

# Contemporary Chinese Novels and Society

## Course description:

This course surveys contemporary Chinese fiction from the 1980s to the present in terms of historical background, ideological content, artistic development and achievement, as well as foreign influences. It aims at familiarizing students with modern Chinese history and culture through reading some of the major Chinese writers, Su Tong, Yu Hua, Ge Fei, Wang Anyi, Wang Shuo and Ye Zhaoyan

## Required texts:

Mo Yan. *Red Sorghum*, trans. Howard Goldblatt. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

Su Tong. *My Life as Emperor*, trans. Howard Goldblatt. New York: Hyperion Press, 2005.

Su Tong. *Raise the Red Lantern: Three Novellas*, trans. Michael S. Duke. New York: Perennial, 2004.

Wang Anyi. *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*, trans. Michael Berry & Chan Egan. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Wang Shuo. *Playing for Thrills*, trans. Howard Goldblatt. Harpenden, Herts, UK: No Exit Press, 2008.

Yu Hua. *To Live*, trans. Michael Berry. New York: Anchor Books, 2003.

## Grading

### 1. Readings and Class Participation (30%)

- readings
- keep regular journal of your reactions to readings as basis for class discussion
- class participation and discussion

### 2. Final Paper (40%)

Your final paper, a close reading of a contemporary Chinese novel, should be 6-10 pages in length.

### 3. Final Exam. (30%)

Will consist of short answer questions. Questions will focus on cultural-historical background, the literary characteristics of specific works, how specific works are representative of literary trends, et

## Course Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction. Reading: Yu Hua, "On the Road at Eighteen," 1987. Film viewing: *To Live*, 1994.

Week 2 Reading: Yu Hua, *To Live*, 1992.

Week 3 Reading: Su Tong, *Raise the Red Lantern*.(originally as *Wives and Concubines*, 1989)  
Film viewing: Raise the Red Lantern.

Week 4. Reading: Su Tong, “Opium Family,”1988. (photocopied packet), *My Life as Emperor*, 1993.

Week 5. Reading: Mo Yan, “Iron child” (photocopied packet), *Red Sorghum*, 1986. Film viewing: Red Sorghum.

Week 6. Reading: Ye Zhaoyan, *Nanjing 1937: A Love Story*, 1996. (photocopied packet). Film viewing: The Flowers of War.

Week 7. Reading: Han Shaogong, *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, 1996. (photocopied packet); Liu Heng, “Dogshit Food”, 1986. (photocopied packet)

Week 8. Reading: Yang Xianhui, *Woman from Shanghai*, 2003. (photocopied packet).

Week 9. Reading: Jiang Rong, *Wolf Totem*, 2004. (photocopied packet)

Week 10: Wang Anyi, *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*,1995

Week 11. Reading: Wang Shuo, *Playing for Thrills*, 1989. Film viewing: In the Heat of the Sun.

Week 12. Exam.

c.