CHT 4111, “The Chinese Novel: Dream of the Red Chamber”  
3 credits (H, I); 4 units of Gordon Rule (Composition)**

Department of African and Asian Languages and Literatures

Contents

CHT 4111 explores the social and intellectual culture of traditional China through a 120-chapter novel known variously as Dream of the Red Chamber and Story of the Stone. Conceived and substantially completed by Cao Xueqin (c. 1724-1764), the novel is believed to reflect the author’s own upbringing in an eminent family that enjoyed close ties with the Manchu rulers of the last dynasty, the Qing. The Dream is generally considered the finest masterpiece of traditional Chinese fiction, and is also China’s first psychologically penetrating novel.

The story opens upon an otherworldly plane in which a karmic bond between its principal figures—the divine “Stone-in-Waiting” and the “Crimson Pearl Flower”—is established before they are born as cousins (named Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu) into aristocratic households of the mortal world. An eccentric Buddhist monk and Daoist monk roam between the supernatural realm and the “red dust” of earthlings to assist these and other worthy persons to become aware of their original and “true” identities. For many generations of readers, the novel’s most absorbing theme is the romance between Baoyu and Daiyu. The unfolding intensity of their relationship draws much of its poignancy, however, from the powerfully told chronicle of the Jia clan’s decline, and the cousins’ youthful resistance to the family’s corruption and oppressively patriarchal values.

The Dream’s scope includes characters from virtually every class and profession (maids-in-waiting, stewards, gardeners, cooks, nuns, actors, officials, members of the imperial family, gamblers, thieves, etc.). It represents practically all genres of literary performance in its pages and also abounds in descriptions of social practice and daily life—such as, of clothing and rules of etiquette, buildings, gardens, plays, parlor games, culinary delicacies, medical prescriptions, fortune telling, and liturgical rites. Paradoxically, it is the concrete experience of a richly materialistic world that grounds the novel’s dreamlike quality and the allegory that passion, thought, and life itself are all illusory.

Pre-requisite: One prior course in Chinese literature or culture, or by instructor’s permission.

Required Materials
2. Reader’s Guide to Dream of the Red Chamber. Course pack for purchase at University Copy Center, University Avenue across from UF campus, and around the corner from Goerings.
3. Reserve Reading for Final Project, at Library West check-out desk.

**Gordon Rule Composition Credit
This requirement will be met by taking notes in the space provided in the Course pack, completing a series of take-home “Self Study Checks,” and written analyses of selected chapters which may be based upon brief oral presentations (10 mins.) about the reading. The remainder will be fulfilled through a post-Midterm project, the student’s choice of either (a) 10 page research paper or (b) oral report to the class, accompanied by abstract, outline and bibliography.

Grading
A (90 & above), B+ (85-89), B (80-84), C+ (75-79), C (70-74), etc.
35% Two tests
30% Class Participation & Preparedness
   20 points – Brief oral presentation and postings to Course Website
   10 points – Pop quizzes (average of best 3 of 4)
15% Three written analyses of selected chapters (3 pp. each)
20% End-of-Term Project (Paper or Class Presentation)
Office Hours. Grinter 478, email <cchenna@aaall.ufl.edu>, tel. 392-2014; messages, 392-2422
Fall '02 hours to be filled in during first week of class: _____________________________

Assignments

The reading assignment during the first month is between 122 to 185 pages per week. Use this time to read carefully and take detailed notes on patterns, themes, and characters. During wks. 5-10, the reading is from 209 to 214 pp. per week. If you fall behind, you will not be prepared to participate in, or even absorb the lectures and class discussions. Use the “self-study checks” (to be distributed in class) as a way to judge how well you understand, recall, and integrate the reading. Students will be assigned in turn to give analyses of the homework readings to the class (about 10 minutes). This is part of the class participation grade.

During the last 4 weeks of the semester, effort should go toward developing the end-of-term project (reading assignment for wks.11-15 drops to 75-126 pp. per week). Use my office hours for recommended topics and secondary criticism. The project may be a 25 minute oral report, including an abstract, outline, and bibliography, or a 10 page term paper with notes and bibliography. In either case, 2-5 articles or books about the Dream should be referenced. The remainder of the Gordon rule requirement is met by written versions of your 10 minute analyses of homework readings (as assigned in turn to each student), notes taken in your course pack, the responses to the self-study checks, and an evaluation of the 25-minute end-of-term oral reports.

Syllabus

Wk 1  Aug 25  Introduction to the course. RFNT “Introduction,” and ch. 1
27  Where does the story begin? Mythological frame, multiple levels of time, space, reality. RFNT chs. 2-3
29  Family & reputation; RFNT chs. 4-5 + appendix 528-34

Wk 2  HOLiDAY (Sep 1) Labor Day
Sep 3  Dreaming; worlds outside the Jia compound. RFNT 6-8
5  Rural connections; 5-elements theory. RFNT 9-13

Wk 3  Sep 8  Doubled characters; lustful relations. RFNT 14-16.
10  Prophetic warnings; the filial son; BY’s attraction to DY & to Aroma. RFNT 17-18
*12  Father & Son in the Garden; Cardinal Spring’s visit; premonitions in riddles.
RFNT 19-21
*Deadline, #1 written analysis of any theme, pattern, or character(s) to date (3 pp.)

