

**HIST 206/EALC 141 Love, Family Life, and Gender Roles:
The Changing Faces of Chinese Private Life**

Spring 2009

Time & Place: Thursdays 1:30-4:30 PM MCES 105

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Underneath the grandeur of empires, war, revolutions, history eventually is about people's life. This seminar explores how the boundaries of private life in China intersect with the public arena and how such an intersection has significantly re-shaped Chinese private life between the 16th century and the present. The first half of the seminar will explore how the private realm in late imperial China was defined and construed by Confucian discourses, architectural design, moral regulation, cultural consumption, and social network. Moving into the twentieth century, the remaining part of the seminar will examine how the advent of novel concepts such as modernity and revolution restructured the private realm, particularly in regard to the subtopics outlined above. The seminar is open to everyone but priority is given to History and EALC Majors when enrolment exceeds 15.

Organizing questions include: How did female chastity become the center of a public cult which then changed the life paths of countless families? How did the practice of female foot-binding intersect with marriage choices, household economy, and social status? How did print culture create a new space for gentry women to negotiate the boundaries between their inner quarters and the outside world? What was the ideal and reality of married life in late imperial China? How did people's life change when the collective pursuit for Chinese modernity placed romantic love, freedom to marry and divorce at the center of public debates? How was "Shanghai modern" related to the emerging middle class life style as evidenced in advertisement posters? How has the ideal of gender equality been re-interpreted and realized under the Communist regime? How have the current market reforms reformulated the contours of private life in China?

Assignments and Grading Policy:

1. Attendance and Participation (10%):

Any absence should be reported before class and be made up with an extra discussion paper. Your class performance will be evaluated by how you contribute to class discussion.

2. Discussion Leader (10 %):

Every student has to lead class discussion at least once during the semester. A sign up sheet will be distributed during the second class meeting. Discussion leaders should post a discussion sheet (1-2 pages) the day before class (no later than Wed 6PM) on Blackboard listing all major issues in this week's readings with relevant page numbers specified. The purpose of the discussion sheet is to facilitate productive class discussion. This goal could be achieved by you explaining the reasons why these issues deserve our attention and how they relate to what we have already discussed in previous meetings, or any other creative formats. Discussion leader will also post a report (due Sunday 6PM the same week) on Blackboard summarizing class discussion and how the above issues are addressed in class.

3. Short Assignments (1-3 pages, 5 in total) (40%):

Students should respond to questions listed in the syllabus marked by *Short Assignment*. This assignment is to prepare you for class discussion and will be due the day before class meeting (Wed. 6 PM) to be posted on blackboard. In addition to the two assignments marked as [not optional] in week 2 and 14, you can select to write on three out of the rest of the assignments, all of which will be simply graded as check [meaning that you have demonstrated sound understanding of the readings], check plus [meaning that you are able to digest the readings with original viewpoints], or check minus [meaning that you fail to understand the readings].

4. Final Project (40%):

This includes a 10-15 page final paper (35%, due April 30) and an in-class presentation (5 %) with a pre-circulated draft posted on BB by 5PM April 22. However, if you are a history major and want to take this seminar to fulfill the research requirement, the paper should be 20-25 page long and substantial engagement with primary sources would be expected. Please schedule a meeting with me before the spring break to discuss your paper proposal.

Otherwise, you will pick one of the following topics:

- A historical review essay. Based on the course materials, you should choose one topic about Chinese private life and elaborate a thesis regarding its development through time.
- Imagine you are asked by a museum or a popular magazine to contribute an illustrated essay on Chinese private life. Use the sources introduced in the class to

- construct a proposal for a museum exhibition or an article to be published for public circulation.
- Design your own topic. To be approved by the instructor in advance.
5. No late submission will be accepted. All the course requirements listed above must be fulfilled in order to pass the course. Failure in any segment will result in failure of the whole course. Exceptions will only be made for documented emergencies.
 6. Academic Integrity: please read the university guidelines carefully <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>. Any violation will result in a failing grade and subject to disciplinary actions.

TEXTBOOKS

(Textbooks are available for purchase at Penn Book Center 130 S. 34th Street, Philadelphia and on reserve at Van Pelt Library, Rosengarten Reserve room.)

