

**CHI/SLC/ENG/HON 394: Topic: Chinese Poetry for Creative Writers:
How Chinese Poetry Impacted English-language Poetics via Translation**

Fall 2024; T/Th 1:30–2:45 P.M. WHALL260

Instructor: Dr. Lucas Klein

Office: Durham Hall 306D

Email: Lucas.Klein@asu.edu

Office Hours: Weds. 1:30–3:00 P.M. or by appointment via email; emails replied to promptly

Course Description:

Medieval and contemporary Chinese poetry, in translation and in Chinese, and its impact on English-language poetry. No previous knowledge of Chinese required.

Humanities, Arts and Design [pending]

This course has applied for recognition for fulfillment of the ASU Humanities, Arts and Design General Studies requirement. Students completing a Humanities, Arts and Design course will be able to:

- Analyze cultural creations or practices in historical or contemporary context.
- Interpret the formal, aesthetic, and creative elements in literary, visual, or cultural texts.
- Articulate relationships among tradition, innovation, individual creativity, and communal expression in cultural creations or practices.
- Communicate narratives, ideas, or arguments using such elements as evidence, creativity, and critical thinking.

Course Objectives:

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese poetry has exerted a powerful influence on English-language (especially American) poetry and poetics. But how has this influence taken place? What has Chinese poetry meant to English-language and other international poets, and how has it been represented and translated to become so influential? What have been the dominant scholarly approaches to Chinese poetry in this time, and how have those approaches been in dialogue with English-language poetry? How do scholarly and poetic approaches to Chinese poetry overlap, and how do they diverge? What can Chinese poetry still mean to English-language poetics? And who are the Chinese poets, ancient and modern, it is absolutely essential for contemporary world poets to know today?

By examining both medieval and contemporary Chinese poets through their poetry, through various translations of their poetry, and through writings by scholars and English-language poets, this class will answer these questions and more.

The premodern Chinese poets we will be looking at are from the Tang (618–907 c.e.) and Song (960–1279) dynasties: Wang Wei 王維 (699–759), Li Bai 李白 (701–762), Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813–858), Han Shan 寒山 (Cold Mountain, fl. 9th century), Su Shi 蘇軾 (Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1037–1101), and Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084–ca. 1155).

The contemporary Chinese poets are: Bei Dao 北島 (b. 1949), Zhai Yongming 翟永明 (b. 1955), Xi Chuan 西川 (b. 1963).

The non-Chinese writers whose work we will discuss include Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, Kenneth Rexroth, Octavio Paz, Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Arthur Sze, Ha Jin, Wong May, and more.

You may translate poetry on your own—even if you do not read Chinese.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will:

- have learned the basic grammar of classical Chinese poetry and its differences in language and style from that of modern Chinese poetry
- be able to appreciate different strategies of literary translation
- periodize various academic and critical approaches to Chinese poetry
- elucidate the ways that Chinese poetry has influenced and interacted with English-language poetry via scholarship, translation, and poetic response
- construct academic arguments in speech and writing

Recommended Texts:

Readings will be available on Canvas and/or on reserve in the library, but interested students may want to buy copies of the following books:

- Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* [free online access via ASU's library]
- Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry* [free online access via ASU's library]
- Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry in Context* [free online access via ASU's library]
- Weinberger, *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*
- Weinberger, *The New Directions Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry*
- Weinberger, *The Life of Tu Fu*
- Snyder, *Riprap, & Cold Mountain Poems*
- Lai, Lim, and Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*
- Rekdal, *West: A Translation*
- Bei Dao, *The Rose of Time*
- Xi Chuan, *Notes on the Mosquito and Bloom and Other Poems*

Course Assignments:

Participation (30% of grade)

Class is conducted seminar-style, which means discussion rather than lecture, analyzing poems, translations, and critical readings together. You are expected to be an active participant in class discussions, which means (among other things) answering instructor questions, raising questions of your own, engaging with points raised by your classmates, and developing your own analysis of the material.

Postings (30% of grade)

Ten written postings are required throughout the semester, to be submitted through the Canvas site under “Discussions.” Depending on enrollment, at the beginning of the semester students may be required to sign up for dates on which to moderate discussion threads and begin discussions with comments and interesting or provocative questions (number of times each student will moderate discussions depends on the size of the class). Generally, each initial posting should be about 250 words; responses should range from 100 to 250 words.

