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Dept. of Langs., Lits., and Cultures, Pugh Hall 301

### **CHT 4111, “Dream of the Red Chamber”**

**3 credits (Gen. Ed. reqts = H or S; and N). All readings are in English.**  
 SPRING 2009 (x 1998). MAT 108, Tues. 7<sup>th</sup> period (1:55) & Thurs. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> periods (1:55, 3:00)

#### **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 reflects the author’s upbringing in an eminent family that enjoyed close ties with the Manchu rulers of the last dynasty, the Qing. The *Dream* is acclaimed as one of the most psychologically penetrating novels of world literature.

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 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, festivals, 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**

1. *Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin. 5 paperback volumes in the “Penguin Paper Classics” edition; translation by David Hawkes and John Minford. Purchase at Goerings Text Books, 1717 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. (Used copies of earlier Penguin editions have these subtitles for the volumes: 1, *The Golden Days*. 2, *The Crab Flower Club*. 3, *The Warning Voice*. 4, *The Debt of Tears*. 5, *The Dreamer Awakes*.)
2. Course pack: *Reader’s Guide to Dream of the Red Chamber*. Purchase at University Copy & More, 1620 W University Avenue. After the midterm, “reserve reading” will be available at the library to explore topics for end-of-semester projects.

**Grading:** A (90 & above), B+ (85-89), B (80-84), C+ (75-79), C (70-74), etc.

25% Test

25% End-of-term project (Term paper *or* Class presentation—the latter will be co-graded by classmates)

20% Pop quizzes (average of best 3 of 5; the quizzes run 5-10 minutes)

15% Three “reaction papers” (written analyses of selected chapters, 3 pp. each)

15% Class Participation and preparedness. You will be assigned questions to address in the upcoming reading. Absences: Three “free” absences are allowed for medical and other emergencies. For each *subsequent* absence, 1.5 pts. will be deducted from the final grade average.

**Instructor & Office Hours:** Email <cchenna@ufl.edu>, tel. 392-2014; also, 392-2422

Spring '09 office hours to be filled in during first week of class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assignments

The **reading assignment** during the first month averages 130 pages per week. Use this time to read carefully and take detailed notes on patterns, themes, and characters. During later weeks, the reading averages 200+ pages 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” that are distributed in class as a way to judge how well you understand, recall, and integrate the reading. As part of the class participation grade, you will occasionally be assigned to prepare a brief report for the day’s reading, with questions for your classmates. Note deadlines for **reaction papers** that are marked by an **asterisk** (\*) in the syllabus. Reaction papers should treat chapters not yet discussed in class, or they may bring out aspects of previous readings that were not discussed in class. Hand in by paper copy, not email attachment.

During the semester’s last 4 weeks, effort should focus on developing the **end-of-term project**. Use my office hours for recommended topics and secondary criticism. The project may be a 10 page term paper (including a bibliography page) *or* a 25 minute oral report (including a 5-page essay for the teacher, and an outline and bibliography as handouts for the class). For both the term paper or the oral report, 2 to 4 books or articles about the *Dream* must be referenced—excluding online sources, unless these are web versions of printed books or articles.

## Syllabus

- Wk 1 JAN 6 Introduction to the course. RFNT (= “Read for Next Time”) “Introduction,” and ch. 1  
8 Where does the story begin? Mythological frame, multiple levels of time, space, reality. RFNT chs. 2-4 (58 pp.)
- Wk 2 13 Family & reputation; RFNT chs. 5-7 + appendix 528-34 (65 pp.)  
15 Dreaming; worlds outside the Jia compound; love’s transforming effect; rural connections; “Five-Elements” theory. RFNT 8-12 (70 pp.)
- Wk 3 20 Doubled characters; lustful relations. RFNT 13-15 (70 pp.)  
22 Prophetic warnings; the filial son; BY’s attraction to DY & to Aroma. RFNT16-18 (73 pp.)
- Wk 4 27 Father & Son in the Garden; Cardinal Spring’s visit; premonitions in riddles. RFNT 19-23 (92 pp.)  
\*29 Status and jealousy; intimacies, sexuality; a false enlightenment; burying flowers in the garden. RFNT 24-28 (100 pp.) *Vol. 2 begins at ch. 27.*  
**\*Deadline, #1 written analysis of any theme, pattern, or character(s) to date (3 pp.)**
- Wk 5 FEB 3 Secret meetings; DY’s depression; rivalry & witchcraft; Wang Xifeng’s prowess. RFNT 29-32 (72 pp.)  
5 BC & plans for BY’s future; lovers’ quarrels; gender issues; role of the maids; characters of BC & Xiang-yun (River Mist); the Double 5<sup>th</sup>, Golden’s death; RFNT 33-39 (136 pp.)
- Wk 6 10 BY’s beating by Jia Zheng. What insight into life has BY gained? Poetry club founded; errors and humiliations. RFNT 40-44 (106 pp.)  
12 Grannie Liu’s 2<sup>nd</sup> visit—role of the ‘naïve’ observer; Adamantina; the polite accomplishments; BC lectures on morals; BY visits Water-spirit Temple; XiF’s birthday surprise & the long-suffering Patience. RFNT 45-50 (127 pp.)

