

# The Chinese Poetic Canon, Beginnings through Song

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EALL 301/601, “Medieval Chinese Poetry”

Tuesdays at 2:30–4:30

HGS 312

## Course Description

This course represents an introduction to the most famous works of the Classical Chinese poetic tradition. We will read these texts in the original, focusing on developing a familiarity with the Chinese poetic idiom and the philological skills necessary for reading Chinese poetry. Students will come away from the course with the ability to read Chinese poetry on their own and a basic knowledge of the verse tradition, its most canonical writers, and the contours of its development, from its beginnings through the Song dynasty. The course is appropriate for students beginning their study of Classical Chinese poetry and students whose major focus is elsewhere but would benefit from knowing the basic works of the Chinese literary tradition.

There is no single canon of famous poetic works; instead, there have been many canons over time, subject to debate and the changing literary values of successive ages, as well as to the sometimes idiosyncratic preferences of influential individuals. For the last thousand years, however, a very basic skeleton of important works and writers has generally been agreed upon (though, of course, not everyone agreed about their relative merits). For the purpose of this introductory class, therefore, we will not be focusing on questions of canon formation or literary taste, but reading instead a selection of those works that every participant in premodern Chinese high culture would have known from the Song dynasty onwards.

Note that we will be reading primarily *shi* 詩 and *ci* 詞 poetry; we will not be reading *fu* 賦. This decision is somewhat arbitrary, given the importance of *fu* for the development of the *shi* tradition, its continuities with the poetics of the *Chuci*, and its continuance through the Tang and Song. However, most of the (much smaller) canon of *fu* has also been well-translated into English already (and makes for difficult reading in the original), and very few *fu* from any period after the fourth century ever made it into the canon of well-known works. Translations of some of these pieces, and references to translations of others, will be found in the supplemental materials section of the course reader.

## Prerequisites:

The prerequisite for this course is one year of Classical/Literary Chinese (or *kambun/kobun*), either at Yale or elsewhere. Modern Chinese is not required, and students are not expected to know the pronunciation of the texts we will read in Mandarin (i.e., Korean, Japanese, Cantonese, etc. pronunciation is fine). Students who have never taken Literary Chinese but have reason to believe that they

can handle the course readings (e.g. native speakers of Chinese or Japanese) should consult the instructor.

## **Readings**

All readings for this course will be found in the Course Reader, which you can download from the course webpage. This document will consist of roughly 1,000 of the most famous Classical Chinese poems, about 800 of which will be translated and annotated for you by the instructor. The primary work of the course will consist in translating the remaining 200 or so poems over the course of the semester. For some of these poems, you will be provided with annotated editions, also available for download from the website. For others, later on in the course, you will have to find annotated editions yourself.

The Course Reader will also contain brief introductions to the literary historical context of the pieces that we will read. For more detailed background information, students can read along with our progress in Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

## **Requirements**

The major requirement of the course is coming to class with the readings listed below translated into English. Each week you will be expected to translate up to 20 poems of varying lengths; depending upon your proficiency with Classical Chinese, this could take you several hours, but you will likely see your speed increase over the course of the semester. Secondly, students should familiarize themselves with the supplemental readings for each week, which will be translated for you in the handouts provided on the course website. These readings are not listed in the weekly assignments below, but will both help you gain the relevant poetic background for understanding the poems we will translate, and also model solutions to the kinds of problems you are likely to encounter in your translations.

For graduate students, the class will require one final paper, due the last day of finals week. This paper should be at least 18 pages long and represent original research or thought, and may be related to the topics of your own research (e.g., the reception history of a poet, poem, or literary trope in a later period or different culture). Undergraduates, by contrast, will be asked to write three papers of 4 to 6 pages each over the course of the semester; the first paper should be submitted on February 21, the second paper on April 4, and the third paper by May 9. These papers should represent close readings of one or more poems that we will read and translate together as a group. Guidelines for these short papers, and optional prompts for the first two, will be found on the course website.

## **Criteria for Evaluation:**

attendance: 10%

class participation: 20%

weekly translations: 25%

written work: 45%

## Statement to Students on their Academic Integrity

You may not under any circumstances present anyone else's work, words, or ideas as your own. Please be sure to review Yale's Academic Integrity Policy (<http://yalecollege.yale.edu/new-students/class-2019/academic-information/intro-undergrad-education/academic-honesty>) and the resources for understanding and avoiding plagiarism available at the Center for Teaching and Learning (<http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources>). If you are ever unsure as to whether a particular example does or does not constitute plagiarism, please consult the instructor first.

## Schedule of Readings

This schedule of readings is *very tentative*, and how much you are asked to translate in a given week will depend entirely on the makeup of the class. Assignments for each week will be clearly marked on the website, so please follow what you find there instead of sticking to the readings outlined here.

### January 17: Introductions

No advance readings. We will translate a few famous and popular poems in class.