- Patrick Hanan, *Falling in Love: Stories from Ming China*. University of Hawaii Press, 2006.
- Ronald G. Knapp, *House Home Family: Living and Being Chinese*. University of Hawaii Press, 2005.
- Yang Jiang, *Six Chapters from My Life Downunder*, Renditions Books.
- Pang-mei Chang, *Bound Feet & Western Dress: A Memoir*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.
- Susan Mann, *The Talented Women in the Zhang Family*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Recommended

- J. A. G. Roberts, *A Concise History of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)
- I.W. Mabbett, *Writing History Essays: A Student's Guide* (Palgrave, 2007)

Course Outline:

Schedule	Central Topics	Timeline	Assignments and paper due
Week 1	Overviews and issues	Daxue	
Week 2	The Architecture of the Private Realm	Late Imperial China	
Week 3	The Enchantment of Love	16-17 th centuries	<i>Short Assignment</i>
Week 4	A Family Portrait	Ming-Qing	
Week 5	The Practice of Foot-binding	Ming-Qing	

Week 6	The Cult of Female Chastity	Ming-Qing	
Week 7	Courtesans, Homosexuality, and Polyandry: Alternative “Marriages”	Late Imperial China to early 20 th century	
Week 8	May Forth Discourses on Marriage Reform	1910s-1940s Republican China	
Week 9	Spring break		
Week 10	New Breeds in Modern Urban Life: Single Women and Nucleus Family	1910s-1940s Republican China	Paper proposal due in class.
Week 11	No class		Thesis statement and bibliography dues on BB
Week 12-13	Private Life under the Communist Regime	1950s -- 1970s Communist China	
Week 14	Love, Marriage, and Private Life in Contemporary China	1980s—present Post-reform China	<i>Group presentation</i>
Week 15	Final paper workshop		Paper draft due on Wed. Final Paper Due on April 30

Weekly Schedule

PART I: Introduction

I. Jan 15: Introduction:

What does “private life” mean in Chinese history?

- Daxue (The Great Learning), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, pp.330-332

II. Jan 22: The Architecture of the Private Realm

READINGS:

- Ronald G. Knapp, *House Home Family: Living and Being Chinese*, University of Hawaii Press, 2005.
Read: Nancy Steinhardt, “The House: An Introduction,” pp. 13-36.
Ronald Knapp, “In Search of the Elusive Chinese House,” pp. 37-72.
Nancy Jervis, “The Meaning of Jia, An Introduction,” pp. 223-234.
Francesca Bray, “The Inner Quarters: Oppression or Freedom?” pp. 259-280.
David Faure, “Between House and Home,” pp. 281-293.
Pick one other piece in the volume and report to the class.
- Zhang Yimou, *Raise the Red Lantern*
- [recommend] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late*

- Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 51-172
- [recommend] Ellen Liang, “The Persistence of Propriety in the 1980s”

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

What is the author’s main thesis in “The Inner Quarters: Oppression or Freedom”? How does she construct her argument? How does she establish the said argument with primary sources?

III. Jan 29: The Enchantment of Love

READINGS:

- Patrick Hanan, *Falling in Love: Stories from Ming China* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006). Read the preface first and take notes of what you consider as indicative of traditional Chinese society and private life.
- Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), “The enchantment of love,” pp.68-112.

SHORT ASSIGNMENT: [**not optional**]

To what extent do you think these novels reflect the social reality? How did romantic love factor in the late Ming society? To better illustrate the underlining cultural logic in these stories, make two comparisons between late Ming China and contemporary US (or any other place/time) and use these stories as evidence to support your point.

IV. Feb 5: Biographic Portrait of a Chinese Family

Guest lecture by Susan Mann on Feb 4.

READINGS:

- Susan Mann, *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family*.

SHORT ASSIGNMENT

Is the Zhang family typical or atypical of its time? Please be specific with the criteria you use.

V. Feb 12: The Practice of Foot-binding

READINGS:

- Christena Turner, "Locating Foot binding, " in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 10, no. 4 (1997): 444-79
- Fred Blake, "Foot Binding in Neo-Confucian China and the Appropriation of Female Labor," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 19:3. Spring 1994

- Dorothy Ko, "The Body as Attire: the Shifting Meanings of Foot Binding in 17th century China," *Journal of Women's History*, 8:4 (winter), pp.8-27
- Hill Gates, 2001, "Footloose in Fujian: Economic Correlates of Footbinding," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 43.1(2001), 130-148.
- [recommend] Dorothy Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 4
- [recommend] Hill Gate, 1997, "On a New Footing: Footbinding and the Coming of Modernity," in *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History* (5): 115-135.
- [recommend] Dorothy Ko, 1999, "Rethinking Sex, Female Agency, and Footbinding," in *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History* (7): 77-106

SHORT ASSIGNMENT

- How did this practice of foot-binding influence the public and private realm in China? Make a comparison list and rank the contributing factors to the development of this practice.