- Wk 7 \*17 Faithful stands up for herself; Xue P's beating & departure; Sir She as collector; DY as teacher; XY as a boy, androgyny; a fairyland snow scene; poems playful and serious RFNT 51-53 + appendices (82 pp.)  
**\*Deadline, #2 written analysis of any theme, pattern, or character(s) to date (3 pp.)**  
 19 Riddles; illnesses; Skybright's two-fold exertion; New Year rituals and financial problems. RFNT 54-59 (92 pp.) *Volume 3 begins at ch. 54.*
- Wk 8 24 Grandmother Jia lectures on the art of fiction; Tan-chun takes authority; BY has a dream within a dream & an attack of dementia; breakdown in domestic order; criminal justice. RFNT 60-63 (100 pp.)  
 26 Domestic goods, status, and thievery; more trouble from Aunt Zhao; birthday celebrations & a revelatory card game; Jia Jing dies. RFNT 64-70 (144 pp.)
- Wk 9 MAR 3 You Er-jie & San-jie & a secret marriage; a broken heart causes Liu Xiang-lian's enlightenment; Xi-feng's scheming and destructiveness; the poetry club's failed revival; the kite party. RFNT 71-73 (67 pp.)  
 5 Grandmother's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday; wheeling and dealing; inadequacies of character and discipline exposed; a pornographic purse. RFNT 74-80 (158 pp.) & review for TEST in Week 11. ***Begin investigating subjects for your final project (paper or oral report).***
- SPRING BREAK HOLIDAY (March 9-13)***
- Wk 10 17 Raid on servants; mid-Autumn omens of family's downfall; the outsiders DY and XY; an elegy for Skybright; rebel girls; BC leaves the garden; Jin Gui, a false moon goddess, arrives; two unfortunate marriages. Study for TEST through ch. 80.  
 \*19 **TEST.** RFNT 81-86 (108 pp.) *Volume 4 starts at ch. 81.*
- Wk 11 24 BY's renewed progress in his studies; DY's change toward BY, her nightmare & illness; Xue Pan leaves home; Xi-Feng's proposed match for BY; Jia Zheng's promotion; DY as moon goddess on her birthday; bribery at court on Xue Pan's behalf; autumn clothes; themes of nostalgia and purity; the lute (*qin*) and ideal communication. RFNT 87-91 (83 pp.)  
 \*26 An understanding between BC & DY; Adamantina's crisis; DY's false hope; rivals in illicit seduction; RFNT 92-96 (109 pp.)  
**\*Deadline, #3 written analysis of any theme, pattern, or character(s) to date (3 pp.)**
- Wk 12 31 The mystery of BC's absences; the virtue of women; Jia Zheng's reflections; BY's double; more family scandal; crab flowers bloom out of season; BY loses his jade; DY learns the truth from a simple maid. RFNT 97-99 (98 pp.) *Volume 5 begins at ch. 99.*  
 \*APR 2 The false wedding; Jia Cheng's failure in local gov't; Tan-chun's marriage arranged. RFNT 100-106, and the vol. 5 preface on pp. 14-17 (117 pp.)  
**\*Due date for prospectus of end-of-term project (1 page abstract + 2 to 5 references)**
- Wk 13 7 Xi-feng puzzles over a divination; an exorcism of the garden; Zhen Shiyin & Jia Yucun meet again; Jin-gui pays for her malice; the imperial secret police raid the garden. RFNT 107-111 (83 pp.)

- 9 Imperial judgment; BC's birthday party; Grandmother Jia's rescue of the family; Yingchun's death; Grandmother's funeral & Xi-feng's collapse; Faithful follows her mistress. RFNT 112-117 (151 pp.)
- Wk 14 14 Adamantina's abduction; Grannie Liu's third visit & Xi-feng's death; recovery of the Zhen family; BY's enlightenment and attempt to return his jade. RFNT 118-120 (59 pp.)
- 16 Xi-chun enters a convent; BY's triumph in the exam and a last meeting with Jia Zheng; intimations of the Jia family's recovery.  
Oral Reports (to be co-graded by classmates; everyone's attendance is required)
- Wk 15 21 Oral Reports (to be co-graded by classmates; everyone's attendance is required)  
(LAST DAY OF CLASS)

**<No Final Exam>**

**\*Friday, April 24, by 2:00 pm is the deadline for Term paper projects.** Place the paper in an envelope under my door at Pugh 353. Do not email your paper.

Classmates' comments on **Class Presentations** will be typed to preserve their anonymity. Presenters may pick these up from the "inbox" on my office door, starting the afternoon of April 27 (Monday).

I expect to submit final grades by April 28 (Tuesday).