

Boston University Shanghai Center

Topics in Chinese Language and Culture

The Three Kingdoms 三国演义

by Luo Guanzhong 罗贯中

Time: Mon., Tues., Thurs. 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Location: Guanghua West, Room 406

Instructor: Guo Weiwei/郭薇薇

gww729@msn.com

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30- 2:30 PM; Thursday, 2:00-4:00 PM

Course Overview:

"THE EMPIRE, LONG DIVIDED, MUST UNITE; LONG UNITED, MUST DIVIDE.
SO IT HAS EVER BEEN."

话说天下大势，分久必合，合久必分。

In this language seminar we will read and analyze the classic martial epic *The Three Kingdoms*. As important for Chinese culture as the Homeric epics have been for the West, this fourteenth-century masterpiece continues to grip the imagination today. The novel is set at a fateful moment at the end of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) when the future of the Chinese empire lay in the balance. Writing centuries after the fall of the Han, author Luo Guanzhong created a sophisticated narrative that is faithful to elite sources of history yet a sophisticated synthesis of popular plays, operas, myths, and folk stories current in early-Ming dynasty. The themes of loyalty and treachery, triumph and defeat epitomize the best and worst in the life of his country. Other themes to be explored in this class include the concept of the hero and his limits, definitions of masculinity, contemporary productions of the classic epic, the relationship between historiography and the novel, the tension between human will and the forces of the cosmos, and Confucian values in conflict.

Fluency in Chinese is required for this class, as well as basic proficiency in classical Chinese. Except for a few articles in English, the novel and supplementary readings will be in Chinese, as well as class discussion and written assignments. Students will purchase the novel in Shanghai but additional readings will be made available to the class as PDF files or photocopied handouts.

Completion of ALL readings prior to each class meeting is crucial for this seminar. Schedules, topics, and readings may be revised at times, in which case announcements will be made in class as appropriate.

Grading and Requirements:

Participation (15%): This portion of the grade will be based on the general level of engagement and participation in class. Students are expected to come to class not only having read the assigned chapters but also prepared to discuss difficult points of language comprehension and usage, chapter content, and broader themes of the novel.

Oral Presentations (20%): Each class, a seminar member will take responsibility for leading discussion of the chapters read. They will offer a brief oral presentation of the main points of the readings, and then raise questions on language, content, and theme to structure the classroom discussion. Given the small size of our class, each student will make oral presentations 3-4 times during the semester.

Paper (45%): Students are required to write three 5-8 page papers during the semester. Each essay topic will be distributed to the class two weeks before it is due in class.

Final Exam: (20%): There will be an in-class final exam. Students will be required to read and critically analyze two passages from the novel.

Penalties for late work: The papers must be turned in on the dates specified below. One-half of a grade will be deducted for each day of delay.

Attendance in all classes is expected and will be recorded. If you cannot attend a specific class you must make all efforts to notify the professor beforehand or explain your absence later.

Plagiarism in any form is never acceptable. All students are responsible for having read Boston University's statement on plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty published in the Code of Student Responsibilities. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University international program for academic dishonesty may be "expulsion from the program or Boston University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean."

See the Code of Student Responsibilities to learn more about the rules of academic conduct:

<http://www.bu.edu/lifebook/university-policies/policies-code.html>

For a good introduction on plagiarism, see:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>.

Required Readings:

三国演义 [*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*]. Luo Guanzhong. Huaxia Press, 2007. ISBN 9787508040103. * **Note:** Student are expected to read the complete novel, even though only specific chapters will be discussed in class, as according to the syllabus.

评三国人物 [*Comments on the Characters in Three Kingdoms*]. Gui Hua and Liang Shi. Chang'an chubanshe, 2006. (selections)

正品三国 [*The Real Three Kingdoms*]. An Zhenmin. Beijing chubanshe, 2007. (selections)

还三国真面目—评说三国演义 [*More True Colors in the Three Kingdoms: Commentaries on Three Kingdoms*]. Gao Enyuan. China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Corporation, 2006. (selections)

Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture. Kimberly Besio and Constantine Tung, eds. State University of New York Press, 2007. ISBN 9780791470121. (selections)

正说三国演义 [A True Three Kingdoms]. Chen Dongyou. Solidarity Publishing, 2007. (selections)

浅谈刘备“善哭”的性格内涵 [Discussion of the Connotations of Liu Bei's "Tears of Joy"]. By Shi Peigen. Harbin Institute Journal, 2004, vol. 25, no. 7. Published by Shandong Normal University.

英雄的末路——浅谈关羽、张飞的性格差异与缺陷 [A Hero's Fate: Brief Analysis of the Differences and Flaws in Guan Yu and Zhang Fei's Personalities]. By Xi Dongjing. Wenjiao ziliao, 2009, vol. 18. Published by Beijing Normal School Chinese Department.

