

**UGS 302 First-Year Seminar FY\* (W)**  
**The Good, Bad, and the Ugly in Chinese Literature**  
**FALL 2013**  
**MWF 2-3 p.m.**  
**MAIN 220D**

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**Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 1-2 p.m.**

- *Please stop by my office hours in the first few weeks to have an informal chat*

*UGS Peer Mentor:*

**Required Course Packet – available at Paradigm Books** 2116 Guadalupe; 512-472-7986  
[www.paradigmbooks.com](http://www.paradigmbooks.com)

**Other Required and Supplementary Reading on Blackboard/Course Documents**  
<https://courses.utexas.edu/> [select UGS 302 on your list of Fall courses]

### **Course Description**

First and foremost, this first-year seminar is designed to bridge a transition into college. The objectives of the course are to build upon the intellectual foundations of class discussion, analytical thinking, and writing, all of which contribute to one's role as a citizen of the world. Discussion is essential for an understanding and appreciation of any idea or concept. Both verbal and written forms of expression are emphasized in this course. Formal oral presentations are always good practice for something one will be called upon to do at some point in one's life and career, long after one leaves the classroom. We are also interested in building intellectual relationships – between professor and student, between student and student, and last but not least, between author and reader.

With regard to content, this course will provide an introduction to a few intriguing ideas and concepts in the classical Chinese cultural and literary tradition and is open to all students. No previous background in Chinese language, culture or literature is required. Readings in English translation will encompass a *selective* sampling of literature from as early as the seventh century B.C.E. through the modern era.

Course emphasis will be given to some topics from the Chinese tradition that are thought-provoking and even bizarre – namely, the **Good** (what is the Tao/Dao?), the **Bad** (traditional “love” and courtship stories), and the **Ugly** (exotica and China's Silk Road). Readings, lectures, and in-class and online discussions will focus on formative texts in early Chinese philosophical thought, Chinese fiction and prose, and exotica (flora, fauna and cuisine) in Chinese history and literature. These works will be read within appropriate cultural, literary, historical, social, philosophical, and religious contexts. Lectures and background readings supplement the primary works of literature.

**Writing Flag:** This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

**Global Cultures Flag:** This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

**Required Class Activities:** Campus tours/meetings with Peer Mentor

- **by 9/23:** Blanton Museum Special Exhibit: “Lifelike”
- **Weds. 9/18 Mid-Autumn Festival class at Coco’s Cafe (1910 Guadalupe)**
- **10/1-10/3 University Lectures 7-8 p.m. in Hogg Auditorium:**  
10/1: In Pursuit of Health; 10/2 In the Creative Mind; 10/3 In the Lab  
Required attendance of ONE Lecture; class outing for Weds. 10/2\*  
*\*in lieu of class on Weds. 11/27*  
*All lectures will be later available online [www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls](http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls)*
- **Mon. 11/25** Class lunch

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- **This course will be graded on the Plus/Minus system.**
- There is no written final exam for this course.
- *No late assignments accepted. Your final grade will be based on work completed by the last day of class 12/6/13.*
- **Laptop Use Policy** – Laptops may ONLY be used for draft writing during designated class sessions.
- **Any Electronic Devices (Cell/Smart phones, iPhone, iPad, etc.) Use Policy** – **All devices must be turned off during class.** Any use of these devices, including texting, websurfing, etc. will lead to dismissal from class (and marked as an absence for that day). **Repeat offenders will result in a filing of a report of academic problems.**
- There is a class attendance policy for this course.

Attendance is vital for success in this course and I value your contribution to class discussion. As well, lectures will be vital for background on historical context and schools of thought, and flesh out ideas and concepts for discussion, all of which cannot be replaced by reading lecture outlines online. In-class writing and oral presentation work cannot be made up.

<p><b>ATTENDANCE POLICY – More than 3 excused/unexcused absences, your final class discussion/participation grade deducted a FULL grade (e.g. A- to B-); additional half grades deducted for each additional absence.</b></p>
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*It is your responsibility to inform me of extenuating circumstances*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>More than 8 absences will result in a failing grade for the course.</b></li></ul> |
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**Religious Holidays** – Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time **after** the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that **you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent** to observe a religious holy day.

