

ANS 372/CL 323 FALL 2010
The Dead Are Alive –
The Supernatural in Traditional Chinese Fiction
MWF 12-1 p.m.
Mezes 1.120

Dr. C.M. Lai (Léi 雷)
WCH 5.112
475-6054
cmlai@mail.utexas.edu

[All lectures, discussion and readings in English.]

Office Hours: Mondays 3-5 p.m., Wednesdays 3-4 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)

Recommended Novel and Drama/Opera:

Cao Xueqin, translated by David Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone, Vols. I, II, III* (Penguin, 1973, 1977, 1980) [aka *Honglou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber)]
Cao Xueqin and Gao E, translated by John Minford, *The Story of the Stone, Vols. IV, V* (Penguin, 1982, 1986)
Tang Xianzu, translated by Cyril Birch, *The Peony Pavilion – Mudan ting*. 2nd ed (Indiana, 2002)

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

Course Description

[This course is open to all students – no previous background in Chinese language, culture or literature is required.]

This course will provide an introduction to the so-called supernatural and otherworldly phenomena in traditional Chinese literature and “pseudo-history.” Readings in English translation will encompass a selective sampling of prose, short fiction, and drama/opera from pre-modern China (end of imperialism in early 20th century). Lectures and discussions will focus on the literary, cultural, historical, social, political, philosophical, and religious background against which these representative works arose. Background reading will be assigned to supplement the primary works of literature and pseudo-history. Course emphasis will be given to close and critical reading of primary works (in English translation) which were originally written in Classical Chinese and vernacular Classical Chinese. Topics covered include otherworldly concepts of the Dao (the Way) and various interpretations of the afterlife, with an introduction to differences between spirits, souls, ghosts and other ethereal beings in various Chinese secular and religious belief systems. Readings introduce Chinese notions of the supernatural in the form of such beings as immortals, goddesses, and shape-shifters.

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 (12/3/10). 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 submit an agreement form by Week 3 if you are planning on using a laptop in class for “notetaking.” Please download the agreement form from the Blackboard course site. 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:

There is no final exam in this course.

- 15% Class and online discussion, participation and preparation (Attendance policy)
- 70% Writing:
- 5% Informal in-class and Blackboard “brainstorming” writing
 - 25% Reading and Discussion Questions
 - 40% Formal Critical and Analytical Writing
- 10% Two Oral Presentation/Lead Discussant (2 Sections)
- 5% Creative Writing – short story/prose/dramatic act (Evaluated CR/NC)

Class Participation, Discussion and Attendance (15%)

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

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 3 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 **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.”*

Discussion is essential for an understanding and appreciation of the literature. I have selected translations that read well in English as well as reflecting the Chinese original appropriately, if not always precisely. Both verbal and written forms of expression are emphasized in this course. Be prepared for discussion of assigned reading by Wednesday and Friday class sessions. In-class writing will take place at the start of most Friday class sessions.

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** (5%)

*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.

- *Reading and Discussion Questions (25%)*

Each week’s Discussion Questions are worth 10 points. There is no make-up of Reading/Discussion questions but your lowest score (including 0 for one missed) will be dropped in the final tabulation of your average.

Formulated “Discussions Questions” based on the material covered in class and background reading will be handed out most Fridays for in-class writing. You will be expected to develop these discussion questions into concise but thoughtful responses. Some questions will be factually based, some will be geared toward your response to the lecture and readings. These discussion questions will be handed out at the start of class and take no more than 10 or 15 minutes. If you arrive after the in-class writing is completed, the score you will receive is 0.

These discussion question responses are exercises in developing your ideas and observations – some of these will evolve into components of your essays. 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* (40%)

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** (3-4 pages, typed, double-space, with Citation), due Friday of the week of your Oral Presentation/Lead Discussant work (20%)
- **Essay 2** (3-4 pages, typed, double-space with Citation), due Friday of the week of your Oral Presentation/Lead Discussant work (20%)

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 in-depth discussion, 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. Serious breaches of academic integrity will be reported.**

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%)

- One short story or prose piece or dramatic act (between 5-10 pages typed, double-space)
- **DRAFT due Wednesday 11/24 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard Discussion Board (2%)**
- **FINAL Version due Friday 12/3 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard (Assignments) (3%)**

Evaluated Credit / No Credit. No late submissions of draft or final versions accepted for credit.

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 subject matter covered in the course.

Oral Presentations (Panel) / Lead Discussant on 2 Sections (10%)

- **TWO** Oral Presentations and Lead Discussant work on your selected piece (10-15 minute presentations/discussion, depending on class size).
- Please sign up for two Panel Groups, one in Section I (Supernatural Love) and one in Section II (The Dead Are Alive). See Schedule Outline below.

Sign-up sheets will be available in class after Week 2. 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 essay.

Your Panel Group will be "assigned" different shorter pieces or parts of one longer piece for presentation and leading of class discussion. Your presentation/lead discussant work will form the core of your essay due the Friday (at 11:59 p.m.) of the same week.

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 presentation 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.**

SCHEDULE OUTLINE

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.

Required Text:

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

Weeks 1-2 **Introduction to Chinese Views of the Cosmos**
– The Natural and the Supernatural

Weeks 3-4 **Diviners, Magicians, Doctors, and Recluses**

Week 5 **Dreams, Omens, and Predestination**

Weeks 6-9 **Panel Discussion Section I: Supernatural Love**
– Mortal Encounters with Spirits, Immortals, Goddesses and Shape-shifters
[Essay 1]

Weeks 10-13 **Panel Discussion Section II: The Dead Are Alive**
– Returning from the Dead, Going to Hell
[Essay 2]

Week 14 **Creative Writing**
[Draft]

[No class Thanksgiving Break Friday 11/26]

Week 15 **Course Overview; Creative Writing**
[Final Version]

NOTE – There is no final exam in this course. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes (12/3/10).

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>