VI. Feb 19: The Cult of Female Chastity in Late Imperial China

READINGS:

- Du Fangqing and Susan Mann, "Competing Claims on Womanly Virtue in Late Imperial China," in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korean, and Japan*, pp.219-247.
- "Widows Loyal unto Death", *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Patricia Ebrey.
- Susan Mann, "Widows in the Kinship Class and Community Structures of Qing Dynasty China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46.1 (February, 1987): 37-56.
- Lu Weijing, *True to Her Words*, Selections.
- Katherine Carlitz, 2001, "The Daughter, the Singing Girl, and the Seduction of Suicide," in *Nan Nü*, 3(1): 22-46.
- Matthew H. Sommer, "The Uses of Chastity: Sex, Law, and the Property of Widows in Qing China," *Late Imperial China*, 17.2 (December 1996): 77-130.
- Janet Theiss, "Female Suicide, Subjectivity and the State in Eighteenth-Century China," *Gender & History* 16:3 (November 2004): 1-25.
- [recommend] Paul Ropp, 2001, "Passionate Women: Female Suicide in Late Imperial China," *NAN Nü*, 3 (1): 3-21.

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

- What are the factors that contributed to the cult of female chastity? How did this practice influence the lives of Chinese women as well as men (as wife, as daughter, as husband, as parents, as children...etc)? Does a functionalist view (that the cult served to protect the patriarchal system) fully explain the phenomenon?

VII. Feb 26:

Courtesans, Homosexuality, and Polyandry: Alternative "Marriages"

READINGS:

Courtesans

- ❑ Literary image: Review the parts related to courtesans in *Falling in Love*.
- ❑ Cinematic representation: *Flowers of Shanghai (1998)*. What kind of space is this courtesan house? Private? Public?
- ❑ [recommend] Gail Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitutes."
- ❑ Li Waiyee, "The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal," in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*

Polyandry

- ❑ Matthew Sommer, "Making Sex Work: Polyandry as a Survival Strategy in Qing Dynasty China," in *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*.

Homosexuality

- ❑ Li Yu, "A Male Mencius's Mother Raises Her Son Properly by Moving House Three Times"
- ❑ Michael Szonyi, "The Cult of Hu Tianbao and the Eighteenth-Century Discourse on Homosexuality," *Late Imperial China* 19, no. 1 (1998): 1-25.

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

- ❑ What are the social/economic factors that gave rise to the practices of alternative marriages? How were they perceived and understood in their time? Did they complement or endanger the ideal social order?

VIII Mar 5: May Fourth Discourses on Marriage Reform

READINGS:

- ❑ Selections in *Women in Republican China*, including Lu Xun, "My View on Chastity," Zhang Weici, "Emancipating Women by Reorganizing the Family," Lu Qiuxin, "Freedom of Marriage and Democracy," B.E. Lee, "How Can We Honor Women," Mao Zedong, "Concerning the Incident of Miss Zhao's Suicide," and "The Question of Miss Zhao's Personality," Tao Yi, "Commentary on Miss Zhao's Suicide," Hu Shi, "The Biography of Li Chao"
- ❑ Susan Glosser, "Saving Self and Nation," in *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2003)
- ❑ Pang-mei Chang, *Bound Feet and Western Dress*, Chapters 1-10 and skim the rest

CLASS ACTIVITY: Role Play

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

How did the discourses on modernity propose to reform the Chinese private life? How was this ideal realized in real life? Are the theory and reality consistent with each other? If not, how to explain the discrepancy?

IX. Mar 12 Spring Break

X. Mar 19: New Breeds in Modern Urban Life: Single Women and Nucleus Family

****paper proposal due in class****

READINGS:

Love and Gender Roles

- *I Myself Am a Woman*: Selected Writings of Ding Ling, “Miss Sofie’s diary,” “A Woman and a Man,” “Shanghai Spring 1930.”

New Ideal of Family Life

- Lu Xun, “A Happy Family,” “Regret of the Past,” available at <http://www.coldbacon.com/writing/luxun-calltoarms.html>
- Susan Glosser, “The Business of Family: You Haigao and the Commercialization of a May Fourth ideal,” *Republican China*, (April 1995):80-116.
- Shanghai calendar posters in *Tu hui mo deng*.

The Emergence of Single Working Women

- Bryna Goodman, “The Vocational Woman and the Elusiveness of ‘Personhood’ in Early Republican China,” in *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*
- Bryna Goodman, “The New Woman Commits Suicide: The Press, Cultural Memory and the New Republic,” *Journal of Asian Studies* (2005).
- Bryna Goodman, “Unvirtuous Exchanges: Women and the Corruptions of the Stock Market in Early Republican Shanghai,” in *Mechthild Leutner and Nicola Spakowski, eds., Women in China: The Republican Period in Historical Perspective*, (LIT Verlag, 2005).
- [Recommend] Shanghai Modern, Ch 1

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

- If these new life styles were a product of the new industrialized urban society, why would they provoked mixed reactions from people at the time?