**Your grade for this course will be based on the following (see below for details):**

- I. 15% Class discussion, including participation and preparation**
- II. 75% Essays, various writing assignments (including drafts)**
- III. 10% Powerpoint Presentation on one of the University “Gems”**

## **I. Class and online discussion, participation and “preparedness.” (15%)**

Discussion is essential for an understanding and appreciation of the literature. Both verbal and written forms of expression are emphasized in this course. Be prepared to lead with discussion questions and/or observations for each class session. Come to class with at least two observations to discuss. Oral recitation of some pieces will be highlighted to appreciate the language. I have selected translations that read well in English as well as reflecting the Chinese original appropriately, if not always precisely.

- **Informal In-class/Online Writing**

*Informal Writing* \*There is no make-up for in-class informal writing.

Informal “free-writing” and “list-writing” will jumpstart many discussions. I strongly encourage you to be on time for class as some of the informal writing will take place at the beginning of class for only a few minutes; some of informal writing will continue online on Blackboard Discussion Board. These will be collected and read and tabulated toward your final informal writing grade.

- **Online Discussion on Blackboard -- Extension of In-class Discussion**

*NOTE – Please practice professional and academic decorum in participating in all online discussion.*

Online discussion is for the purpose of having a meaningful and ongoing dialogue about specifically, but not limited to, the pieces discussed in our course. This is also a medium in which designated class discussion will continue. In all cases, in order to receive credit for class participation/discussion, please observe the due date for posts (by Sunday 11:59 p.m. of the week – see details for each forum). Credit will be given for the quality, rather than quantity, of post(s).

The online venue is also yet another channel for ideas – to talk about your ideas, take risks with expression of your ideas in informal writing, and to get feedback on your ideas in pre-draft form. And, as with any source, if you refer to an idea online, please cite it by person’s name and date of online posting. There will be several avenues through which you will be participating. I may initiate the discussion threads but most of it will be up to you – I will interject now and then but will mostly be an eager reader.

In the case of lead discussants and presentations, each discussant or presenter will initiate a thread for discussion after their presentations. Please check in, read, respond and/or redirect the conversation.

1. Discussion on pieces already discussed in class or of supplementary reading.
2. Discussion of tangentially related, or “off-shoot” of in-class discussion.
3. Discussion on student led-discussions and presentations.

## II. Writing –Formal Writing, Discussion Questions (75%)

- **Reading and Discussion Questions (in class) (25%)**
- **Formal Writing Assignments (50%)**

The reading of literature is incomplete without the writing about one's understanding of the literature at a given moment. In this course, we will be engaged in critical thinking and writing about literature; in addition to informal writing in class and online, there will be formal writing assignments. We will also work on rethinking and revising your written drafts into a slightly expanded and revised essay. There will be ample opportunity in this course to draft and revise your writing as well as work on basic research skills. I would like you to view writing as thinking and therefore as an ongoing process.

On matters of research and exploration of topics, I encourage you to make use of the UT library, including resources tailored for First-Year Seminar students.

Website: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/students/>

On matters of writing at any stage, I encourage you to consult with me, your Peer Mentor, and/or make use of the University's Writing Center.

Website: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc>

A note on the Writing Center in FAC – you can take your preliminary ideas and brainstorm with a writing tutor. You do NOT need to take a full draft before going to the Writing Center. Website: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc>

- *Reading and Discussion Questions (25%)*
- **There is no make-up for Discussion Questions (DQ)**
- **The lowest score (or 0 for a missed DQ) will be dropped in the final average**

Formulated “Discussions Questions” based on the material covered in class will be handed out for Sections II and III and written in class, at the start of class for 15-30 minutes. For some discussion questions, you need only write a brief response (2-5 sentences). For others, you will be expected to develop some of these discussion questions into a longer and more thoughtful response. These discussion questions will be collected, read, and given feedback, and assigned a grade (out of 10 points). These discussion question responses are exercises in developing your ideas and observations – some of these may evolve into elements of a formal essay. I would like you to regard informal writing as ongoing drafts, therefore you are NOT expected to focus on presentation (organization, clarity, usage of English). Rather, the focus is on thinking, analysis, and brainstorming in written form.

