**ASCL 60.03.01**

**Beyond the Great Wall: Frontier in Traditional Chinese Literature**

Wcult: NW

Dist: LIT

Instructor: Miya Qiong Xie miya.xie@dartmouth.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 4:30-5:30, Bartlett Hall 202

**Course Description**

Constructing a territorial wall to demarcate the “self” from the “other,” the “civilized” from the “barbarian,” is an ancient idea that is still relevant today. The history and culture of the Great Wall of China tell us that as significant as the material wall is, the representations and discourse surrounding it are even more important.

This course studies canonical works of Chinese literature and art from the pre-modern period in chronological order. In particular, it draws on examples that deal with the Great Wall, the northern frontier beyond the Wall, and cross-Wall relations between China Proper and the nomadic frontier. Approaching the subject from literary and cultural perspectives, this course addresses and problematizes some of the most difficult challenges that have confronted the Chinese state from the past to the present. These include the notion of a great unity, issues surrounding minorities, cultural diversity, and so on. When relevant, we will also examine broader theoretical issues such as political morality, gender and sexuality, and border-crossing.

**Learning Objectives**

In this course, you will read classical texts from traditional China that deal with the Great Wall and the frontier, watch films inspired by those texts, and read scholarly articles about the texts and the films. By the end of the course, you will gain a general understanding of Chinese history and culture, which will be applicable to more specialized courses in the fields of Chinese and Asian studies. Through reading and discussing these primary and secondary materials, you will also learn to appreciate and analyze pre-modern Chinese texts, as well as the cultural particularities reflected in them, with a critical eye. In addition, you will have opportunities to compare the Chinese texts to texts and media products from other cultures, and to consider the contemporary relevance of the topics discussed in class.

**Format and Procedures**

Enrollment is open, and there are no prerequisites. You do not need to know Chinese to take the course. All works are read in English translation. The class meets twice per week for two seminars that are each 1 hour and 50 minutes long, except for meetings on Jan. 23 and Jan. 30, which will be replaced by the X-hours on Jan. 22 and Jan. 29. For films, we will always arrange in-class screenings and collect short responses. Participation policies apply to all the film meetings and X-hours. Light snacks will be provided during film screenings.

**Statement of Inclusivity**

You are encouraged to speak up and participate during class meetings. You are also welcome to use your preferred name and gender pronouns in class. Because the class will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every member of this class must show respect for every other member of this class. This includes but is not limited to being open to the unique experiences, values, and beliefs of each class member; communicating in a respectful manner; and keeping confidential any discussions of anything of a personal (or professional) nature.

**Course Requirements**

1. Active participation in seminars and other course-related activities is required. This includes attending seminars on time, doing the required readings, and drawing interesting questions and insights from them. Absences need to be explained to the instructor and approved. Three late arrivals count as one absence. Participation can be enhanced by other contributions you make to the course community, such as organizing reading groups, regularly posting articles and announcements of course-relevant opportunities on the course website, etc. I welcome creative forms of participation.
2. All reading materials will be uploaded to the course website.
3. The assignments will consist of short responses, three papers, and a group-led discussion.

You will be expected to post a one-paragraph response to the readings on the course website by the end of the day before each regular meeting. Responses to the films will be collected in class right after the screenings. You do not need to post responses for X-hour meetings.

Paper 1 (due on Jan 25) will be a short response of 500–750 words that engages at least one primary text and one critical article that we have read. I will provide several prompts and you will respond to one of them.

Paper 2 (due on Feb. 8) will be 1000–1500 words long. You will be asked to compare two primary texts/media products.

Final Paper (due on March 7) will be a comprehensive project of 2400–3000 words. In this project, you will find your own source materials (beyond course readings) and respond to a major theme or issue of the course. You will meet with the librarian about choices of additional source materials and submit a proposal of 300 words with a bibliography of at least ten entries for the final paper by Feb. 15, present your project during the final week of class meetings, receive feedback from the instructor and your classmates, and submit the full paper by March 7.

