

## Topics in Chinese Literature – Religion (ARC/RELS 401): Fall 2013 – Syllabus

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Office hours: T/Th 9.00-9.30 + 12.45-1.15pm + by appointment  
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Class times: Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9.35 to 10.55 in Cherry Hall 316

### Course description:

This course is a survey of classical Chinese literature with particular attention given to religious themes. Of these themes we will focus on the relationships between the individual and society, humans and nature, humans and the transcendent, men and women, and tradition and modernity. We will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures in which they live. We will also consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape social and religious norms and behaviors. Sources (in English translation) include a divination manual, royal court records, poetry, prose, short stories, a novel, tales of the supernatural, a play, contemporary fiction by Chinese and Chinese-American authors, and a film.

### Goals:

1. Information literacy: correctly locate and evaluate relevant information.  
(Knowing how to use apposite data to objectively examine (conflicting) claims with logic, doubt, and humility.)
2. Critical thinking: adequately analyze and synthesize data into evidence to support interesting claims.  
(Moving from an “is X true or false?” paradigm to a “let’s weigh the evidence” paradigm.)
3. Objective communication: construct logical, eloquent, and evidence-based arguments.  
(Presenting your claims (and perhaps those of others) as accurately, precisely, and dispassionately as possible.)
4. Social responsibility: recognize that civil rights naturally entail civic engagement.  
(Acting for a peaceful society that strives to ameliorate the greed and exaggerated consumption of capitalism.)
5. *Eudaimonia*; Happiness: the early Greeks and early Chinese both knew it was the product of the mental, moral, and aesthetic self-cultivation that can and should attend a critical study of the arts.

### Grades:

Prepared participation in all class discussions: 25%

Submission of 10 reading responses: 25%

By 8 a.m. on each Thursday indicated in the course calendar below, email comments and questions (not summaries) related to that week’s material to the instructor. Responses should consist of no fewer than 250 words of error-free English prose. Responses will be graded pass/fail and cannot be made up.

Submission of 2 analytic essays: 25% each

By each of the deadlines prescribed in the course calendar below, you must submit a double-spaced, 12-point-font essay of 10-15 pages presenting an argument on a topic described in the course calendar at the appropriate date. Each should be submitted as an emailed, attached Microsoft Word document. Drafts are welcome up to 48 hours in advance of deadlines.

Grading rubric: (See the “Grading” section at the end of this syllabus for more detail)

Information literacy: consider the currency, reliability, point of view, and purpose of your sources

Critical Thinking: evaluate the quality of the descriptions and arguments—particularly their *evidence*—in your sources

Objective communication: clearly and logically explicate your *thesis*, within a stated *context*, with compelling *evidence*

**tlcr: participation: 25% + reading responses: 25% + first paper: 25% + second paper: 25% = 100%**

As Confucius said: “I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again.” *Analects* 7.8 [子曰不憤不啟不悱不發舉一隅不以三隅反則不復也]

Graduate students taking this course will not be expected to complete additional work, but will have higher expectations placed upon them for their work. This means I will expect more from your class participation, from your reading responses, and from your analytic essays.

### Texts:

Knight, Sabina. *Chinese Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. [120 pgs]  
Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1505-1580), trans. Arthur Waley, *Monkey* (1943). [300 pgs]  
Other readings in pdf format are on Blackboard.

### Readings:

#### Week 1: Introduction

27 Aug 2013: Sabina Knight, *Chinese Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2012).

29 Aug 2013: Sabina Knight, *Chinese Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2012).

#### Week 2: W. Zhou 西周 (1045-771)

03 Sep 2013: *Yijing*: Richard Wilhelm; trans. Cary Baynes, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes* (1923; rpt. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949; 1967), xlvii-lxii, 3-15 (Introduction, #1 & #2)

05 Sep 2013: Reading response #1 due by 8am!

Edward Shaughnessy, "Composition of Qian and Kun Hexagrams" (1983), rpt. in *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 197-219.

#### Week 3: W. Zhou 西周 (1045-771)

10 Sep 2013: *Shijing*, Stephen Owen, "Foreword" to Arthur Waley's *The Book of Songs* (1937; 1996), xii-xxv, 5-6, 11 (Foreword, Odes 1, 10),

AND:

Hui Zhihui 胡志揮, trans., *Zuo's Commentary* (湖南人民出版社, 1996), 1571-1579 ("Duke Ai 17<sup>th</sup> year").

12 Sep 2013: Reading response #2 due by 8am!

Edward Shaughnessy, "How the Poetess Came to Burn the Royal Chamber" in *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 221-238.