Postings are graded on a simple scale out of **3.0**: **3.0** for cogent, convincing, and well-written; **2.5** for interesting, but not fully thought-through; **2.0** for not very well-written, but has some potential; **1.5** for, um, you’re phoning it in, aren’t you? **1.0** for I think you probably used AI software to write this, instead of doing the reading and thinking about it; **0.5** I don’t anticipate giving any half-point grades; **0.0** for no submission or unacceptable work.

One posting will consist of short written responses to at least two of your classmates’ final Research Video Essays (see below).

In place of a written posting, a **Translation** may be submitted. If you know Chinese, you may use that knowledge to come up with your own translation of a poem in question; if you do not know Chinese, you may come up with a translation via the glosses, dictionaries, and alternative English versions provided as part of the class materials. For instance, reading the translations in *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*, can you come up with a twentieth?

Research Video Essay (40% of grade)

The week after classes end, a research video essay is due. The format is open—as in, it could be a recording of you delivering a presentation, or it could look like a more professional video essay demonstrating creativity and expertise—but it must offer an original and insightful comparative analysis of work by at least poets or translators we have covered in class (as in, it could compare translations of the same poem, poetry by different poets, poetry of different eras, different poems by the same poet, etc.); videos must be **no longer than ten minutes**. This is your chance to do original research in a compelling way, to tell the world something we didn’t previously know about Chinese poetry and its representation in English. A bibliography page must be included.

Expectations for Honors Students:

“The primary purpose of the [Honors Enrichment Contract](#) is to give students and instructors the opportunity to interact about challenging academic issues.”

In this course the honors students and I will design an agreement in addition to general course expectations that is tailored to the specifics of our interaction, the expected work, and the course. One possibility is as follows:

- Explore at least one additional, complementary Chinese poem and its translation/translations into English or another language
- present on the poem and its translation/s to the class (about ten minutes)
- write a paper of roughly 8 pages analyzing the poem and the ways in which it has been or could be translated and understood

Honors students can also propose other course-related ideas with me to fulfill the Honors Enrichment Contract.

Honors students interested in working on a thesis with me should meet with me during the semester to discuss specifics of future work.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction—What are we doing?

1. 8/22
Weinberger, from *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*
James J. Y. Liu, from “The Critic as Translator”

Week 2: The Grammar of Classical Chinese Poetry

2. 8/27
Fuller, “The Classical Chinese Language,” ch. 1, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 1-19)
Cai, “Major Aspects of Chinese Poetry,” introduction to *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 1-9)
3. 8/29
Fuller, “The Formal and Rhetorical Features of Chinese,” ch. 2, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 20-49)

Week 3: Li Bai and the “Invention” of Chinese Poetry for Our Time

4. 9/3
Pound, *Cathay*
Weinberger, “Inventing China,” introduction to *The New Directions Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry*
Billings, from *Cathay: A Critical Edition*
5. 9/5
Li Bai 李白 (701–762), in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 204–219)
Cai, from *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 210-213; 231-237); Varsano, “Drinking Alone

Beneath the Moon: Li Bai and the Poetics of Wine” (pp. 223-235)

Week 4: Li Bai in English; Bai Juyi

6. 9/10

Lowell and Ayscough, from *Fir-Flower Tablets*

William Carlos Williams, from *The Cassia Tree*

Smith and Zhai, *Li Bo Unkempt*

Ha Jin, from *The Banished Immortal*

7. 9/12

Waley, Po Chü-i [Bai Juyi] 白居易, from *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems*

Gary Snyder, from *Riprap*

James Wright, “As I Step Over A Puddle At The End Of Winter, I Think Of An Ancient Chinese Governor”

Bai Juyi in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 274–289)

Cai, from *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 237-240)

Week 5: Du Fu, History, and Current Events

8. 9/17

Ayscough, from *Tu Fu* [Du Fu 杜甫], *The Autobiography of a Chinese Poet*

William Hung, from *Tu Fu: China's Greatest Poet*

Rexroth, Tu Fu, from *One Hundred Poems from the Chinese*

Rexroth, “Tu Fu, *Poems*” from *Classics Revisited*

Kizer, from *Cool, Calm, and Collected*

Young, from *Du Fu*

Sze, from *The Silk Dragon*

Owen, from *The Poetry of Du Fu*

Wood, from *In the Footsteps of Du Fu*

9. 9/19 [LK away]

Chen, “Du Fu: The Poet as Historian” (pp. 236-247)

Week 6: Who's Du Fu when he's at home?

