

**ASN312—Literary and Historical Memory in China**  
**Syllabus, Fall 2007**

**I. Instructor and Time:**

Instructor: Chi-chiang Huang, Professor	Class: MW 1:25 pm-2:50 pm (6A)
Office: Stern Hall 207	Classroom: Stern Hall 201
Office hours: MWF 11-12	Contact: huang@hws.edu; x3553

**II. Objectives:**

In this class, literary memory refers to the narrative represented by literary genres such as fiction, novel, story, poetry, or drama that reflects its author's view or interpretation of history in his/her work. Historical memory refers to private and official historical accounts written or compiled by prominent authors or official historians responsible for the compilation of traditional dynastic histories. While historical memory supposedly tells us historical truths better than literary memory does, often times, it fails to live up to its reputation. Sometimes, literary memory spawns much more genuine and welcomed accounts of what has actually happened in the past and provides us with alternative, if not better, conduits through which facts and realities can be understood.

Examining and reading the two kinds of memory in China, we may be surprised by, among other things, the revelation of what the tyranny of historical memory and the sentimentality of literary memory can do to us. Or, we may see factual accounts in works perceived as fiction and fictitious accounts in works perceived as historical records. Still more, we may be troubled by a kind of work that mixes and integrates literary and historical memory into a hybrid text aimed at rewriting or revising what is viewed as "received history" in the text's/writer's idiosyncratic way. A dozen of books published recently and circulated widely represent the new breed of this hybrid memory whose accountability is suspect and needs to be addressed and scrutinized.

Although this course aims to distinguish truth from legend, myth, and fiction embedded in both literary and historical memory by comparing and contrasting diverse and disparate "historical", "factual", and "fictional" accounts as commonly perceived or taken for granted, its ultimate goal is to appreciate and practice the art and technique of questioning and truth-seeking. Despite the possibility that truths may not be revealed, it remains crucial that one strives to seek truths by fostering a sense of objectivism and skepticism when reading, among other things, literary and historical texts. For this purpose, much time will be used to discuss arguments, reasoning, evidence on the basis of which writers tell their stories. In other words, this course stresses a critical reading, thinking, and assessment process, which is crucial for an indepth understanding the meaning of a text.

Sample accounts of historical personages and events are used for the purpose

outlined above. Students are expected to engage in analyzing and assessing arguments presented by an article or a book. The course is intended to address goals 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and to some extent, goal 4, among the eight goals that constitute an important portion of the Colleges' educational mission.

### **III. Textbooks and Selected Readings:**

#### Books for Purchase:

Clements, Jonathan., *The First Emperor: Conqueror of China* (NY: Sutton Publishing, 2006)

Cohen, Paul., *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998)

Dreyer, Edward L., et al., *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming, 1405-1433* (Longman Publishing Group, 2006)

Menzies, Gavin, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* (Harper Collins, 2004)

Moss, Roberts ., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel. Abridged Edition* (University of California Press, 1999)

Ko, Dorothy., *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (University of California Press, 2005 )

Waldron, Arthur N., *Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Wills, John E. Jr., *Mountain of Fame* (Princeton University Press, 1994)

Wood, Frances., *Did Marco Polo Go to China?\_(Perseus Publishing, 1997)*

### **IV. Class Requirements:**

A twenty-page final paper, which counts 40% of the final grade, is due by 12/11. The paper should be typed, in double space, and footnoted according to *The Chicago Manual of Style* or *MLA Citation Style*. Biweekly quizzes, tests, or journals, which count 30%, are given to keep track of your reading and progress. A 30-minute class presentation is required to show your ability to read between the lines. Vigorous and informed participation in class discussions is encouraged and expected, which will be rewarded when the final grades are determined. Each student will be allowed three excused absences. Each additional absence will lower your final grade by half of a letter grade. In other words, the following will factor into the consideration of the final grades:

Final paper: 40%

Quizzes, tests, or journals: 30%

Class performance: 15%

Attendance: 15%

### **V. Academic Support: (from CTL)**

A note about the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL): Hobart and William Smith Colleges encourages students to seek the academic collaboration and resources that will enable them to demonstrate their best work. Students who would like to enhance their learning and/or academic performance should contact the CTL at ext.

3351 or visit our website.

