

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

Fall 2024
Tue. & Thur. 3:30-5:00 p.m.
Room: GAR 0.120
Office Hour: Tue. & Thur. 11:00 am-12:30 pm

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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.

Throughout the semester, each student is expected to write 10 reports on the weekly readings and present the readings covered by each report. But the most important task is to identify a research topic, write a 12-15 page (double-spaced) paper on that topic, and present a draft version of the paper to the class for discussion. The proposal of your research paper is due November 5, and the final draft of your finished paper is due December 3.

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) Hua Lan and Vanessa Fong, eds., *Women in Republican China: A Sourcebook* (Routledge, 2015);
- 4) 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%): Each week, you are expected to read at least one book chapter, or one academic article, or three chapters of a source book (*Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, and *Women in Republican China*) from the readings. Write a one-page, single-spaced report (in 12-point font and with 1-inch margins) on the readings of your choice. 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 10 am on the day when the readings covered by your report are to be discussed.

- 2) Class participation (10%): You are expected to actively participate in discussions and do presentations.
- 3) Mid-term exam (40%): on October 10.
- 4) Research paper (40%): You are expected to write a paper of 12-15 double-spaced pages (in 12-point font and with 1-inch margins), on a topic of your choice and with the instructor's consent. Paper proposal is due November 6. The finished paper is due and to be presented in class on December 3 and 5.
- 5) Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. 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:

Aug. 27 & 29 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
17. The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine

Sept. 3 & 5 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

- 25. Lessons for Women
- 31. Family Instructions to the Yan Clan
- 42. The Analects for Women

Sept. 10 & 12 Women and Religion

Lecture: 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

Sept. 17 & 19 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

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

Sept. 24 & 26 Family Life in Traditional China

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

Oct. 1 & 3 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

Oct. 8 & 10 Movie and Midterm

Movie: "Raise the Red Lantern"

Midterm: Oct. 10

Oct. 15 & 17 Marriage and the Family under the Republic

Lecture: Women in Republican China

Readings and discussion:

Lan and Fong, *Women in Republican China*

Chap. 1 The Way of Confucius and Modern Life

Chap. 2 My Views on Chastity

Chap. 3 Is This Also a Human Being?

Chap. 5 How Can We Honor Women?

Chap. 7 Freedom of Marriage and Democracy

Chap. 9 Love and Socializing Between Men and Women

Chap. 11 My View on the Issue of Divorce

Oct. 22 & 24 Discourse on Gender Equality and Women's Emancipation

Lan and Fong, *Women in Republican China*

Chap. 14 The Question of Miss Zhao's Personality

Chap. 15 Concerning the Incident of Miss Zhao's Suicide

Chap. 17 "The Evils of Society" and Miss Zhao

Chap. 18 The Biography of Li Chao

Chap. 20 The Incident of Miss Xi Shangzhen's Suicide

Chap. 22 My Plan for Women's Emancipation and My Plan for Self-Education

Chap. 28 The Question of Women's Character

Chap. 29 The Woman Question in China: Emancipation from a Trap

Chap. 31 The Great Inappropriateness of Women's Emancipation

Chap. 35 A Plan for Women's Development: Letter from Xiang Jingyu

Chap. 38 Vanguard Women

Chap. 42 The Woman Question and Socialism

Oct. 29 & 31 Women in Revolution

Lecture: Women and the Communist Revolution

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

Nov. 5 & 7 Women and Family in Maoist China

Lecture: Women and the Family under Mao

Readings and discussion:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*
Chap. 8, The Socialist Construction of Women, 1949-78.

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.

(Research paper proposal due Nov. 5)

Nov. 12 & 14 Rural Women in the Reform Era

Lecture: Women in the Reform Era

Readings and discussion:

Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*
Chap. 9, Capitalized Women, 1978-

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.

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

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.

Nov. 19 & 21 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.

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: "Love(less) in China: Why Aren't Young Chinese Getting Married?"

Dec. 3 & 5 Presentation of research paper