

WMST W4300
 Spring 2007
 Th. 2:10-4 p.m.
 Schermerhorn Ext. 754

Professor Dorothy Ko
 Office: 416D Lehman, BC
 Office Phone: 212.854.9624
 Office Hours: T 3-4; Th 4-5

Advanced Topics in Women's and Gender Studies:
CHINESE FEMINISMS
In a Global World

Rationale:

This seminar examines the entanglements between discourses of feminism and modernity in China. In the Post-Mao or Reform period in the PRC (1979-present), Chinese scholars and activists have been engaging in vigorous debates about the roots of female oppression, the nature of femininity, the definitions of “woman” and “human,” the proper relationship between the state and feminism, as well as the role of “the West” in “Chinese” articulations.

The simple premise of this seminar is that these divergent conversations are worth listening to (one may even say eavesdropping,) but that to do so well we need to retrain our ears. Our reading list, therefore, is comprised almost exclusively of writings by Chinese scholars, some originally presented in English and others in translation. Our challenge is to confront their unfamiliarity or even illegibility, to place them in proper historical contexts, and to tune in to their absences (what they have deliberately or inadvertently left out.) As such, this seminar is an exercise in sympathetic listening coupled with analytic distance.

Requirements:

1. Background in Chinese studies and language abilities may help, but it is not required. All of the required readings are in English; those interested and able may do supplementary reading in Chinese for extra credit.

2. The seminar is structured a bit like a hypertext: your response to the initial readings would determine the focus of our discussions in some of the subsequent sessions. For this reason, your active participation and willingness to engage in team-work are crucial to our success.

3. Assignments:

Class participation (30% of final grade): Every student is expected to post their *brief* responses to the readings by Wed. midnight. In addition, one or two students may be appointed “presenters” to help lead class discussions. You will be graded on both the postings and the class discussions.

Essay 1 (20%): Select one feminist from the list of ten interviewees (see Week 2). Research her background and current projects; read her writings (if available). Enter into a (imaginary or real) conversation with her about the issues we discuss in class. Analyze the extent to which her feminist commitments are integral to the problems faced by and aspirations of the Chinese nation as gleaned from *The State of China Atlas*. Write a

report of your journeys; you may adopt the format of “What would xxx say...,” a constructed dialogue, or others. Due Feb. 15, 4 p.m.

Essay 2 (20%): Select one article or one set of articles from our list of assigned readings. Write a paper to: (1) State what the author is arguing for; (2) infer what she is implicitly arguing *against*; (3) analyze her premises, ideological commitments, intellectual heritage, influence, and blind spots. This paper (5-8 pages) is due Mar. 1, 4 p.m.

Final project (30%): You may do the final project alone, or in teams of two or three. It is an open space in which you can explore and investigate certain themes discussed in class that interest you. There are no set requirements for the exact format and content. You will make presentations during the last two weeks. A one-page proposal is due Mar. 8 in class and the final report is due on May 10, the day of the scheduled final exam, at 4 p.m.

Reading Materials:

- The following paperback is available for purchase at Labyrinth Books:
The State of China Atlas, ed. Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and Robert Benewick, California, 2005.
- Those items marked by [E-JOURNAL] can be downloaded from Clio.
- Those items marked by [Class Files] can be downloaded from Courseworks.
- Other items are available in a course pack you can purchase at Village Copier (2872 Broadway, at 112th St., 212-666.0600). These items are marked by [1], [2] and so on in the schedule below.

Class Schedule:

I. THE LURE OF THE PRESENT

Week 1 (Jan. 18) Introduction: An Exercise in Listening

Assignment for Week 2:

Pick one feminist from the ten being interviewed for the Global Feminisms project (Download “China Site Booklet” from: www.umich.edu/~glblfem/). Take notes on: chronology of personal development and development of feminist discourses in China; her understanding of “gender” and “feminism;” her awareness of or interactions with “the West;” any terms or expressions that puzzle you. Post on Courseworks and be prepared to make a 5-minute presentation in class on a list of her concerns and your responses to them.