- *Critical Thinking and Writing, Formal Writing (50%)*

**Submit Written Assignments in .doc or .docx or pdf formats, on Blackboard under Assignments. Allow for technical problems and wait time in meeting the deadline. Assignments due by 11:59 p.m. of due date. No late submissions accepted for credit.**

**DUE DATES FOR MAJOR FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

<i>Response Essay on Section I</i> (2 pages, double-space) due Week 4 (9/20)	(10%)
<i>Prose Scenario on Section II</i> (2-3 pages, double-space) due Week 7 (10/11)	(10%)
<i>Analytical Essay on Section II</i> (4-5 pages, double-space), due Week 9 (10/25)	(15%)
<i>Research Inquiry on Section III</i> (5-6 pages, double-space), due Week 15 (12/6)	(15%)

**Expectations and Evaluation for Response Writing and Analytical Essay**

Analytical and critical thinking will be the focus for the essays on materials in Sections I and II. Develop your observations and ideas into a thoughtful review of the literature, appending relevant ideas, interpretations, information, etc. from lectures, background reading, etc. View this critique as a point of thoughtful and analytical departure, rather than as a block of mere description. Support your observations and analysis with specific examples from the texts. How you define the parameters of this framework is up to you, and should reflect you in voice and in taste. I look to your essays to reflect thoughtful observations and clear analysis regarding your chosen theme or themes; incorporate relevant ideas and works from background reading, in-class and online discussion, and lectures; and last but not least, to reflect something of your interest and inspiration as a reader of literature. Footnotes or Endnotes are not required but **plagiarism will not be tolerated and consequences will include failure of assignment and may lead to failure of the course.** I expect you to proof your essays carefully and to hand in essays with minimal errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Each essay will be equally evaluated on the following:

**Content** Selection and discussion of chosen topic (including assimilation of discussion, lectures), expression of ideas and opinions, observations, etc.

**Written Presentation** Organization, clarity of expression of ideas and opinions, “mechanics” of writing (proper usage of English grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.)

**Expectations for Prose Scenario Piece**

- One prose scenario piece (between 2-3 pages, double-space), such as a short story or prose narrative piece or dramatic act related to *Section II Readings*.
- Incorporate, loosely or otherwise, the Chinese cultural memory covered in course-related lectures, readings, and discussion.

A “scenario” in narrative prose will set the stage for the analytical essay on Section II. In contrast to the academic nature of the analytical essay, view this assignment as a form of speculation and conjecture, involving your reading of plot, theme, characterization, and authorial intent, to name just a few possibilities. You are encouraged in this piece to freelance and forge your insight and critical analysis into more innovative directions, along the lines of creating fan fiction -- prequels, sequels, and alternative scenarios.

Your “creative” piece of fan fiction will be the endpoint of course online and offline dialogue on the Section II pieces of short fiction.

- Your piece will be evaluated on:

**Content** Quality of selected focus, including assimilation and relevance to original novel, effective use of allotted space (2-3 pages, double-space)

[NOTE – This is fan fiction – **written presentation** is not a priority but your piece should be fairly accessible to readers.]

### **Expectations and Evaluation for Research Inquiry Assignment**

Embark upon a research inquiry on a *topic of interest* related to food or money in Section III. This assignment should include a brief overview (abstract) of your selected topic and an analysis of 5 sources consulted.

I expect you to proof your assignment carefully and to hand in a final version with minimal errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Your research inquiry will be evaluated equally on:

**Content** Discussion, selection and research of well-defined topic and quality of sources (including selective assimilation of additional research, assigned reading, discussion, lectures)

**Written Presentation** Organization and compilation of findings, clarity of expression of ideas and opinions, “mechanics” of writing (proper usage of English grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.); proper citation usage

### **III. Oral Presentation – Powerpoint or Prezi Presentation on University “Gem” (10%)**

*Presentations on a “Gem” to be presented throughout the term on Fridays (Weeks 6-10). Sign up on BB/Communication/Groups for a time and subject by Week 3 Friday 9/13. One student per subject within a “Gem.” First come, first serve – declare your subject on: BB/Communication/Groups/Group Discussion Board.*

The process of preparing an oral presentation of one’s ideas is an integral part of developing ideas and refining observations. A prepared oral presentation is an excellent exercise in abstracting the essence of one’s ideas, basically “getting to the point,” and supporting one’s point with meaningful examples. The student powerpoint presentations will be 10 minutes long (plus additional time for discussion) and based on individually selected subjects from a “Gem.” These presentations will allow us to share ideas with one another in a formalized forum. You will be assessed on oratory skills for a well-spoken talk will greatly contribute to a communication of your ideas. As well, oral presentations are always good practice for something you will be called upon to do at some point in your life and career, long after you leave the classroom. You are expected to work with your Peer Mentor in preparation of your oral presentation.