浅析《三国演义》中的一类谋臣形象 [Brief Analysis of the Various Types of Stratagems in Three Kingdoms]. By Wu Yiting. Harbin Institute Journal, 2002. Vol. 23, no. 4. Published by Beijing Normal School Chinese Department.

SYLLABUS OF READINGS

Week I

Class 1: Introduction to the novel and its place in history and culture

Class 2: Background on the kingdoms of Wei, Shu, and Wu

Class 3: Continued, Background on the kingdoms of Wei, Shu, and Wu

the Chapter 11 in *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, "Studies of Three Kingdoms in the New Century."

Week II

Class 1: Historical origin of the three kingdoms

Class 2: Read chapter on Cao Cao and Yang Xiu to prepare for opera performance

of the Chapter 8 in *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, "Three Kingdoms at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: The Shanghai Jingju Company's Cao Cao and Yang Xiu."

Class 3: Attend opera performance of "Cao Cao and Yang Xiu"

Week III

Class 1: Discussion of opera performance

Class 2: Read Foreword in *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, "The Language of Values in the Ming Novel *Three Kingdoms*."

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 1: Pledging Mutual Faith in the Peach Garden

Week IV

Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 4: A Plot Against Traitor Dong Zhuo; Cao Cao Presents a Jeweled Knife

First essay due: Review essay of "Cao Cao and Yang Xiu"

Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 15: Taishi Ci Fights With The Little Prince

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 16: At the Camp Gate, Lu Bu Throws a Halberd

Week V

Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 18: Braving the Battlefield, Xiahou Dun Loses An Eye

Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 21: In a Plum Garden, Cao Cao Rates the Heroes of the Realm

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 27: The Man with a Magnificent Beard Rides Alone for a Thousand *Li*

Week VI

Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 27: Guan Yu Slays Six Generals and Breaches Five Passes

[Yi Chapter 3 in *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, “The Notion of Appropriateness 义] in *Three Kingdoms*.”

Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 34: Imperial Uncle Liu Vaults the Tan River on Horseback

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 37: Liu Bei Pays Three Visits to Zhuge Liang

Week VII

Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 38: Zhuge Liang Charts a Course for the Three Kingdoms

Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 39: The Director General Makes His Debut at Bowang

Read article: On the Connotations of Liu Bei’s “Tears of Joy”

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 41: Liu Bei Leads His People Across the River

Week VIII

Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 41: Zhao Yun Rescues the Child Lord Single-handedly

Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 43: Zhuge Liang Debates the Southern Officials

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 46: Zhuge Liang Borrows Cao Cao’s Arrows through a Ruse

In *A True Three Kingdoms*, read pages 137-150.

Week IX

Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 50: Guan Yu Releases, and Obligates, Cao Cao

Second essay due: topic choices will be distributed for your selection

Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 58: Cao Cao Flees the Field in Disguise

Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 66 : Armed With a Sword, Guan Yu Goes to the Feast Alone

Week X

- Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 75: Hua Tuo Scrapes the Poison from Guan Yu's Bone
Chapter 6 in *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, "Zhuge Liang and Zhang Fei: Bowang shao tun and Competing Masculine Ideals."
Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 76: Guan Yu Retreats to Mai in Defeat
Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 79: Brother Oppressing Brother; Cao Zhi
Composes Poems

Week XI

- Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 84: Zhuge Liang Deploys the Eightfold Ramparts Maze
Read article: A Hero's Fate: Brief Analysis of the Differences and Flaws in Guan Yu and Zhang Fei's Personalities
Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 90: Burning Rattan Armors, Zhuge Liang Captures Meng Huo for the Seventh Time
Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 91: Attacking Wei, The Lord of Wuxiang Presents a Memorial

Week XII

- Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 95: Rejecting Advice, Ma Su Loses JiETING
In *A True Three Kingdoms*, read pages 151-161.
Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 95, cont.: Zhuge Liang's Lute Repulses Sima Yi
Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 96: Shedding Tears, Zhuge Liang Puts Ma Su to Death

Third essay due: topic choices will be distributed for your selection

Week XIII

- Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 103: At Wuzhangyuan, Zhuge Liang Tries to Reverse His Star-told Fate
Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 109: A Han General's Ruse: Sima Zhao Is Surrounded
Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 109: Retribution for the House of Wei: Cao Fang Is Dethroned

Week XIV

- Class 1: Read and discuss Chapter 114: Abandoning Stores, Jiang Wei Defeats the Wei Army
Read *Brief Analysis of the Various Types of Stratagems in Three Kingdoms*
Class 2: Read and discuss Chapter 116: On Hanzhong Road, Zhong Hui Divides the Army
Class 3: Read and discuss Chapter 116, cont.: At Dingjun Mountain, the Martial Lord Shows His Apparition

May 31, 2010: Final Examination