Week 2 (Jan. 25) Feminist Issues and Concerns, China, circa. 2006

Reading: Transcripts of interviews with Ai Xiaoming, Gao Xiaoxian, Chen Mingxia, Ge Youli, He Zonghua, Li Huiying, Liu Bohong, Wang Cuiyu, Wang Xingjuan, and Zhang Li Xi, in “China Site Booklet” downloaded from: www.umich.edu/~glblfem/. Visit other parts of the website to familiarize yourself with the nature and goals of the “Global Feminisms: Comparative Case Studies of Women’s Activism and Scholarship” project housed at the

Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor. Note especially the excellent Bibliography.

The State of China Atlas, pp. 9-31, 108-111.

**Week 3 (Feb. 1) The All China Women's Federation: Precarious Balance
Between State and Feminism**

Reading:

[E-JOURNANL] Wang Zheng, "Maoism, Feminism, and the UN Conference on Women: Women's Studies Research in Contemporary China," *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 126-152.

[1] Jin Yihong, "The All China Women's Federation: Challenges and Trends," in *Chinese Women Organizing*, ed. Ping-Chun Hsiung et al., pp. 123-140.

[2] Liu Bohong, "The All China Women's Federation and Women's NGOs," in *Chinese Women Organizing*, pp. 141-157.

[E-JOURNAL] Wang Zheng, "State Feminism"? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 519-551.

The State of China Atlas, pp. 52-65, 116-119.

Recommended:

Ellen Judd, *The Chinese Women's Movement Between State and Market*, Stanford, 2002.

Jude Howell, "Women's Organisations and Civil Society in China," in *Gender and Civil Society: Transcending Boundaries*, ed. Jude Howell and Diane Mulligan, Routledge, 2005, pp. 54-77.

Week 4 (Feb. 8) From Socialist Economy to Market Economy

Reading:

[3] Lin Chun, *The Transformation of Chinese Socialism*, pp. 1-16, 113-131.

[4] Wang Zheng, "Gender, Employment and Women's Resistance," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, 2nd edition, ed. Elizabeth Perry and Mark Selden, pp. 158-182.

[E-JOURNAL] Pun, Ngai, "Engendering Chinese Modernity: The Sexual Politics of *Dagongmei* in a Dormitory Labour Regime," *Asian Studies Review*, v. 28 (June 2004): 151-165.

[E-JOURNAL] Pun, Ngai, "Subsumption or Consumption? The Phantom of Consumer Revolution in 'Globalizing' China," *Cultural Anthropology* 18, no. 4 (2003): 469-492.

The State of China Atlas, pp. 32-51, 112-115.

Recommended:

Ching Kwan Lee, "The Unmaking of the Chinese Working Class in the Northeastern Rustbelt," in *Working in China*, ed. Ching Kwan Lee, pp. 15-37.

Pun, Ngai, "Opening a Minor Genre of Resistance in Reform China: Scream, Dream, and Transgression in a Workplace," *positions* 8, no. 2 (2000): 1-25.

Feng Xu, *Women Migrant Workers in China's Economic Reform*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd. and New York: St Martin's Press, 2000.

Tamara Jacka, *Women's Work in Rural China: Change and Continuity in an Era of Reform*, Cambridge, 1997.

Week 5 (Feb. 15) No class; first essay due at 4 p.m.

Reading:

The State of China Atlas, pp. 66-105, 119-125.

II. MEMORIES OF SOCIALISM (1949-76)

Week 6 (Feb. 22) The Utopian 1950s

Reading:

[5] Wang Zheng, "Gender and Maoist Urban Reorganization," in *Gender in Motion*, ed. Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson, pp. 189-209.

[Class Files] Kimberley Ens Manning, "Making a Great Leap Forward? The Politics of Women's Liberation in Maoist China," *Gender and History* 18, no. 3 (Nov. 2006): 565-585.

[Class Files] Gao Xiaoxian, "'The Silver Flower Contest': Rural Women in 1950s China and the Gendered Division of Labour," *Gender and History* 18, no. 3 (Nov. 2006): 586-613.

Recommended:

Tina Mai Chen, "Female Icons, Feminist Iconography? Socialist Rhetoric and Women's Agency in 1950s China," *Gender and History* 15 (2003): 268-295.