The University of Texas has many “Gems” that enhance our experience in and out of the classroom. I hope you will discover cultural and intellectual centers such as the

Harry Ransom Center, the Blanton Museum, and the various University of Texas libraries and performance centers. Our class will explore the many Gems through your eyes as each of you focus on one particular piece or subject for your presentations. This will also introduce you to the village otherwise known as the UT campus!

**Project:** Powerpoint or Prezi Presentation (10 minutes in length, no more than 6 powerpoint slides) with observations on a selected piece or subject from your assigned “Gem.”

- Your Peer Mentor will have individual sessions with you to “practice” your presentation
- Presentation subject does not have to be China-related

### **ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES:**

Offer an edited verbal critique which should include text and visuals. Your taste and voice should provide the commentary rather than a summary of published commentary.

- Three/Four students per Gem; one student per piece or subject. You are encouraged to visit or attend the Gems with fellow presenters.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to visit or attend your selected Gem before deciding on a piece or subject.
- Select one angle from which to formulate your critique.
- This angle might start from the artist’s own conceptual framing, the observations offered from the Gem’s website and/or audio tour
- Feel free to give your own “take” of the piece or subject in its physical space (lighting, exhibition space, etc.) in the Gem or the UT campus.
- Your presentation is an opinion piece, not a research presentation so additional research is not required. However, some additional research may be needed to round out your presentation.

**University “Gems” for focus:** Three/Four students per Gem; one student per piece or subject; sign up on BB/Communication/Groups

- Consult <http://www.utexas.edu/about-ut/arts-attractions>
- Week 6 (10/4) – Blanton Museum (3 students)
- Week 7 (10/11) – Blanton Museum (4 students)
- Week 8 (10/18) – Harry Ransom Center (4 students)
- Week 9 (10/25) – LBJ Library and Museum (3 students)
- Week 10 (11/1) – Landmarks Public Art Program (4 students)

**Oral Presentations will be equally evaluated on the following:**

**Content** Quality of selection and discussion of chosen subject, expression of ideas and opinions, observations

**Oral Presentation** Organization, clarity of expression of ideas and opinions, “mechanics” of presentation (within time limit, articulate delivery of presentation), effective use of Powerpoint

## SCHEDULE OUTLINE

*Detailed class and reading assignments will be posted/handed out for each section and posted on Blackboard. All sections will be supplemented by lecture outlines, notes and translations by instructor.*

<b>Weeks 1-2</b> 8/28 – 9/6	<b>Introduction to Critical Thinking and Writing, and Other Academic Practices</b> (No class Labor Day 9/2)
<b>Weeks 3-4</b> 9/9 – 9/20	<b>Section I – the GOOD – What is the Dao?</b> <u>FORMAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE 9/20</u>
<b>Weeks 5-8</b> 9/23 – 10/18	<b>Section II – the BAD – Traditional “Love” and Courtship Stories</b> University Lectures 10/1-10/3 [“Gems” Powerpoint Presentations Fridays 10/4, 10/11, 10/18] <u>FORMAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE 10/11</u>
<b>Weeks 9-11</b> 10/21-11/8	<b>Section III – the UGLY – Chinese Exotica, Food, Money</b> [“Gems” Powerpoint Presentations Fridays 10/25, 11/1] PCL Library Instruction 11/8 <u>FORMAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE 10/25</u>
<b>Weeks 12-14</b> 11/11-11/27	<b>Section III – the UGLY – The Silk Road, China and the West</b> Research inquiry (No class Weds. 11/27; Thanksgiving Break 11/28-29)
<b>Week 15</b> 12/2 – 12/6	<b>Research Inquiry Source Analysis, Citation Practices, Overview</b> <u>FORMAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE 12/6</u>

**Fall semester Signature Course students are required to attend one of the University Lectures. All University Lectures are at Hogg Auditorium from 7-8 p.m.**