No extensions will be given for the papers. Late papers will be marked down one full grade when submitted within 24 hours of the due date/time. Papers more than 24 hours late will not be accepted.

Groups of 2 students will be assigned to lead a 20-minute class discussion. Dates, topics, and other details will follow.

I welcome creative ideas for all the assignments. Please discuss your plans with me in advance.

1. No electronic devices are allowed in the classroom. Please print out the readings and bring them to each class.

**Grading Procedures**

This course is letter graded. The final course grades will take each component into consideration:

Participation: 5%

Short Responses: 5%

Discussion Team: 10%

Paper 1: 15%

Paper 2: 25%

Final Paper: 40% (5% for proposal, 10% for presentation, and 25% for final paper)

Grades for assignments and papers will be based on the “scholarship ratings” stipulated by the ORC on the following page: <http://dartmouth.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/orc/Regulations/Undergraduate-Study/Requirements-for-the-Degree-of-Bachelor-of-Arts/Scholarship-Ratings>

**Academic Integrity**

You are expected to abide by the Dartmouth Academic Honor Principle: <http://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-honor-principle>. Any work submitted in this course for academic credit must be your own work. For resources on the proper citation of sources, please refer to <http://writingspeech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>.

**Student Accessibility Needs**

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (Carson Hall 125, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to me. As a first step, if you have questions about whether you qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, you should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

**Student Wellness**

We recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate dean (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/>), Counseling and Human Development (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/>), and the Student Wellness Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/>). We encourage you to use these resources and come speak with us in order to take care of yourself throughout the term.

**Religious Observances**

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

**Academic Skills Center (**[**http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/**](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/)**)**

The Academic Skills Center is open to the entire Dartmouth Community. Here are some common reasons you might visit the ASC:

* You're getting B's, but you want to get A's
* You don't feel comfortable talking in class
* You're attending class regularly, but you feel like you're missing important points
* You feel like you're a slow reader
* You're having trouble completing tests in the allotted time
* You're spending hours studying for a foreign language class but still not “getting it”
* You feel like you don't have enough time to get everything done
* You're not sure how to take notes
* You want to sign up for a tutor or study group
* You're not sure if you should get tested for a learning disability

**The Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology** (RWiT: <http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/rwit>)

Located in [Berry 183](http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/students/hours-and-location), RWIT is a free service dedicated to helping members of the Dartmouth community develop more effective strategies for generating and organizing their ideas, finding and evaluating research sources, and presenting and revising compositions in a variety of media. Through informal dialogue, RWIT tutors assist writers in developing better compositions and more effective composing strategies. A collaboration between the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric, the Library, and Academic Computing, RWIT brings together faculty, administrators, staff, and students to focus on the art and science of composition.

**Dartmouth College Library (**[**http://library.dartmouth.edu/**](http://library.dartmouth.edu/)**)**

A key to successful research is the use of reliable, high-quality information sources. While some information can be found on the open web, the best place to start your research is at the Library’s Research Guides, [researchguides.dartmouth.edu/guides](http://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/guides). These research guides have categorized and organized the library’s key resources—including books, databases, scholarly articles, and data sources—for your convenience. The Library’s [website](http://library.dartmouth.edu/) also has information on useful research tools and services. In addition to the online information, a librarian has been assigned to this class to answer research questions, help you find appropriate resources, and assist with search techniques. Please contact your subject librarian (<http://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/subjectlibrarians>) for specialized help.

**Course Schedule**

**Beyond the Great Wall: Frontier in Traditional Chinese Literature**

**Week 1: Introduction**

Jan 7: Introduction

Read: Jared Diamond, “How China Became Chinese,” *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: Norton, 1997), 322–333.

Jan 9: The Inner Asian Frontier

Read: Robert N. Taaffe, “The Geographic Setting,” in Sinor, ed., *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 19–40.

 Owen Lattimore, “The Reservoir and the Marginal Zone,” in *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (1940), 238–251.

**Week 2: Before There Was a Wall**

Jan 14: Flood Myth and the World Model

Read: “Tribute of Yu,” <http://ctext.org/shang-shu/tribute-of-yu>

Mark Lewis, “Flood Taming and Cosmogony,” *The Flood Myth of Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 21–47.

