

Modern East Asian Texts—Sample Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Chloe Estep
Office Hours MW 9-10 AM in 854 Williams Hall
(or virtual by appointment)

I. Course Description

This course is an introduction to and exploration of modern East Asian literatures and cultures through close readings and discussion of selected literary works from the early 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century. Including texts from and about China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and the United States, the class will explore the shared and interconnected experiences of modernity in East Asia, as well as broaden our perspective by considering the location of East Asian cultural production within a global modernity. Major issues we will encounter include: social reform and revolution; linguistic and cultural translation; media and technology; representations of gender, race, and class; history and memory; colonialism and war; bodies and sexuality; industrialization and globalization.

No knowledge of the original language is required. However, you will (inevitably, happily, perhaps perplexingly) come across non-English vocabulary, scripts, and references in the course of the semester. Students with knowledge of these languages should feel free to read texts in the original and bring up relevant issues, while making your contributions as accessible as possible to our course community. All are encouraged to reflect on and revel in the indeterminate, multilingual world in which we live.

Week 1 **The Brink of Modernity**

January 11 (Monday class on Wednesday) Organization and Introduction
Read: N/A

M Jan 16 (**NO CLASS for MLK Day**)

Read: Mori Ōgai, “Dancing Girl” (1890) and Higuchi Ichiyō, “The Thirteenth Night” (1895) (J)
Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Jan 18

Read: Mori Ōgai, “Dancing Girl” (1890) and Higuchi Ichiyō, “The Thirteenth Night” (1895) (J)

Week 2 **Literature and Social Reform**

M Jan 23

Read: Lu Xun, “Preface to *Outcry*” (1923), “A Madman’s Diary” (1918), “Medicine” (1919) (C)
Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Jan 25

Read: Lu Xun, “New Year’s Sacrifice” (1924), “Soap,” (1924), “In Memoriam” (1925) (C)

Week 3 **Decadence, Mystery, Modernism**

M Jan 31

Read: Mu Shiyong, "Shanghai Foxtrot" (1932) (C)

Tanizaki Jun'ichiro, "The Tattooer" (1910) (J)

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Feb 1

Read: Edogawa Ranpo, "The Human Chair" (1925) (J)

Yi Sang "Wings" (1936) (K)

Week 4 **Love and Revolution**

M Feb 6

Read: Zhao Shuli, "Little Erhei's Marriage" (1943) (C)

Ding Ling, "When I was in Xia Village" (1941) (C)

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Feb 8

Read: Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yan'an Forum" (1942) (C)

Watch: Jiang Wen, dir., *In the Heat of the Sun* (1994) (C) [film]

Week 5 **War, Translation, Violence**

M Feb 13

Read: Kojima Nobuo, "American School" (1954) (J)

Chŏn Kwang-yong, "Kapitan Ri" (1962) (K)

Activity: In-class writing workshop

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Feb 15

Read: Nosaka Akiyuki, "American Hijiki" (1967) (J)

Eileen Chang (AKA Zhang Ailing), "Sealed Off" (1943) (C)

Write: Submit paragraph on paper topic before class

Week 6 **Nationalism, Masculinity, Eroticism**

M Feb 20

Read: Mishima Yukio, "Patriotism" (1960) (J)

Ōe Kenzaburō, *Seventeen* (1961) (J)

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Feb 22

Watch: Mishima Yukio, dir., *Patriotism* (J) (1966) [film]

Kim Ki-young, dir., *The Housemaid* (1961) (K) [film]

Write: **First paper due by 9 PM on Friday, Feb 24**

Week 7 **Feminism, Livelihood, Capitalism**

M Feb 27

Read: Bak Wan-seo, "Identical Apartments" (1974) (K)

Tsushima Yūko, "The Silent Traders" (1982) (J)

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

T Feb 28

Film screening of *Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974* in Cohen Hall 402 at 7PM

W Mar 1

Read: Wang Anyi, “Brothers” (1989) (C)

Watch: Hara Kazuo, dir., [Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974](#) (1974) (J) [film—must sign up for free trial to watch]

M Mar 6 **No class for Spring Break**

W Mar 8 **No class for Spring Break**

Week 8 Race, Ethnicity, Temporality

M Mar 13

Read: O Jeong-hui, “Chinatown” (1979) (K)

Takbum Gyel, “Notes on The Pekingese” (2014) (C/Tibet)

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Mar 15

Read: Zheng Wanlong, “The Clock,” (1989) (C)

Yi Yang-ji, “Koku” (1985) (J/K)

Week 9 “World Literature”

M Mar 20

Read: Bei Dao, selections (1978-present) (C)

Stephen Owen, “What is World Poetry?” (1990) (USA)

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Mar 22

Read:

Murakami Haruki, “Barn Burning” (1983) (J)

Stephen Snyder, “[The Murakami Effect](#)” (2017) (USA)

Watch: Lee Chang-dong, dir., [Burning](#) (2018) (K) [film]

Week 10 Language, Globalization, Disorientation

M Mar 27

Read: Tawada Yōko, *The Naked Eye* (1991) (J)*

Watch: Jia Zhangke, dir., [The World](#) (2004) (C) [film]

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Mar 29

Read: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (1982) (K/USA)*

Write: Submit paragraph on paper topic before class

Week 11 Horrifying Gender

M Apr 3

Read: Xi Xi, "A Girl Like Me" (1983) (HK)
Sayaka Murata, *Convenience Store Woman* (2016) (J)*
Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Apr 5

Read: Han Kang, *The Vegetarian* (2007) (K)*

Additional links for today: <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2016/06/20/raw-and-cooked-translation-why-the-vegetarian-wins/>
<https://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-ca-jc-korean-translation-20170922-story.html>
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-translation/>

Write: **Second paper due by 9 PM on Friday Apr 7**

Week 12 **Urban Structures, Queer Futures**

M Apr 10

Read: Chi Ta-wei, *The Membranes* (1995) (TW)*

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Apr 12

Watch: Bora Kim, dir., *House of Hummingbird* (2018) (K) [film]

Week 13 **Postmodern Diaspora**

M Apr 17

Read: Charles Yu, *Interior: Chinatown* (2020) (USA)*

Write: Respond to discussion questions by 9 PM

W Apr 19

Read: Esme Weijun Wang, "Yale will not Save You" from *The Collected Schizophrenias* (2019) (USA)

Watch: Andrew Thomas Huang, *Kiss of the Rabbit God* (2019) (USA) [film]

Week 14 **Review and Final**

M Apr 24 Review for Final (Session optional for those writing research papers)

W Apr 26 Oral Finals (Written finals distributed at the beginning of regular class time)