Women and Religion

Lecture: Religion in Imperial China

### Required readings:

Yao, *Women, Gender, and Sexuality in China*,  
5. "Religions"

### Supplementary readings:

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"

## Feb. 14 Marriage and Family

### Required readings:

Yao, *Women, Gender, and Sexuality in China*,  
3. "Marriage and Family"

### Supplementary readings:

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, Part Five:  
30. "New Songs from a Jade Terrace"  
47. "The Story of Yingying"  
48. "The Story of Miss Li"

## Feb. 21 Sexuality and Everyday Life

### Required readings:

Yao, *Women, Gender, and Sexuality in China*  
3. "Sex, Body, and Medicine"  
4. "Labor, Profession, and Everyday Life"

### Supplementary readings:

Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, Part Five:  
32. The Ballad of Mulan

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. 28 Literature and Education**

### Required readings:

Yao, *Womeen, Gender, and Sexuality in China*,  
6. “Arts, Literature, and Education”

Hershatter, *Women and China’s Revolutions*  
1. The Gendered Labor of Empire, 1800-1840

### Required readings:

Yao, *Womeen, Gender, and Sexuality in China*,  
7. “Five Women to Remember”

## **Mar. 7 Women in Traditional China**

### Mid-term exam

Supplementary material:  
Movie, “Raise the Red Lantern”

## **Mar. 14 (Spring break)**

## **Mar. 21 Women in Late-Qing China**

Lecture: Women in Late-Qing China

### Required readings:

Hershatter, *Women and China’s Revolutions*,  
2. “Disturbances, 1840-1912”  
3. “Revolutionary Currents, 1895-1912”

## **Mar. 28 Women under the Republic**

Lecture: Women in Republican China

### Required readings:

Hershatter, *Women and China’s Revolutions*,  
4. “Imagined Futures, 1912-27”

5. “Regulatory Regimes, 1928-37”

(Research paper proposal due)

**Apr. 4 Women and Revolution**

Lecture: Women and the Communist Revolution

Required readings:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*,

6. “Wartime Women, 1928-41”

7. “Wartime Women, 1935-49”

Supplementary readings:

David Goodman, “Revolutionary Women and Women in the Revolution: The Chinese Communist Party and Women in the War of Resistance to Japan, 1937-1945,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 164 (2000), pp. 915-942.

Video: “The Red Detachment of Women” (ballet).

**Apr. 11 Women and Family in Maoist China**

Lecture: Women and the Family under Mao

Required readings:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*,

8. “The Socialist Construction of Women, 1949-78.”

Supplementary readings:

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

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.

Jacob Eyferth, “Women’s Work and the Politics of Homespun in Socialist China, 1949–1980,” *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (2012), pp. 365-391.

**Apr. 18 Rural Women in the Reform Era**

Lecture: Women in the Reform Era

Required readings:

Yunxiang Yan, "Girl Power: Young Women and the Waning of Patriarchy in Rural North China," *Ethnology*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2006), pp. 105-123.

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.

Supplementary readings:

Yan Hairong, "Spectralization 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.

**Apr. 25 Urban Women in the Reform Era**

Required readings:

Vanessa Fong, "China's One-Child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (2002), pp. 1098-1109.

Yingchun Ji, "Between Tradition and Modernity: 'Leftover' Women in Shanghai," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (2015), pp. 1057-1073.

Supplementary readings:

Ye Liu, "Women rising as half of the sky? on women from the one-child generation and their education participation in contemporary China," *Higher Education*, Vol. 74, No. 6 (2017), pp. 963-978.

Harriet Evans, "The Gender of Communication: Changing Expectations of Mothers and Daughters in Urban China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 204 (2010), pp. 980-1000.

Movie: "Lost in Beijing"

**May. 2 Presentation of research paper**