Week 7 (Mar. 1) No class—meet with team members to draft final project proposal; second essay due at 4 p.m.

Week 8 (Mar. 8) The Cultural Revolution, 1966-76

Reading:

[6] Wang Zheng, "Call Me 'Qingnian' But Not 'Funü'," in *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era*, ed. Xueping Zhong et al., pp. 27-52.

[Class Files] Jin Yihong, "Rethinking the Iron Girls: Gender and Labour during the Chinese Cultural Revolution," *Gender and History* 18, no. 3 (Nov. 2006): 614-625.

****Mar. 10-18: Spring Break!****

Week 9 (Mar. 22) The Question of Women (and other analytic categories)

Reading:

[7] Tani Barlow, "Politics and Protocols of Funü: (Un)Making National Woman," in *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*, ed. Christina Gilmartin et al., pp. 339-359.

[8] Li Xiaojiang, "With What Discourse Do We Reflect on Chinese Women? Thoughts on Transnational Feminism in China," in *Spaces of Their Own*, ed. Mayfair Yang, pp. 261-277.

Recommended:

Chinese translation of Tani Barlow, "Politics and Protocols of Funü," in □□□□□□□□□□

Tani Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*, Duke University Press, 2004.

Tani Barlow, "Theorizing Woman: Funü, Guojia, Jiating," in *Body, Subject, and Power*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani Barlow, pp. 253-289.

Shu-Mei Shih, "Towards an Ethics of Transnational Encounter, or 'When' Does a 'Chinese' Woman Become a 'Feminist'?" *differences* 13, no. 2 (2002): 90-126.

III. FORGOTTEN ORIGINS OF CHINESE FEMINISM, 1890s-1940s

Week 10 (Mar. 29) The Late-Qing Rupture: Inventing Women's Rights and Inner-Outer (nei-wai) Boundaries

Reading:

[Class Files] Sudo Mizuyo, "Concepts of Women's Rights in Modern China," *Gender and History* 18, no. 3 (Nov. 2006): 472-489.

[E-JOURANL] Hu Ying, "Reconfiguring Nei/Wai: Writing the Woman Traveler in the Late Qing," *Late Imperial China* 18, no. 1 (June 1997): 72-99.

[9] Angela Leung, "Dignity of the Nation, Gender Equality, or Charity for All? Options for the First Modern Chinese Women Doctors," in *The Dignity of Nations: Equality, Competition, and Honor in East Asian Nationalism*, ed. Sechin Y.S. Chien and John Fitzgerald, Hong Kong University Press, 2006, pp. 71-91, 219-226.

[10] Lydia Liu, Appendixes, Appendix A, B, in *Translingual Practice*, pp. 259-298.

Recommended:

Rune Svarverud, "The Notions of 'Power' and 'Rights' in Chinese Political Discourse," in *New Terms for New Ideas*, ed. Michael Lackner et al., Brill, 2001, pp. 125-143.

Lydia Liu, "The Secret of Her Greatness," in *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*, Harvard, 2004, pp. 140-180.

Week 11 (Apr. 5) Eugenics and Discourses of Motherhood in the May Fourth Period

Reading:

[E-JOURNAL] Sakamoto Hiroko, "The Cult of 'Love and Eugenics' in May Fourth Movement Discourse," *positions* 12, no. 2 (2004): 329-376.

[Class Files] Yung-chen Chiang, "Womanhood, Motherhood and Biology: The Early Phases of *The Ladies' Journal*, 1915-25," *Gender and History* 18, no. 3 (Nov. 2006): 519-545.

Recommended:

Frank Dikotter, *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China*, Hurst & Co., 1998.

Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Contexts, 1896-1945*, Routledge, 2002.

Week 12 (Apr. 12) Breathing Space

Reading: to be assigned (possibilities: body; sexuality; actresses; rethinking the May Fourth paradigm)

Week 13 (Apr. 19) Presentation of final projects

Week 14 (Apr. 26) Presentation of final projects

May 10 (Thur.): Scheduled final exam 1-4 p.m.; final project due at 4 p.m.