XI. Mar 26: no class

thesis statement and annotated bibliography due on BB by 5PM March 26

XII. April 2: Private Life under the Communist Regime

READINGS:

- “Women and the Law: Divorce in the Republican Period,” in *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China*, ed. by Kathryn Bernhardt and Philip C. C. Huang,

Stanford University Press, 1994.

- Gail Hershatter, "Making the Visible Invisible: the Fate of the 'Private' in Revolutionary China," in *Wu sheng zhi sheng*, read only 257-263 for an overview.
- Neil J. Diamant, "Pursuing Rights and Getting Justice on China's Ethnic Frontier, 1949-1966," *Law & Society Review* 35.4(2001):799-840.
- Neil J. Diamant, "Re-Examining the Impact of the 1950 Marriage Law: State Improvisation, Local Initiative and Rural Family Change," *The China Quarterly*, No. 161 (Mar., 2000), pp. 171-198.
- Margery Wolf, "Marriage, Family, and the State in Contemporary China," *Pacific Affairs*, 57, no. 2. (Summer, 1984): 213-236.
- Film: The Story of Qiu Ju.

How does men/women/ family/ village/ state represented in this film? Is the cinematic portrayal of rural women consistent with what we have read so far?

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

How did Diamant and Wolf reach opposite conclusions on the status of women in cities and countryside? Which side is right? Or both right just different views/sources/questions?

XIII Apr 9: Private Life during the Cultural Revolution

READINGS:

New Gender Model: Iron Girls

- Emily Honig, "Iron girls revisited," *Redrawing Boundaries: Work, Household, and Gender in China*, pp.97-110.
- Wan Shan-hung and Hung Tieh-shan, "The Iron Girl", *Chinese Literature* 5 (1971): 59-66.
- Wen Tzu-pien, "Good Daughter of the party," in *Chinese Literature* 3(1971): 3-30.
- Posters Images <http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/crc.html>,
<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/poster/exhibintro.html>

Revolution in the Deepest Corner of the Soul

- Yang Jiang, *Six Chapters from My Life Downunder* (Renditions Books)
- Chen Kaige, *Farewell, My Concubine*.
- Xie Jin, *Hibiscus Town*.
- [recommend] Zhang Xinxin, "How come you aren't divorced yet?" in *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in the People's Republic*

SHORT ASSIGNMENT:

How did the Cultural Revolution revolutionize private life (or did it?)

XIV Apr 16: Love, Marriage and Private Life in Contemporary China

READINGS:

- Yunxiang Yang, "Making Room for Intimacy: Domestic Space and Conjugal Privacy in Rural North China," in *House Home Family*, pp. 373-395.
- Gail Hershatter, "Making the Visible Invisible: the Fate of the 'Private' in Revolutionary China," in *Wu sheng zhi sheng*, pp. 257-281.

Films for group presentation:

- Huang Jianxin, *The Marriage Certificate*
- Ang Lee, *The Wedding Banquet* [Call No. DVD PN1997 .W42132 2004]
- Se, jie : Lust, caution / = Lust, caution (2007) Call No. DVD PL2837.E35 S42132 2008
- Eat drink men women, Call No. VHS PN1997 .E285 1995
- Xu Anhua, *My Aunt's Post Modern Life*
- Jia Zhangke, *Still Life*, [Call No. DVD/PAL PN1995.9.C47 S36 2008]
- Yi Yi : A one and a two / = One and a two (1999) Call No. DVD PN1995.9.F35 Y5 2001
- Tsai Ming-liang, *Vive l'Amour* (Taipei) [Call No. DVD PN1995.9.S45 A37 1998].
- Tsai Ming-liang, *The River*
- Stanley Kwan, *Lan Yu*
- [recommend] Emily Honig, "Private Issues, Public Discourse: The Life and Times of Yu Luojin," *Pacific Affairs*, 57, no.2 (1984): 252-265.
- [recommend] Deborah Davis, "My Mother's House"

CLASS ACTIVITY: Group Presentation

Present a brief movie review that places the cinematic portrayal of contemporary private life in China in a longer historical perspective as discussed in this term. How would you characterize the changes that had occurred in Chinese daily life? Choose a few movie clips to illustrate your point.

XV Apr 23: Final Paper Workshop (draft due April 22 5PM)

XVI April 30: Final Paper Due 4PM [College Hall 316B]