10. 9/24

Owen, “Tu Fu” from *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry* (pp. 183-224)

11. 9/26

Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*

Du Fu in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 220–268)

Cai, from *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 162-175; 186-188; 216-217)

Week 7: The Way to Cold Mountain

12. 10/1

Han Shan 寒山 (Cold Mountain, fl. 9th century)
Snyder, from *Riprap, & Cold Mountain Poems*
Watson, from *Cold Mountain*
Red Pine, from *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain*
Kerouac, from *The Dharma Bums*
Hazard and Wallwork, *Cold Mountain: Han Shan*

13. 10/3

Rouzer, “Who Gets to Climb to Cold Mountain?” introduction to *On Cold Mountain: A Buddhist reading of the Hanshan Poems*
Rouzer, “The Cold Mountain Master Poetry Collection,” introduction to *The Poetry of Hanshan (Cold Mountain), Shide, and Fenggan*

Week 8: East Slope

14. 10/8

Watson, *Su Tung-p'o*
Paz, *East Slope*
Lin, from *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo*
Jeffrey Yang, *East Slope*

15. 10/10

Su Shi 蘇軾 (Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1037–1101), in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 390–399)
Cai, from *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 268-273; 313-315)

Week 9: “A Medium for Poetry”

16. 10/15

no class

17. 10/17

Fenollosa and Pound, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*
Pound, from *The ABC of Reading*
Olson, from “Projective Verse”

Week 10: Li Shangyin and the Poetics of Difficulty

18. 10/22

Graham, from *Poems of the Late T'ang*
James Liu, *The Poetry of Li Shang-Yin*
François Cheng, on Li Shangyin from *Chinese Poetic Writing*

Lisa Raphals, from *What Country*
Gustaf Sobin, “The Earth as Air”
Robert Kelly, “Reading Li Shang-Yin: Falling Flowers,”

19. 10/24

Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813–858), in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 323–333)
from Cai, *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 189-197; 387-390)

Week 11: Wang Wei and the In/visibility of Language

20. 10/29

Yip, Wang Wei 王維 (699–759) from *Hiding the Universe and Chinese Poetry*
Yu, Pauline, from *The Poetry of Wang Wei*
Snyder, “Five Poems by Wang Wei”

21. 10/31

Wang Wei in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 193–201)
Cai, from *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 177-179; 205-210)
Chen and Chen, “Poetry and Buddhist Enlightenment: Wang Wei and Han Shan” (pp. 205-222)

Week 12: Li Qingzhao and Women’s Subjectivity

22. 11/5

Rexroth and Chung, *Li Ch’ing-Chao*

23. 11/7

Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084–ca. 1155) in Fuller, *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* (pp. 408–416)
Cai, from *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (pp. 273-276; 394-395)
Egan, from *The Problem of Beauty*

Week 13: The Scholars and the Poets

24. 11/12: Theories of Language and the Cosmos

Kao and Mei, from “Syntax, Diction, and Imagery in T’ang Poetry”
Owen, “Transparencies: Reading the T’ang Lyric”
Hinton, introduction, *Awakened Cosmos: The Mind of Chinese Poetry*

25. 11/14: Chinese Poetry and the American Imagination

Snyder, Rexroth, et al., “Chinese Poetry and the American Imagination”
Rexroth, from “The Dragon and the Unicorn” and trans., Wang Hung Kung “In the Mountain Village”
Snyder, “Axe Handles”
Charles Wright, from *Oblivion Banjo*

Perelman, "China"
Silliman, from "The Chinese Notebook"
Perelman, from "Poetry in Theory"
Trevor Joyce, poems

Week 14: Race, Asian Americanness, Chineseness

26. 11/19

Yau, "Neither Us Nor Them"
Weinberger et al., "Letters to the Editor"
Hong, "Delusions of Whiteness in the Avant-Garde"

27. 11/21

Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899–1946), "Dead Water" and "Laundry Song," various translations
Bei Dao 北島 (b. 1949), *The Rose of Time* (McDougall, Chen, Hinton, Weinberger)
Bei Dao in Morin, *The Red Azalea*; Finkel, *A Splintered Mirror*, and Barnstone, *Out of the Howling Storm*
Owen, "What Is World Poetry?"

