SEX, BODIES, AND MODERNITY IN CHINA

This advanced seminar explores the social and cultural history of late imperial and modern China, with a focus on ideas and practices of the body, gender, and sexuality from the eighteenth century to the present. We will consider the three subjects together as a means to understand the complexity and diversity of Chinese lives. We will also examine how the meanings of these subjects have changed under forces of dynastic change, imperialism, nationalism, and global capitalism, making up China’s complex experiences of “modernity.”

READINGS
The following required texts are available at the University Bookstore and on reserve at the College Library. Additional readings (marked with *) can be accessed at Learn@UW.

- Susan Mann, Precious Records: Women in China’s Long Eighteenth Century (Stanford, 1997)
- Dorothy Ko, Every Step a Lotus: Shoes for Bound Feet (California, 2001)
- Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, eds., Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader (California, 2002)


**Requirements**

1. **Class Participation** 10%
   It is important that all students come prepared and contribute actively to every session of this intensive seminar. For any session that is missed, you will be required to write a 5-page essay about the readings assigned for that week.

2. **Reading Responses** 20%
   On the day prior to each class meeting (by noon on Tuesdays), you will post a one-page critical response to the reading and one question for class discussion at Learn@UW. Provide a hard copy to the instructor. Read other people’s postings before coming to class. Late postings will not be considered.

3. **Presentations** 20%
   A team of two students will lead each session: one to summarize the main points of the reading; the other to offer a critical response to the reading and coordinate discussion of questions prepared by the entire class. Each student will sign up for two such presentations in alternate roles.

4. **Research Paper** 50%
   You will research and write a paper of 12-15 pages, including an outline with an annotated bibliography (10%) and two drafts (20%), on a topic of your choice related to the course. Each student will report on research progress periodically, present work at the Writers’ Workshop, and serve as a peer reviewer for another student’s project. The final paper (20%) is due on Dec. 19.

You are also required to attend a Historical Research Workshop at 6:00-7:30 pm on Sept 20, 22, 26 or 28. Register in advance.

Research paper schedule:
- Oct. 5  Tentative paper idea
- Oct. 19 Paper outline due: topic, questions, and annotated bibliography
- Nov. 30 Writers’ Workshop: peer review of draft 1 (5 pages)*
- Dec. 7, 14 Writers’ Workshop: presentation of draft 2 (10 pages)*
- Dec. 19 Final Paper due (12-15 pages)

*Drafts are due one day prior to meeting.

**Schedule**

- **Sep. 7**  Introduction
- **Sep. 14**  Chinese Bodies
*Kuriyama, “The Imagination of Winds and the Development of the Chinese Conception of Body
*Hevia, “Sovereignty and Subject: Constituting Relations of Power in Qing Guest Ritual”
Furth, “Blood, Body and Gender” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 291-314

**Sep. 21** Virtue and the Imperial Order
Mann, *Precious Records*, 1-75
Theiss, “Femininity in Flux” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 47-66
Sommer, “Dangerous Males” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 67-88

**Sep. 28** Family, Education, and Production
Mann, *Precious Records*, 76-226
*Pomeranz, “Women’s Work and the Economics of Respectability”

**Oct. 5** Footbinding
Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*
*Zito, “Bound to be represented”

**Tentative paper idea**

**Oct. 12** New Culture, New Danger
Glosser, “‘The Truth I learned’” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 120-144
Hershatter, “Modernizing Sex, Sexing Modernity” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 199-225
*Dong, “Who is Afraid of the Chinese Modern Girl?”
*Kang, “Tabloid Sex and Cultural Conservatives”

**Oct. 19** Fashioning the Nation
Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*

**Paper outline due**

**Oct. 26** Performing Gender
Jin, *Women Playing Men*

**Nov. 2** Iron Girls and Natural Women
*Wang, “Gender and Maoist Urban Reorganization”
Honig, “Maoist Mappings of Gender” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 255-268
Evans, “Past, Present or Imperfect” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 335-360

**Nov. 9** Reforming Labor
*Pun, Made in China*

**Nov. 16** Contemporary Desires
Schein, “Gender and Internal Orientalism in China.” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 385-411
Chen, “Embodying Qi and Masculinities in Post-Mao China” in Brownell and Wasserstrom, 315-339
*Rofel, “Qualities of Desire: Imagining Gay Identities”

*Pun, Made in China*
Nov. 23  Work on your paper. No class.

Nov. 30  Writers’ Workshop: Peer Review Session

Dec. 7  Writers’ Workshop: Presentations I


POLICIES

• If you need any accommodations related to your attendance or performance in this course, please inform me during the first two weeks of class.
• As a courtesy, please do not use your cell phone or the internet when class is in session.
• If you miss a class, find another student who can share notes and announcements with you.
• Request for deadline extensions will only be accepted with a doctor’s note. Unexcused late assignments and papers will be docked for 10% per day.
• Plagiarism, meaning quoting or basing your ideas on the work of another person without proper citation, is a serious offence. All cases will be reported. Learn how to avoid it: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS

Courtesan culture
Sports and nationalism
Changing meanings of chastity
Migrant bodies
Women revolutionaries
Women writers
Masculinities in the twentieth century
Body in traditional medicine
Same-sex identities and communities
Sex work and sex workers
Gender and ethnicity

ADDITIONAL READINGS (available at Learn@UW)