#### Week 4: E. Zhou 東周 (770-221)

17 Sep 2013: *Zuo zhuan*: Burton Watson, trans., *The Tso Chuan: Selections from China's Oldest Narrative History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 21-53.

19 Sep 2013: Reading response #3 due by 8am!

*Li sao*: David Hawkes, trans., *Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), 21-34.

#### Week 5: E. Zhou 東周 (770-221)

24 Sep 2013: Chuang Tzu (Zhuāngzǐ 莊子), "Three Dialogues." Trans. Arthur Waley, Burton Watson. In *Anthology of Chinese Literature, Volume 1: From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century [ACL]*, ed. Cyril Birch (New York: Grove Press, 1994), 82-85,

AND:

Chang Heng (Zhāng Héng 張衡), "The Bones of Chuang Tzu." Trans. Arthur Waley. In *ACL*, 176-178.

26 Sep 2013: Reading response #4 due by 8am!

Mark Csikszentmihalyi, ed. *Readings in Han Chinese Thought* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 116-155 ("Demons & spirits" + "Death & Transcendence").

#### Week 6: Han 漢 (202-220)

01 Oct 2013: Chia Yi (Jiǎ Yì 賈誼; 201-169), "The Owl" & "Lament for Ch'ü Yüan." Trans. J. R. Hightower. In *ACL*, 138-141.

03 Oct 2013: FALL BREAK (Oct 3-4)

**Week 7: Wei-Jin 魏晉 (265-581)**

08 Oct 2013: Lu Chi (Lù Jī 陸機; 261-303), "Essay on Literature." Trans. Shih-hsiang Chen. In *ACL*, 204-214,  
AND:

Gān Bǎo 干寶 (fl.315), "*In Search of Spirits: Twelve Tales.*" Trans. Kenneth DeWoskin. In *Classical Chinese Literature, Volume 1: From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty*, eds. John Minford and Joseph S. M. Lau (New York and Hong Kong: Columbia University Press and Chinese University Press, 2000), 652-665.

10 Oct 2013: Analytic essay #1 due by 8am!

In a double-spaced, 12-point-font essay of 10-15 pages, compare how any 2 works assigned thus far in the course address the relationship between either (a) individuals and society, (b) humans and nature, or (c) humans and the transcendent. What is "religious" about this relationship? *Cite all works quoted or paraphrased using the Chicago documentation style, both in your essay text and in an accompanying bibliography. In addition to at least 2 works assigned in the course thus far, your sources must include at least 4 academic print or electronic sources available through the WKU Library.*

AND:

T'ao Ch'ien (Táo Qián 陶潛; 365-427). "Peach Blossom Spring." Trans. Cyril Birch. In *ACL*, 167-168

AND:

T'ao Ch'ien (Táo Qián 陶潛). "Two Poems on Returning to Dwell in the Country." Trans. William Acker. In *ACL*, 182-183.

**Week 8: Tang 唐 (618-907) & Song 宋 (960-1279)**

15 Oct 2013: Wang Wei (Wáng Wéi 王維; 700-761) and P'ei Ti (Péi Dí 裴迪), "From 'Poems of the River Wang.'" Trans. C. J. Chen and Michael Bullock. In *ACL*, 220-223,

AND:

Li Po (Lǐ Bái 李白; 699-762), "On the Mountain: Question and Answer." Trans. Arthur Waley. In *ACL*, 225,

AND:

Li Po (Lǐ Bái 李白), "Four Poems on Wine." Trans. William Acker, A. C. Graham. In *ACL*, 230-233.

17 Oct 2013: Reading response #5 due by 8am!

Po Chü-yi (Bái Jūyì 白居易; 772-846), "The Temple." Trans. Arthur Waley. In *ACL*, 270-277,

AND:

Su Shih (Sū Shì 蘇軾; 1037-1101), "The Red Cliff." Trans. A. C. Graham. In *ACL*, 381-384.

**Week 9: Yuan 元 (1279-1368)**

22 Oct 2013: Li Haogu 李好古 (c.1230), "Zhang Boils the Sea" (張生煮海) in Liu Jung-en, *Six Yuan Plays* (Penguin, 1972), 159-187.

24 Oct 2013: Reading response #6 due by 8am!

Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1505-1580), trans. Arthur Waley, *Monkey* (1943), chs.1-5. [300 pgs total]

**Weeks 10-11: Ming 明 (1368-1644)**

29 Oct 2013: Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1505-1580), trans. Arthur Waley, *Monkey* (1943), chs.6-12.

31 Oct 2013: Reading response #7 due by 8am!

Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1505-1580), trans. Arthur Waley, *Monkey* (1943), chs.13-19.