<b>Tuesday 10/1</b>	In Pursuit of Health	
<b>Wednesday 10/2</b>	In the Creative Mind*	*class outing to this lecture
<b>Thursday 10/3</b>	In the Lab	

All lectures will be available on: University Lecture Series <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls/>

Designed to create a campus-wide conversation, the University Lecture Series gives first-year students an opportunity to interact with leading members of our faculty—scholars, scientists, and civic leaders who are nationally and internationally renowned. All students, faculty, alumni, staff and community guests are invited, but the events will be aimed at entering first-year students. The University Lecture Series is generously brought to UT by the Audre and Bernard Rapoport Excellence Fund for Undergraduate Studies.



### **Use of Blackboard**

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Blackboard can be used to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to take online quizzes and surveys.

You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notifications of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are **not** an excuse for late work. However, if there is an unscheduled downtime for a significant period of time, I will make an adjustment if it occurs close to the due date.

Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

### **The UT Library**

The UT Library offers resource help and many services. The following link is for Undergraduate Students:

Website: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/students/>

### **The Undergraduate Writing Center**

The Undergraduate Writing Center provides individual, professional advice on all aspects of writing to UT undergraduates on a drop-in basis or by appointment. Location: Flawn Academic Center 211, 471-6222.

Writer's Advice Line: free and open to everyone.

Email your brief query or call at 475-VERB.

Website: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc>

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **The University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **University Electronic Mail Notification Policy**

#### **(Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)**

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: if you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

### **Documented Disability Statement**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. See Website below for more information: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

UGS 302                      **Weeks 1-2 – Discussion, Reading, Writing Assignments**  
**Introduction**

**Required:**    Course Packet: Available at Paradigm Books  
                  Other Readings on BB/Course Documents

**Week 1**                      **Introduction – Academic Practices**

**Wednesday 8/28**        Introduction – Course objectives

**Friday 8/30**              Brief Introduction to Chinese Language and Writing  
                                  Meet with Peer Mentor

- **ASSIGNMENT FOR FRIDAY 9/6 CLASS** – Informal in-class report and submission of Website Evaluation Checklist (see attached)
- Website Evaluation Checklist for 2 websites on your topic of interest related to Chinese language and culture.

**Reading:**        See BB/Course Docs/Introduction:  
C.M. Lai, “Brief Introduction to the Chinese Language and Writing System”  
A. Zee, *Swallowing Clouds* (excerpt)\*                      \*also available in Course Packet

**Further Reading:**    Jerry Norman, “The Beginnings of Chinese Writing” pp. 6-9 (See Chinese Script, Oracle Bones, Bronzes pdf file on BB/Course Docs/Intro)

**Week 2**                      **Information Literacy**

**Monday 9/2**              **Labor Day – no classes**

**Wednesday 9/4**        Critical Thinking, Writing, and other Academic Practices  
                                  Standard Chinese practices  
**BB/Course Docs:**    Chinese Names, Note on Romanization

**Friday 9/6**              Evaluation of 2 websites – In-class reports of websites on selected topic of interest (submit checklists)

*See Detailed schedules posted on BB/Course Documents/Schedules for remaining detailed schedules of readings and assignments.*

**UGS 302 Website Evaluation Assignment Guidelines NAME:**  
**Anyone can publish on the Web; thus it is important to be able to distinguish between reliable and unreliable websites. Consider the following criteria in evaluating a website:**

**Authority**

- Who wrote it?
- What are their qualifications?
- Are they experts?
- Who published/hosted it?
- Is the publisher/host reputable?

**Objectivity**

- Why was this site created?
- Is this fact or opinion?
- Is it biased?

**Accuracy**

- Is this true?
- Can you tell where they got their information?
- Can you find this information elsewhere?

**Currency**

- When was this information published or last updated?
- Is it current enough for your research?

**TIPS:**

- The **author and publisher/host** may be the **same**. For example, if you don't see an author's name on an organization's website, then the organization is both the author and the publisher.
- You may not find all of your answers on the web page provided. You may have to **look at other pages** on the web site (look for an "about" link, for example) or search the web for more information about the person or organization that created the web site.
- **Weigh all four criteria** when making your decision. For example, the information may appear accurate, but if the authority is suspect you may want to find a more authoritative site for your information.