

Prof. Shehong Chen

Spring 2016

Women in China 43.207(201) (Also a Gender Studies course)

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Class meeting time: 12:30-1:45, Tue. and Thur.

Office hours: 11:00-12:20, Tue. and Thur. and by appointment

Women in China

The course aims at understanding the evolution of Chinese women's status within historical and global contexts. Is Confucianism an anti-woman value system? What roles were given to women within the family and society? Why was the practice of binding women's feet so long lasting? How have foreign influences impacted Chinese women's status? What did women contribute to the Republic and Communist Revolutions and how did the two revolutions impact gender relations? What did women think of the one-child-per-family policy? These are some of the questions the course tries to answer through reading historical documents, personal memoirs, a literary fiction, and scholarly works. The course's main learning objectives include the abilities to interpret the process of change and continuity, to assess and use historical documents, to evaluate interpretations, and to analyze interactions of various forces.

Course requirements:

- Since the subject matter of the course is probably new to most students, attendance is essential. Missing each class meeting without a documented emergency reason after the last day to add a course will cost 5 points. A total of 30 points are assigned for this purpose.
- There are four quizzes. Since the quizzes are designed to help students keep up with the pace of the class, there is no makeup opportunity. Each quiz has a maximum of 10 points. To give room for emergencies, only three of the four quizzes, a total of 30 points, will be counted for in the course grade.
- Late papers will suffer a deduction of 5 points each day, including weekends.
- Midterm and final exams contain all essay questions and are given on designated days. Special arrangement to take either of the exams on a different day or different time can be made ahead of the scheduled days if there is a strong and acceptable reason. However, there will be NO makeup exams if students forget to come and take the exams on the designated days.
- **This class does not offer extra credits.**

The course grade is made up of the following:

2 papers	100 points (50 points each)
4 quizzes	30 points (10 points each, with one quiz reserved for emergency)
Midterm	100 points
Final	100 points
Attendance and participation	30 points
Total	360 points

The following books are required readings and are available in the University Bookstore.

- 1, Ida Pruitt, A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman, Stanford University Press, 1945.
- 2, Ba Jin, Family, reprint, 1972
- 3, Chen Huiqin, Daughter of Good Fortune: A Twentieth-Century Chinese Peasant Memoir, University of Washington Press, 2015.

All other excerpted readings and documents will be handed out in class or sent to all students as email attachments.

Week one (Jan. 19 and 21)

Introduction of the course and of Confucianism.

Readings: The Lun Yu (The Analects) at www.confucius.org/main01.htm#e.

Week two (Jan. 26 and 28)

Confucianism and women: concept of *Ren(Jen)*, three cardinal guides, three obediences, four virtues, and arranged marriages.

Readings: Excerpts of Chenyang Li's "The Confucian Concept of *Jen* and the Feminist Ethics of Care: A Comparative Study."

Week three (Feb. 2 and 4)

Chinese women's view of Confucianism: Ancient and modern.

Readings: Ban Zhao, Lessons for Women and Li Yu-ning, "Historical Roots of Changes in Women's Status in Modern China."

First quiz. (10 points)

Week four (Feb. 9 and 11)

Footbinding and oppression of women.

Readings: Excerpts of Wang Ping's "Three-inch Golden Lotus: Achieving Beauty through Violence."

First paper due on Thursday: What is Li Yu-ning's central argument in "Historical Roots of Changes in Women's Status in Modern China" and how is it related to Ban Zhao's Lessons for Women? (50 points)

Week five (Feb. 18)

This class does not meet on Tuesday because it is Monday schedule.

Foreign influences and changes in women's status.

Readings: begin reading Ida Pruitt's Daughter of Han.

Week six (Feb. 23 and 25)

Working women's lives and western influence.

Readings: Ida Pruitt, Daughter of Han, pages 1-141.

Second quiz. (10 points)

Week seven (Mar. 1 and 3)

The Republic Revolution: Qiu Jin, the Song Sisters, and Ning Lao Taitai.

Readings: Ida Pruitt, Daughter of Han, the rest of the book.

Week eight (Mar. 8 and 10)

Connection between women's rights and nationalism.

Readings: "Anti-footbinding Society of Hunan: Rules and Regulations on Marriage" and Qiu Jin, "An Address to Hundred Million Fellow Countrywomen."

Midterm exam is on Thursday, on materials of weeks 1 through 8.

Week nine (Mar. 22 and 24)

The New Culture Movement's impact on women.

Readings: Ba Jin, Family.

Third quiz. (10 points)

Week ten (Mar. 29 and 31)

The New Culture Movement and Communist Revolution.

Movie: New Year Sacrifice

Readings: "The New Marriage Law of 1950."

Second paper due on Thursday: Connections between Family, New Year Sacrifice, and "The New Marriage Law of 1950" (50 points).

Week eleven (April 5 and 7)

Impact of the Communist Revolution on rural women.

Readings: Chen Huiqin, Daughter of Good Fortune, chs. 1-4.

Week twelve (April 12 and 14)

A peasant view of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the One-Child policy .

Readings: Chen Huiqin, Daughter of Good Fortune, chs. 5-8 and "The One-Child Family."

Fourth quiz. (10 points)

Week thirteen (April 19 and 21)

Liberation or double burden?

Documentary film: Small Happiness.

Readings: Chen Huiqin, Daughter of Good Fortune, chs. 9-12.

Week fourteen (April 26 and 28)

Economic reforms: Confucianism and global influence.

Readings: Chen Huiqin, Daughter of Good Fortune, chs. 13-16.

The final exam is on a university-designated day, which will be announced later in the semester.