05 Nov 2013: Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1505-1580), trans. Arthur Waley, *Monkey* (1943), chs.20-24.

07 Nov 2013: Reading response #8 due by 8am!

Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1505-1580), trans. Arthur Waley, *Monkey* (1943), chs.25-30.

**Week 12: Qing 清 (1644-1911)**

12 Nov 2013: Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715), *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異, trans. John Minford, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (Penguin, 2006), “Hua bi 畫壁” (Painted Wall), 23-27 (#6); “Jiaona 嬌娜” (Grace and Pine), 76-86 (#21); “San sheng 三生” (Past Lives), 98-101 (#25); “Hua pi 畫皮” (The Painted Skin), 126-132 (#34); “Ying ning 嬰寧” (The Laughing Girl), 152-167 (#40); “Lian suo 連瑣” (Twenty Years a Dream), 280-289 (#65) [+ notes, pp.503-504, 511-512, 515-516, 521-523, 526-527, 542-543]

14 Nov 2013: Reading response #9 due by 8am!

Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936), “Benediction” in ACL2, 303-320,

OR:

Wang T'ieh, “The Smashing of the Dragon King” in ACL2, 402-430.

**Week 13: Qing 清 (1644-1911)**

19 Nov 2013: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Wòhǔ Cánglóng 臥虎藏龍)*. Directed by Ang Lee (Lǐ Ān 李安). 2000; USA: Sony Pictures, 2001.

21 Nov 2013: Watching movie response #10 due by 8am!

*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Wòhǔ Cánglóng 臥虎藏龍)*. Directed by Ang Lee (Lǐ Ān 李安). 2000; USA: Sony Pictures, 2001.

**Week 14: Modern**

26 Nov 2013: Maxine Hong Kingston, “White Tigers” in *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 17-53.

28 Nov 2013: “Thanksgiving” holiday

**Week 15:**

03 Dec 2013: Student paper presentations

05 Dec 2013: Student paper presentations

Analytic essay #2 due by 8am!

In a double-spaced, 12-point-font essay of 10-15 pages, compare how any 2 works assigned since the first essay was due address the relationship between either (a) individuals and society, (b) men and women, or (c) tradition and modernity. What is “religious” about this relationship? *Cite all works quoted or paraphrased using the Chicago documentation style, both in your essay text and in an accompanying bibliography. In addition to at least 2 works assigned in the course thus far, your sources must include at least 3 academic print or electronic sources available through WKU Library.*

**Student issues:****Student-teacher relations in the Arts & Humanities:**

I'm not here to sell you knowledge. You can get that online or in the library. Selling knowledge to a customer may be the paradigm for other academic divisions, but not in the Arts. History, literature, philosophy, and religion professors are like football coaches: we show you what exercises to do to acquire certain skills, skills like critical thinking, creativity, and communication, but you do the actual work. You are not a passive receptacle of learning, but rather an active practitioner of skill acquirement. Thus we often say of our courses: the more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

**Preparation for class:**

It is generally accepted in higher academic circles that students must study two to three hours outside of class for every hour spent in class, and this course will certainly demand such commitment. As this course meets 2.5 hours per week, you should expect to spend between five and eight hours per week studying for this course. Students who are unable or unwilling to commit this amount of time to this course should reconsider whether this course is appropriate for them. Try not to fall behind on the reading because it is very difficult to catch up. This is a survey course, and we move along quickly.

**Classroom behavior:**

I expect you to be not only on time and prepared, but also to demonstrate initiative by asking interesting questions and otherwise engaging the topic at hand. You may have thoughtfully read all of the assignment, but I won't know this unless you give me evidence of this by talking with me about it. An Arts classroom is also like a corporate boardroom: there is protocol to be followed (e.g., raising your hand for a question), there are other people in the room deserving of your respect (e.g., by not distracting them), and there is the fact that you are being judged on your behavior and participation (that 25% of your grade).

**Cellphones (and all other hand-held electronic devices):**

We live in a fast-paced world. But the skills you have the opportunity to practice in Arts courses require mental focus. Staying focused on a task for eighty minutes at a time is a skill, and a marketable one at that. Cellphones are distracting, perhaps delightfully so, but distraction detracts from focus. Therefore, no cellphones, or any other hand-held electric devices, are allowed in the classroom. Please turn them off and stow them in your pocket or bag before class begins. I don't want to see them or hear them. Thanks!