Wk 4  Sep 15  Status; intimacies, sexuality. RFNT 22-24
17  False enlightenment; burying flowers; secret meetings; DY’s depression. RFNT 25-27 (Volume 2 begins at ch. 27)
19  *TEST ONE Rivalry & witchcraft; Wang Xifeng’s character. RFNT 28-30

Wk 5  Sep 22  BC & plans for BY’s future; poetry making; lovers’ quarrels; role of the maids. RFNT 31-34.
24  Compare character of BC and Xiang-yun (River Mist); the Double 5th; Golden’s death. RFNT 35-37
26  BY’s beating by Jia Zheng; errors and humiliations. RFNT 38-41

Wk 6  Sep 29  Grannie Liu’s 2nd visit—role of the ‘naïve’ observer; RFNT 42-44
Oct 1  The polite accomplishments; lectures on morals; Xi-feng’s birthday surprise.  
Water-spirit temple; Adamantina. DY & BC make up. RFNT 45-48

*Oct 3  Faithful stands up for herself; Xue Pan’s beating and deparature; RFNT 49-51 + appendices (pp. 583-94)

*Deadline, #2 written analysis of any theme, pattern, or character(s) to date (3 pp.)

Wk 7  Oct 6  Androgeny; a poetry party for snow; riddles; illnesses. RFNT 52-53
Oct 8  BY’s life “off-camera;” New Year rituals and financial problems. RFNT 54-56
(Volume 3 begins at ch. 54)
10  Grandmother Jia lectures on the art of fiction; Tan-chun takes authority; BY’s dream within a dream. RFNT 57-61

Wk 8  Oct 13  An attack of dementia; breakdown in domestic order; criminal justice. RFNT 62-63
15  Birthday recreations; the death of Jia Jing. RFNT 64-67
17  You Er-jie & San-jie. A broken heart causes Liu Xiang-lian’s enlightenment. RFNT 68-70

Wk 9  Oct 20  Xi-feng’s scheming and destructiveness; the failed revival of the poetry club. RFNT 71-73
22  Grandmother’s 80th Birthday; wheeling and dealing. RFNT 74-76
24  A pornographic purse and the raid on servants; a family’s downfall; mid-Autumn festival omens. RFNT 77-79

*Deadline, #3 written analysis of any theme, pattern, or character(s) to date (3 pp.)

Wk 10  Oct 27  An elegy for Skybright; rebel girls; BC leaves the garden. RFNT 80-83 (Volume 4 starts at ch. 81)
29  Unfortunate marriages; BY’s return to school; DY seriously ill. (RFNT 84-86 )
31  BY makes progress in his studies; discussion of BY’s betrothal; official corruption; Jia Zheng’s promotion; DY’s birthday. RFNT 87-90

Wk 11  Nov 3  A burning of poems; DY’s deterioration; duplicities; choice of BY’s mate. RFNT 91-94
5  Seduction & scandal; crab flowers bloom out of season; BY loses his jade.
7  HOLIDAY, Homecoming

Wk 12  Nov 10  Individual Project; library research required.

*12 EXAM TWO
14  The false wedding. RFNT 95-98; 99-102 (Volume 5 begins at ch. 99; read preface, pp. 14-17)

Wk 13  Nov 17  Death of DY; Jia Cheng’s failure in local gov’t; Tan-chun’s marriage arranged; Xi-feng puzzles over a divination. RFNT 103-106
19  Zhen Shiyin & Jia Yucun meet again. Jia Xheng pays for his extremism, and Jinggaui for her malice; raid on the Jia compound & punishment. RFNT 107-109
*21  Imperial judgment; BC’s birthday party; Grandmother Jia falls ill; Yingchun’s death. RFNT 110-113

*Due date for prospectus of end-of-term project (1 page abstract + 2 to 5 references)

Wk 14  Nov 24  Grandmother’s funeral & Xi-feng’s collapse; Faithful follows her mistress; a robbery, the abduction of Adamantina. RFNT 114-116
26  Death of Xi-feng; recovery of Zhen family; BY’s enlightenment. RFNT 117-120. Work on final project.
28 HOLIDAY (Nov. 27-28) Thanksgiving

Wk 15  Dec 1  BY attempts to return his Jade; debate with BC on true virtue; Xi-chun enters a convent; triumph in the exam and a last meeting with Jia Zheng; suggestions of the family’s recovery
3  Reports  (to be co-graded by classmates; everyone’s attendance is required)
5  Reports  (to be co-graded by classmates; everyone’s attendance is required)

Wk 16  8  Reports (to be co-graded by classmates; everyone’s attendance is required)
10  Reports (to be co-graded by classmates; everyone’s attendance is required)
Last Day of Class

<No Final Exam>