

Lingnan University
Department of Visual Studies
B.A. (Honors) in Visual Studies

Course Title	:	Women, Art and Society in China
Course Code	:	VIS 4311
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture and tutorial
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours per week
Category in Major Programme	:	Programme elective
Prerequisite(s)	:	
Co-requisite(s)	:	N/A
Restriction(s)	:	
Exemption Requirement(s)	:	N/A

Brief Course Description

Compared to European and American art history, the study of women in relation to the visual arts in China is a relatively new and developing area of enquiry. Drawing upon recent research, this course will investigate the roles that women play in the visual arts within specific socio-historical contexts in China. In particular, this course will emphasise how gendered identities are constructed through the visual arts. We will examine different categories of women painters, artisans and patrons in imperial China. We will also explore ways that women have been visually represented such as in religious images, vernacular paintings, portraiture and popular prints. Moreover, the course will discuss examples of Chinese women artists and their works during the modern and contemporary periods.

Aims

The course aims to introduce students to the roles of women and their representation in the visual arts in China from the imperial past to the contemporary period. It intends to arouse student interest in a subject that has been marginalised in Chinese art history. The course also aims to further develop students' research skills and ability to discuss objects and images within specific contexts.

Indicative Content

1. Key concepts in the study of women and gender in China
2. Gentry women painters
3. Courtesan women painters
4. Courtly and professional women calligraphers, painters and artisans
5. Imperial women as patrons and collectors
6. Women and portraiture
7. Women as goddesses
8. Women in vernacular painting

9. Women's bodies and women's work – textiles and embroidery
10. The female nude and modernity
11. Images of women in popular prints
12. Women artists from modern China
13. Women artists from contemporary China

Teaching Methods

This course is structured around one lecture and one tutorial per week. The lecture provides background information, introduces students to artists and their works, and raises key issues. The tutorials will involve small group discussions on the lectures, weekly readings and further images shown in class. Student presentations will also take place during the tutorials. If a relevant exhibition is available during term time, a visit to the exhibition will be arranged.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. recall the names of notable Chinese women artists and patrons as well as their experiences;
2. analyse examples of works by and about women in relation to perceptions of women and their positions in society;
3. relate the study of women in the visual arts to broader socio-historical and artistic developments in China;
4. reflect upon the ways that gendered identities may be constructed and questioned through visual material;
5. explore and critically evaluate various sources for research on women and the visual arts in China.

Assessment

Active class participation	15%
Class presentation	10%
Mid-term written assignment	25%
Research paper	45%
Preparations for research paper	5%

Presentation 10%

Each week, one or more students will make a 10-15 minute presentation each. For the presentation, the student will introduce a Chinese woman artist or patron or a work that depicts Chinese women. The student is required to discuss one particular work in relation to the issue of female identity.

Written Assignment 25%

Students will choose a topic in consultation with the instructor. 5 pages double-space, with footnotes and a bibliography including at least two academic sources. If Wikipedia or other similar websites are cited as sources, the paper will be returned to the student for revision.

Research Paper 45%

Students will choose a topic in consultation with the instructor. 10 pages double-space, with footnotes and bibliography of at least five academic sources. If Wikipedia or other similar websites are cited as sources, the paper will be returned to the student for revision.

Preparations for Research Paper 5%

This includes the submission of an outline and bibliography in advance. The instructor will then give comments and suggestions for revision.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Students' progress towards the learning outcomes outlined above will be measured by means of:

1. active participation in class, which requires students to take an active role in class discussions. Regular attendance from students is expected. This participation reflects their ability to recall key points from the lecture and readings, as well as to construct and defend opinions on issues concerning women and the visual arts in China.
2. a 10-15 minute presentation, which will introduce students to other Chinese women artists, patrons and representations of women that may or may not be covered in the course. Through the presentation, students should reflect upon the meaning of female identity in China as constructed within a particular work.
3. a written assignment in which students explore and critically evaluate the perspectives of different sources on women and the visual arts in China.
4. a research paper on a focused topic that applies and integrates the different learning outcomes of the course. Students should give thought to the specific socio-historical and artistic contexts of objects or images that they choose as examples. They should also demonstrate analysis of the construction of gendered identities through visual material.

