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 these interconnected subjects 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 globalization, making up China’s experiences of “modernity.”

REQUIRED TEXTS
The following 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)

Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin A. Winckler, Governing China’s Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal Politics (Stanford, 2005)

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)

Jin Jiang, Women Playing Men: Yue Opera and Social Change in Twentieth-Century China (Washington, 2009)


RECOMMENDED TEXT (REQUIRED FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS)

Susan Mann, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History (Cambridge, 2011)
REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Participation 10%
All students must come prepared and contribute actively to every session of this fast-paced seminar. Those with more than two unexcused absences, i.e. absences without medical documentation, will receive zero for this portion of the grade.

2. Learn@UW Postings 10%
On the day prior to each class meeting (by 5 pm on Tuesdays), you will post the following: a quote from the assigned readings, a concise commentary of no more than a paragraph addressing the quote, and a follow-up question for class discussion. Read other people’s postings before coming to class. Late postings will not be considered.

3. Presentations 10%
A team of three students will lead each session: one student to summarize the main points of the readings; a second student to offer a critique; and a third student to coordinate discussion of questions prepared by the entire class. Each student will sign up for two such roles.

4. Response Papers 20%
Students will submit three papers of 1-2 pages each discussing the central themes of the readings assigned for the week. Graduate students must submit a response paper every week.

5. Research Paper 50%
You will research and write a paper of 15 pages (20-25 pages for graduate students), including an outline with an annotated bibliography (10%) and an ungraded draft of 10 pages, on a topic of your choice related to the course and preapproved by the professor. 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 (40%) is due on May 14.

You are also required to attend a Historical Research Workshop at 6:00-7:30 pm on February 1, 7, 9 or 13 at Memorial Library, Room 231. Register in advance.

Research paper schedule:
Feb. 22 Post tentative paper idea to Learn@UW
Mar. 14 Paper outline and annotated bibliography due
May 2, 9 Writers’ workshop: peer review and presentation of draft 2 (10 pages)*
May 14 Final paper due (15 pages)

*Drafts are due two days prior to meeting.

SCHEDULE

Jan. 25 Introduction

Feb. 1 Modernity in Chinese History
Waley-Cohen, The Sextants of Beijing
Feb. 8  Body and Gender
*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

Recommended: Mann, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History

High Qing Period, the 1700s
Feb. 15  Gender 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

Feb. 22  Family, Education, and Work
Mann, Precious Records, 75-226

Tentative paper idea due

Late Qing and Republican periods, the 1800s-1949
Feb. 29  Footbinding
Ko, Every Step a Lotus, entire

Mar. 7  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
*Kang, “Tabloid Sex and Cultural Conservatives”

Mar. 14  Modern Girl
*Dong, “Who is Afraid of the Chinese Modern Girl?”
*Finnane, “What Should Women Wear?”
*Edwards, “Policing the Modern Woman in Republican China”

Paper outline and annotated bibliography due

Mar. 21  Performing Gender
Jin, Women Playing Men

Contemporary Period: 1949 to the present
Mar. 28  Body Politics
Greenhalgh and Winckler, Governing China’s Population
Apr. 4    No Class. Spring Break

Apr. 11   Reforming Labor
         *Pun, Made in China*

Apr. 18   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”*

Apr. 25   No Class. Work on your paper.

May 2     Writers’ Workshop: Presentations I

May 9     Writers’ Workshop: Presentations II. Final Paper due on May 14.

POLICIES
• If you need any accommodations related to your attendance or performance in this course, please discuss with me in advance, not after.
• 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 papers will be docked for 10% per day and rejected a week from the original due date.
• 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](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS
Courtesan culture
Sports and nationalism
Migrant bodies
Women revolutionaries
Women writers
Masculinities in the twentieth century
The body in traditional Chinese medicine
Same-sex identities and communities
Sex work and sex workers

ADDITIONAL READINGS (available at Learn@UW)