Jan 16: Alternative World Models

Read: Annonymous, Anne Birrell, tran., *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (Penguin Classics, 2000), 13-31; 183-88.

Richard E. Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002), 1-12; 30-57.

**Week 3: The Frontier and the Great Wall**

Jan 21: The Qin and the Great Unity

Read: Yuri Pines, “The Idea of Great Unity,” *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 11–43.

Jorge Luis Borges, “The Wall and the Books,” <http://southerncrossreview.org/54/borges-muralla.htm>

In-Class Screening: Zhang Yimou, *The Hero* (2002)

Jan 22 (X-hour): The Qin and the Great Unity

**Week 4: The Han, the Huns, Morality and Marriage**

Jan 28: The General Captured and the Historian Castrated

Read: Sima Qian, “The Biography of General Li Guang” in *Records of the Grand Historian* (ch. 109) <https://quod-lib-umich-edu.dartmouth.idm.oclc.org/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb06046.0002.001>; “The Letter to Ren An: English Translation,” in *The Letter to Ren An & Sima Qian's Legacy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 22–29.

Stephen Durrant, “Introduction,” in *The Letter to Ren An & Sima Qian's Legacy*, 3–21.

Jan 29: In-Class Screening: *Mulan* (1998) (half hour extra)

**Week 5: Mulan and The Shifting Borders**

Feb 4: Mulan and the Northern Wei

Read: Anonymous, “Poem of Mulan”; Wei Yuanfu, “Song of Mulan.” *Mulan: Five Versions of a Classic Chinese Legend, with Related Texts*, pp. 1-7.

 Lan Dong, “From a Courageous Maiden in Legend to a Virtuous Icon in History,” *Mulan’s Legend and Legacy in China and the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 51-92.

Feb 6: New Borders, New Literature

Read: Xiaofei Tian, “The Cultural Construction of the North and South,” in *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang (502–557)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center, 2007), 310–66.

**Week 6: The Tang and the Frontier**

Feb 11: The Frontier Poetry of the Great Tang

Read: Edward Schafer, “The Glory of Tang,” in Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (California, 1963), 7-39.

Stephen Owen, “Tang Literature of the Frontier,” in Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: Norton, 1996), 459–477.

Feb 13: Frontier Women as Political Metaphor

Read: “Banished beyond the Border: Liu Xijun and Wang Zhaojun,” “Abducted and Ransomed: Cai Yan,” the poem on Wang Zhaojun by Shi Chong (249–300), all in *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 91-95; 112-127.

 Yang Xiaoshan, “Wang Anshi’s ‘Mingfei qu’ and the Poetics of Disagreement,” *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 29 (Dec. 2007), 55-84.

**Week 7: The Yuan of the Mongols and the Eurasia Revisited**

Feb 18: Reimagining the Frontier

Read: Ma Zhiyuan, *Autumn in the Han Palace*

Pamela Crossley, *Hammer and Anvil: Nomad Rulers at the Forge of the Modern World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 3-21; 43-63.

Feb 20: A Book Seminar with Pamela Crossley

Read: Pamela Crossley, *Hammer and Anvil: Nomad Rulers at the Forge of the Modern World*, 103-166.

**Week 8: From the Border Without to the Border Within**

Feb 25: Ming, the Dynasty that Built the Most Wall

Read: Poems by Yue Fei, Wen Tianxiang, Yuqian.

Carlos Rojas, “A Garden of Forking Paths,” *The Great Wall: A Cultural History*, 92–125.

In-Class Screening: King Hu, *Dragon Gate Inn* (1967)

Feb 27: The Dynastic Fall and the Abducted Women

Read: Li Yu, “The Male Heir,” “Father and Son,” in *Twelve Towers*.

Tina Lu, “Reunions and Dynastic Fall,” in *Accidental Incest, Filial Cannibalism, and Other Peculiar Encounters in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 64-100.

**Week 9: Student Presentations (March 3 and 5)**