If you are a student with a disability for which you may need accommodations, you must register with Disability Services at the CTL and provide documentation of the disability. Services and accommodations will not be provided until this process is complete. Contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, David Silver, at [silver@hws.edu](mailto:silver@hws.edu) or ext. 3140 for an appointment. Additional information is available at: <http://www.hws.edu/academics/enrichment/ctl/disability.asp>

**VI. Lectures and Readings:** Lecture, readings, and paper assignments: (This schedule is subjected to change, particularly new reading materials or films relevant to this course become available. All changes will be announced in class.  
\*=quiz, test, journal day

Weekly Schedule:

1<sup>st</sup> Week: 8/27 (M)-- Introduction

8/29 (W)-- *Kings and Emperors:*  
“The First Emperor: The Unifier”  
Clements, chap 1-2;  
Wills, chap 1

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2<sup>nd</sup> Week: 9/3 (M)---*Qin Shi huangdi:*

“A Bad Ruler?”  
Clements, chap 3-4,  
Wills, chap 3

9/5 (W)---*Great Historical Monument:*  
“Wall Building and Mausoleum Building”  
Clements, chap 5-6  
Waldron, chap 1-3

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3<sup>rd</sup> Week: 9/10 (M)---*The Quest for an Eternal Empire:*

“The Underground Empire”  
Clements, chap 7-8

9/12 (W)\*---*The Question about Good Rulership:*  
“The Short-lived and the Long-lived Emperors”  
Wills, chap 5, 15

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4<sup>th</sup> Week: 9/17 (M)--- *Military Heroes:*

“Lord Guan: the Symbol of Royalty”  
Roberts, 174-242  
“Yue Fei: Gives Us Back Our Rivers and Mountains”  
Wills, chap 11

9/19 (W)---*Heroic Minister*:  
“Zhuge Liang: Challenging Heaven’s Decree?”  
Roberts, 243-298  
Wills, chap 7

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5<sup>th</sup> Week: 9/24 (M)--- *Culture Heroes*:  
“Confucius, Sima Qian, Huineng, Su Dongpo, Qiu Chuji, Wang  
Yangming”  
Wills, chap 4, 8, 10, 12, 13  
9/26 (W)\*--- *Heroines*:  
“Ban Zhao; Wang Qiang, Empress Wu Zetian”  
Wills, chap 6, 9

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6<sup>th</sup> Week: 10/1 (M)--- *Footbinding: A Revisionist’s View* :  
“The Heavenly Feet vs. the Bound Feet”  
Ko, chap 1-2  
10/3 (W)---*Footbinding Condemed*  
“Footbinding as a Vanished Culture”  
Ko, chap 3-4

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7<sup>th</sup> Week: 10/8 (M)--- *Men’s Creation, Women’s Promotion*  
“Footbinding and Its Aesthetic Origin”  
Ko, chap 5-6  
10/10 (W)\*--- *The Great Wall and the Great Traveler*:  
“The Making of the Great Wall, I”  
Waldron, chap 4-5 (including pp.53-60)

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8<sup>th</sup> Week: 10/15 (M)--- *Fall Recess, no class*  
10/17 (W)---“The Making of the Great Wall, II”  
Waldron, chap 6-8

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9<sup>th</sup> Week: 10/22 (M)---  
“The Symbolism of the Great Wall”  
Waldron, chap 9-11  
10/24 (W)\*--- *Was Marco Polo a Liar?*  
“Was Marco Polo Ever in China?”  
Wood, chap 1-7

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10<sup>th</sup> Week: 10/29 (M)---  
“The Great Wall is Missing?”  
Wood, chap 8-15, Conclusions, Afterword

10/31 (W)--- *1421 and Zheng He's Adventure* (see <http://www.1421.tv/>)  
"Zheng He Reassessed"  
Menzies, Introduction, chap 1-2  
Dreyer, chap 1-3

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11<sup>th</sup> Week: 11/5 (M)--- *The Greatest Voyager and Explorer?*  
"Zheng He's Seven Expeditions"  
Dreyer, chap 4-6  
Menzies, chap 3-5  
11/7 (W)\*--- *Zheng He and China's Sea Power*  
"Zheng He Discovered America?"  
Menzies, chap 6-7, Epilogue, Postscript  
"What Legacy?"  
Dreyer, chap 7-8

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12<sup>th</sup> Week: 11/12 (M)--- *Rebellion and Revolution:*  
"The Heavenly Kingdom"  
Wills, chap 16  
11/14 (W)--- *Deconstruction of the Boxer Uprising*  
"The Boxer Narrative"  
Cohen, Prologue and chap 1

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13<sup>th</sup> Week: 11/ 19 (M)---  
"Resurrecting the Experienced Past, I"  
Cohen, chap 2-3  
11/21 (W)--- *Thanksgiving Recess, no class*

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14<sup>th</sup> Week: 11/26 (M)\*---  
"Resurrecting the Experienced Past, II"  
Cohen, chap 4-6  
11/28 (W)---  
"The Mythologized Past, I"  
Cohen, chap 7-8

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15<sup>th</sup> Week: 12/3 (M)---  
"The Mythologized Past"  
Cohen, chap 9  
12/5 (W)--- *Review and Assessment*

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16<sup>th</sup> Week: 12/11 (W)--- *Final Paper Due by 5:00 pm.*