Week 15: Contemporary Chinese Poets in America

28. 11/26

Zhai Yongming 翟永明 (b. 1955), from *The Changing Room* (Lingenfelter)
Xi Chuan 西川 (b. 1963), from *Notes on the Mosquito and Bloom & Other Poems* (Klein)
Bei Dao, from *Sidetracks* (Yang)
Feng, from *The Transpacific Flow: Creative Writing Programs in China*

29. 11/28

Thanksgiving

Week 16: Chinese Poetry in America

30. 12/3

Lai, Lim, and Yung, from *Island*
Leong, from *Wild Geese Sorrow*
Goh, from *Islanders*
Rekdal, from *West: A Translation*

31. 12/5

Garcia Roberts, *Derangements of My Contemporaries* and *Li Shangyin*
Wong, *In the Same Light*
Weinberger, *The Life of Tu Fu*
Weinberger, *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*

Grading Scale

A+	97% - 100%	A	94% - <97%	A-	90% - <94%
B+	87% - <90%	B	84% - <87%	B-	80% - <84%
C+	76% - <80%	C	70% - <76%	D	60% - <70%
E	0% - <60%				

Grade Appeals

Grade disputes must first be addressed by discussing the situation with the instructor. If the dispute is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair per the [University Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades](#).

Communication and Technology Requirements

Canvas Email/Messages is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon messages in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly. ***All instructor correspondence will be sent to students via their ASU email account.***

This course requires a computer with Internet access and the following:

- Web browsers ([Chrome](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#), or [Safari](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office or Google Drive ([Microsoft 365](#) and Google Drive are free for all currently-enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Note: A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. may not be sufficient for completing work in ASU courses. While students will be able to access course content with mobile devices, students must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes and exams, and virtual labs.

Technical Support

This course uses Canvas to deliver content. It can be accessed through the MyASU portal at <http://my.asu.edu> or the Canvas home page at <https://myasucourses.asu.edu>. For technology support or other services, go to your MyASU portal and click on the HELP tab—or contact the ASU Experience Center. Go to <https://tech.asu.edu/services/ec> for email and live chat options. Phone: 1-855-278-5080 or +1-480-965-6500.

Language Tutoring and Other Campus Resources

SILC Learning Support Services offers free language tutoring services. They provide both face-to-face and online tutoring. To check their schedule and sign-up for a tutoring session, go to <https://silc.asu.edu/learning-support-services/tutoring> (scroll down to find the schedule for tutors in the student's target language).

Please refer to the following additional resources available to ASU students:

- [ASU Academic Success Program](#) (tutoring)
- [Counseling Services](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Disability Resource Center](#)
- [Major & Career Exploration](#)
- [Career Services](#)
- [Student Organizations](#)

Absences

Students who need to be absent from class due to religious observances ([ACD 304-04: Accommodations for Religious Practices](#)) or due to participation in university-sanctioned activities ([ACD 304-02: Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities](#)) should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester about the need to be absent from class and make arrangements to make up missed assignments and in-class work.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, and laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal from ASU. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

In this course, all assignments must be completed by the student. Artificial Intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT and other related tools used for creating of text, images, computer code, audio, or other media, are not permitted for use in any work in this class. Use of these generative AI tools will be considered a violation of the ASU Academic Integrity Policy, and students may be sanctioned for confirmed, non-allowable use in this course.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services should contact SAILS immediately. The SAILS Tempe office is located on the first floor of the Matthew Center Building. SAILS staff can also be reached at (480) 965-1234 (v) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional information visit: <https://coass.asu.edu/accessibility>.

Expected Classroom Behavior

Be sure to arrive on time for class. Excessive tardiness will be subject to sanctions. Any disruptive behavior, which includes ringing cell phones, listening to music, text messaging, constant talking, eating food noisily, etc. The use of laptops (unless for note taking), cell phones, or other electronic devices are strictly prohibited during class.

Policy Against Threatening Behavior

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

Reporting Title IX Violations

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://coass.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>.

Policy on Sexual Discrimination

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), and [retaliation](#) by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

Copyrighted Materials

All content in this course, including video lectures/meetings, presentations, assignments, discussions, quizzes, and exams is protected by copyright and may not be shared, uploaded, sold, or distributed.

Students must refrain from uploading or submitting material that is not the student's original work to any website, course shell, or discussion used in this course or any other course unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws. Instructors reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement. Any recording of class sessions by students is prohibited, except as part of an accommodation approved by the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.