

HUM 382-4: Selected Topics in the Humanities

Change and Survival: Contemporary Chinese Fiction in Translation

Semester:	Intersession 2014 (1144)	D100	Burnaby Campus	
Instructor:	Dr. Shuyu Kong	AQ 5121	shuyuk@sfu.ca	778.782.9239

PREREQUISITES 45 credit hours

COURSE CONTENT China in the last century has been a turbulent time of revolution, reforms and changes. How have Chinese people survived all the violence, trauma and changes? How have Chinese writers captured personal memories and the broader socio/political history? What kinds of narrative devices have they employed to express their sympathy for and understanding of the complexity of human behaviour?

This course introduces some representative fictional works by contemporary Chinese writers, including 2012 Nobel Laureate Mo Yan. Through a close reading of these works, we will try to reach some understanding of both humanity and narrative from the very specific perspective of contemporary Chinese literature. The aims of the course are to:

- Discover some representative literary works from modern China through close reading and explore how Chinese literature expresses some common subjects and themes in human experience: violence, trauma, memory and changes.
- Gain familiarity with some basic concepts of narrative theory and gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between history and narrative through examining the different narrative devices used to represent history.
- Develop generic skills in narrative analysis as well as the attributes of thinking and writing critically through weekly class discussions and the formulation of a final paper.

In order to achieve these goals, in each class we will discuss one aspect/issue of narrative and representation through a specific literary text. The students are required to read the assigned texts (both primary and secondary), reflect on the set of questions provided, and write informal reading/viewing notes. These texts and questions will then be discussed in class via group discussion and presentations. Active participation in seminars and developing a major research paper are required for successful completion of the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Wang Yuan, **Beijing Women: Stories**. MerwinAsia.

Ah Cheng, **The King of Trees: Three Novellas**. New Directions.

Mo Yan, **Life and Death are Wearing Me Out: A Novel**. Arcade Publishing.

Recommended References:

David Lodge, **The Art of Fiction**, Vintage

Sue Williams, **China: A Century of Revolution** (Documentary, media center, Bennett)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Attendance and Participation	15%
Midterm Exam (open book, 2 hours)	20%
Presentation (15 min. including 3-page reading notes)	20%
Term paper (10 pages, including oral report of outline)	45%