WS 823-5: Graduate Seminar: Women and the Writing of Cultures

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In this course we will examine writings and films by women whose lives’ journeys crossed linguistic and cultural boundaries. Foregrounding women in the writing (and visual images) of cultures, our goal is to learn about these non-English speaking cultures through the eyes of a woman and develop some skills in reading cultures and understanding today’s world through a glimpse of the not-too-distant past of different parts of the world. We will pay special attention to manifested feminist perspectives and standpoints and explore how they contribute to our knowledge of the world by making visible the often neglected inhabitants of the world and giving voice to the often silenced group.

Required readings/viewing:
- Carma Hinton, One Village in China: The Small Happiness (Women of Long Bow village talk about marriage, birth control, work, and daily life; color, 58 min. 1984); All Under Heaven (Change and continuity in Long Bow village, from the 1940s to the 1980s; color, 58 min. 1985); To Taste a Hundred Herbs (Portrait of a traditional Chinese doctor whose Catholic faith shapes his values and gives him a special role in his community color, 58 min. 1986)

Articles by Pearl Buck, Carma Hinton, Jing M. Wang, etc.

Recommended Reading:
- Arkush and Lee, eds. Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-19th Century to the Present, 1989
- Pearl Buck, The Good Earth, 1931, 1994; My Several Worlds, 1954, 1996; The Chinese Novel; Nobel Lecture, 1938
- Pamela Constable, Fragments of Grace: My Search for Meaning in the Strife of South Asia, Publisher: Brassey's Inc, 2004
- Carma Hinton, The Gate of Heavenly Peace (video)
- Agnes Smedley, Daughter of Earth, 1943, Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution
- Teresa Thornhill, Tea With Cardamon: A Journey Through Iraqi Kurdistan, 1996
- J. Wang, ed. Westerners Through Chinese Eyes, 1990

see over
Course requirements and Grading Structure:
20% - Attendance and participation
20% - Oral presentation and leading the group discussion
20% - Research presentation
40% - Research paper

Description of Assignments
Participation: attendance and participation in class and seminar.
Oral presentation and leading the group discussion: Each student will make two oral presentations one of the
theory books, one to the big class and one to the graduate seminar, and lead the discussions
afterwards.
Presentation of your research: Each student will give a 20 minute presentation on their research project. At least
two days prior to the presentation the following must be made available via email to the rest of
the class:
- A description of your research project
- An annotated bibliography
- A list of questions to facilitate class discussion
Research paper: A 15-20 page (typed and double spaced) critical paper on a relevant topic of your choice.

Weekly Reading Schedule
(Students are expected to have completed the reading and ready to contribute to the class discussion by the class
meeting time.)
Week 1 - May 4 - Introduction,
Week 2 - May 11 - Pearl Buck, Pavilion of Women. Seminar reading: Articles
Week 3 - May 18 - Video: Pavilion of Women
Week 4 - May 25 - Cathy Davidson, 36 Views of Mount Fuji. Seminar reading: Marjorie Wolf, A Thrice Told Tale.
Week 5 - June 1 - Carma Hinton: Small Happiness and All Under Heaven,
Week 6 - June 8 - Carma Hinton: To Taste a Hundred Herbs. Cooper and Liu, Grace in China. Seminar reading:
Week 7 - June 15 - Cooper and Liu, Grace in China, Guest Lecture: William Liu on his mother's life and writing.
critical paper due.
Week 12 - July 20 - Oral Presentation

The Department of Women's Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good
writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the
Department.