Required Readings

Barlow, Tani. *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Ko, Dorothy. *Teachers of the Inner Quarters, Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Nochlin, Linda. "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?" *ARTnews* (Jan 1971): 22-39.

Weidner, Marsha, ed. *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1990.

Weidner, Marsha, ed. *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists 1300 – 1912*. Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1989.

Supplementary Readings

Andrews, Julia F. and Shen Kuiyi. "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance: the Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 11, no.1 (Spring 1999): 1-29.

Berg, Daria. "Cultural Discourse on Xue Susu, A Courtesan in Late Ming China." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 6, pt.2 (Jul 2009): 171-200.

Cahill, James. *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China*. Berkeley, 2010.

Chen Baozhen 陳葆真. "Guan Daosheng he ta de zhushitu 管道昇和她的竹石圖." *Gugong jikan* 故宮季刊, no. 4, 11 (1977): 51-84.

Chen Jo-shui. "Empress Wu and Proto-Feminist Sentiments in T'ang China." In *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Imperial China*, edited by Frederick Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang, 77-116. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Chiu, Melissa. "Thread, Concrete and Ice: Women's Installation Art in China." *ART Asia-Pacific* 20 (Autumn 1998): 50-57.

Contemporary Chinese Women Painters. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1995.

Deguang 德光. "Zhongguo nüxing meishu zongguan 中國女性美術綜觀." *Meishu yanjiu* 美術研究, no. 1 (1995): 44-54.

Hagman, Lori. "Ladies of the Jade Studio: Women Artists in China." In *Women Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, edited by Karen Petersen and J.J. Wilson. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

Karetzky, Patricia E. "Wu Zetian and Buddhist Art of the Tang dynasty." *T'ang Studies* nos.20-21 (2002-2003): 113-150.

Karlitz, Katherine. "The Social Uses of Female Virtue in Late Ming Editions of the Lie nü zhuan". *Late Imperial China* 12.2 (1991), 117-152.

- Ko, Dorothy. *Every Step a Lotus: Shoes for Bound Feet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Kuo, Jason, ed. *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*. Washington: New Academia, 2007.
- Laing, Ellen Johnston. *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early-Twentieth Century Shanghai*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.
- Laing, Ellen Johnston. "Erotic Themes and Romantic Heroines Depicted by Ch'iu Ying." *Archives of Asian Art* 49 (1996): 68-91.
- Lee Hui-shu. *Empresses, Art, and Agency in Song Dynasty China*. Seattle: Washington University Press, 2010.
- Li Shi 李滢. *Ming Qing guige huihua yanjiu 明清閨閣繪畫研究*. Beijing: Forbidden City Press, 2008.
- Li Wai-ye. "The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal." In *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, edited by Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang, 46-73. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Liu Heping. "Empress Liu's Icon of Maitreya: Portraiture and Privacy at the Early Song Court." *Artibus Asiae* 63, no.2 (2003): 129-190.
- Morris Rossabi. "Kuan Tao-sheng: Woman Artist in Yuan China." *Bulletin of Sung-Yuan Studies* 21 (1989): 67-84.
- Murray, Julia. "The Admonitions Scroll and Didactic Images of Women in Early China." *Orientalism* 32:6 (June 2001): 35-40.
- Tao Yongbai 陶詠白 and Li Shi 李滢. *Shiluo de lishi: Zhongguo nüxing huihua shi 失落的歷史: 中國女性繪畫史*. Changsha: Hunan mei shu chu ban she, 2000.
- Ka Bo Tsang. "In Her Majesty's Service: Women Painters in China at the Court of the Empress Dowager Cixi." In *Local / Global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland, 35-57. Burlington: Ashgate, 2006.
- Stuart, Jan. *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits*. Washington: Freer Gallery of Art, 2001.
- Wen Liao. "The Turbulent History of Chinese Feminist Values and Art." In *Chinese Art at the End of the Millennium: Chinese-art.com 1998-1999*, edited by John Clark, 67-71. Hong Kong: New Art Media Ltd, 2000.

Wu Hung. *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Xiao Lu. *Dialogue*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010.

Yü Chün-fang. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3* hours of class contact and 6* hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.

* Numbers of hours are subject to adjustment for individual courses.