### January 24: The *Shijing*

關雎, in Mao edition (translate the "Great Preface" and the poem as Mao interprets it)

野有死麋、燕燕、黍離、采芣 according to Mao's glosses *and* according to the glosses of Gao Heng (that is, translate each poem twice, in different ways; no need to translate the commentary)

### January 31: The *Chuci*

招魂、招隱士

### February 7: Early Poetry and *Yuefu*

Early anonymous poetry: 戰城南；有所思；蒿里；陌上桑；善哉行；西門行；東門行；古詩十九首其一、二、三

Early poetry of dubious attribution: [班婕妤]，怨詩；[蔡邕]，飲馬長城窟行；[李陵]，攜手上河梁；[蘇武]，結髮為夫妻

### February 14: Jian'an and Wei

The Cao family: 曹操，短歌行；曹操，苦寒行；曹丕，燕歌行二首；曹植，名都篇；曹植，雜詩七首其一、二；曹植，七哀詩

The "Seven Masters" of the Jian'an: 王粲，從軍詩（從軍征遐路）；王粲，七哀詩其一；陳琳，飲馬長城窟行；徐乾，室思其三

Ruan Ji 阮籍：詠懷其一、二、五

**February 21: Jin Dynasty**

Western Jin dynasty verse: 潘岳，悼亡其一；陸機，招隱詩；左思，詠史其一；郭璞，遊仙詩其一、四

Tao Qian 陶潛：九日閑居；歸園田居五首其一；乞食；讀山海經十三首其一；戊申歲六月中遇火；飲酒二十首其五

Xie Lingyun 謝靈運：過始寧墅；登池上樓；入彭蠡湖口

**February 28: Fifth and Sixth Centuries**

Anonymous love songs 子夜歌：其一、二、九

Bao Zhao 鮑照：代白頭吟；代東武吟；擬行路難十八首其一、六

Xie Tiao 謝朓：同謝諮議詠銅爵臺；王孫遊；遊敬亭山詩

Lyrics on "Copperbird Terrace": 江淹，銅雀妓；何遜，銅雀妓

Yu Xin 庾信：山齋；郊行值雪詩

An example of court composition 漢高廟賽神：蕭綱、劉孝儀、劉遵、王臺卿、徐陵、庾肩吾

**March 7: Early Tang**

Court and wilderness: 魏徵，述懷；王績，野望

The "Four Talents of the Early Tang" 盧照鄰，長安古意；王勃，滕王閣；駱賓王，在獄詠蟬

Tang court composition 奉和初春幸太平公主南莊應制：李嶠、沈佺期、蘇頌、宋之問、李義、韋嗣立、李邕、邵升

Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂：感遇其一、三、五

Early eighth century verse: 張若虛，春江花月夜；賀知章，回鄉偶書二首其一；王之渙，登鸛雀樓

**March 28: High Tang**

Meng Haoran 孟浩然：晚泊潯陽望香爐峰；與諸子登峴山；春曉；宿建德江

Wang Wei 王維：渭川田家；渡河到清河作；酬張少府；送別（山中相送罷）；送元二使安西

Wang Changling 王昌齡：出塞二首其一；春宮曲；芙蓉樓送辛漸

Frontier poetry 高適，燕歌行；岑參，走馬川行送出師西征

Li Bai 李白：古風其一；公無渡河；古朗月行；靜夜思；鳴皋歌送岑徵君；夢游天姥吟留別

**April 4: Mid Tang**

Du Fu 杜甫：對雪；彭衙行；茅屋為秋風所破歌；丹青引；宿白沙驛

Meng Jiao and Han Yu: 孟郊，秋懷；孟郊，懊惱；韓愈，落齒；韓愈，石鼓歌；韓愈，調張籍

Li He 李賀：李憑箏篋引；秦王飲酒；長歌續短歌；長平箭頭歌

Bai Juyi 白居易：賣炭翁；自題寫真；食筍

#### April 11: Late Tang

Du Mu 杜牧，獨酌；題宣州開元寺；齊安郡晚秋；赤壁；遣懷

Li Shangyin 李商隱：錦瑟；重過聖女祠；樂遊原；無題（來是空言去絕蹤）；無題（颯颯東風細雨來）；謝先輩防記念拙詩甚多異日偶有此寄；常娥；

Wen Tingyun 溫庭筠：昆明治水戰詞；謝公墅歌

Yu Xuanji 魚玄機：賣殘牡丹；遊崇真觀南樓睹新及第提名處

#### April 18: Early Ci Poetry

Wen Tingyun 溫庭筠：菩薩蠻（小山重疊金明滅）；更漏子（玉爐香）

Five dynasties ci: 韋莊，菩薩蠻（人人盡說江南好）；李煜，虞美人（春花秋月何時了）；李煜，浪淘沙（簾外雨潺潺）；李煜，烏夜啼（無言獨上西樓）

Liu Yong 柳永：雨霖鈴（寒蟬淒切）；夜半樂（凍雲黯淡天氣）；八聲甘州（對瀟瀟）

Northern Song *xiaoling*: 范仲淹，御街行（紛紛墮葉）；張先，青門引（乍暖還輕冷）；晏殊，浣溪沙（一向年光有限身）；歐陽修，生查子（去年元夜時）；歐陽修，蝶戀花（庭院深深深幾許）

#### April 25: Later Ci Poetry

Yan Jidao 晏幾道：臨江仙（夢後樓臺高鎖）；蝶戀花（醉別西樓醒不記）；鷓鴣天（彩袖殷勤捧玉鍾）

Su Shi 蘇軾：水調歌頭（明月幾時有）；定風波（莫聽穿林打葉聲）；洞仙歌（冰肌玉骨）；永遇樂（明月如霜）

Lyricists of the Late Northern Song: 秦觀，如夢令（遙夜沉沉如水）；周邦彥，滿庭芳（風老鶯雛）；周邦彥，西河（佳麗地）

Li Qingzhao 李清照：漁家傲（天接雲濤連曉霧）；李清照，如夢令（常記溪亭日暮）；李清照，聲聲慢（尋尋覓覓）

Lyricists of the Southern Song: 辛棄疾，念奴嬌（我來弔古）；辛棄疾，賀新郎（甚矣吾衰矣）；姜夔，揚州慢（淮左名都）；吳文英，風入松（聽風聽雨過清明）；吳文英，八聲甘州（渺空煙四遠）