**Computers:**

Computers can be useful for taking notes, but they can also be a distraction, both to the user as well as to all those who can see the screen. For these reasons, I do allow computers in the classroom, but only if you sit where no one else can see your screen; that is, in the back row. If all the back row seats are already taken by the time you arrive to class, please accept my humblest apologies, but you will have to take hand-written notes instead. If you are using your computer in the back row, and whatever is on your screen distracts those sitting on either side of you, then I will ask you to turn it off. So sorry!

**Talking in class:**

You should not talk to each other in class. Not out of respect for me, mind you, but out of respect for other students trying to focus. I see the class period as an opportunity for you. If you do not wish to participate, that is fine with me: you may put your head down and go to sleep, or you can quietly pass notes to one another, or you can lean over and whisper to one another. But if I can hear you talking, that means you are distracting other students. Please don't do that. (Yes, it will affect your grade.)

**Studying together:**

Studying together can be a good thing or it can be a really bad thing. If you do the work and want to deepen your understanding by discussing it with other students to gain their perspective, that's great. This course is a rare opportunity for you to talk about religion without upsetting someone in the room. But if you do not do the work, meet up with other students, divide the reading, then meet back up to plagiarize each other's notes, that is not a good thing. It's just cheating.

**The Library:**

I like Google as much as the next guy. Probably more so. But as wonderful as Google is, there are still lots of things the library has that cannot be found with a Google search. Two spring immediately to mind: librarians and books. Librarians know all kinds of things about how to access useful and relevant information, both online and in dead-tree format. Go talk to one! The other thing is books. I know Google Books is making good progress, but there are still a great many texts that are only accessible by browsing the stacks. Browsing the stacks is a key part of the university experience. Don't miss out!

**Grades:**

Your grades for this class derive from an Excel spreadsheet with columns for each of the items mentioned in the "Grades" section at the beginning of this syllabus. You can have two unexcused absences and still receive an attendance score of 100; it drops by 1/3 of a letter grade after that. For a 100 in the "participation" column, you will need to ask an interesting question every class period. You will receive numbered grades for the two papers and the ten response papers. At the end of the term there will be a number between 0 and 100 in each column: I will add them up and do the division and that will be your grade.

**Grading:**

My grading rubric for all exams and projects consists of three areas. The first is information literacy (25%), the second is critical thinking (50%), and the third is objective communication (25%). I think these skills are important for all college students (actually, all *humans*) to learn for a variety of reasons, not least because they are skills that many employers, from a wide variety of fields, look for in potential job candidates.

"Information literacy" refers to your ability to find good sources of information; discriminate between reliable and unreliable sources (knowing that these lie on a continuum); and ascertain who the author is, the context in which they are writing, and what they are trying to do with their argument(s).

"Critical thinking" refers to your ability to assess your sources and the claims they make by analyzing their argument(s). Specifically, it is the ability to identify an author's thesis, summarize their argument, distinguish the evidence given in support of the argument, and logically weigh that evidence as support for the argument. Given the semantic range of many words, critical thinking may often involve the careful consideration of a single phrase to deduce the author's intent.

"Objective communication" is the ability to articulate your own claims in a scholarly fashion: What is the point (the aim, the thesis) of what you are saying? What is the scope of your claim? (That is, where and when and to whom does it apply?) Do you know how to cite your sources (using the Chicago style), adduce relevant evidence (and counter-evidence), and draw logical conclusions? Would the authors you are citing agree with your characterization of their work? Can you synthesize multiple sources into a coherent narrative? Is your writing clear and precise and original? (See "Plagiarism" below for more on the latter.) Communication is a skill that will improve with practice. And it is not just mechanically exteriorizing your interior thoughts: articulating your ideas can actually change your ideas by allowing you to more clearly assess the logic and evidential support of your heretofore-unchallenged assumptions.

Information literacy concerns obtaining relevant material; critical thinking involves dealing with the material in an interesting and logical manner; objective communication is about the adequate expression of your critical thinking.

**Plagiarism:**

Whenever you submit work to me, of any kind and for any assignment, either oral or written, if the words that you use in your work match uncited words anywhere else in the universe (except your own notes, written in your own words): that is plagiarism. This includes any webpage, any monograph in any language anywhere, and even other students' notes, past or present. If you were sick one day and got notes from another student, you must first put them in your own words if you are going to submit them as your own work. I am the judge of what constitutes words that "match." Any work that includes plagiarized words will receive a zero, and may result in failing the class and expulsion from the university. If this concept is unclear to you, please see me or a WKU librarian to explain it more.

**Student Disability Services:**

Students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. Any request to me for accommodations must be accompanied by a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

**The Learning Center (TLC)** (located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC-A330):

Should you require academic assistance with this course, or any other General Education Course, the TLC can help.