

CHN 3654G – SECTION 550

Trauma, Memory and Narrative in Chinese Literature and Film Winter term 2023

Class Time: Monday 12:30-14:30 / Wednesday 13:30-14:30

Class Location: Huron University College H111

Instructor: Dr. Guoyuan Liu

Email address: gliu23@uwo.ca

Office Hours: TBA

Course prerequisite: NONE

Course description:

Trauma is “a crisis of representation” (Hirsch). Trauma is “socially mediated” (Alexander). To understand trauma, it is not enough just to examine the incident that has caused the wound. More importantly, we should explore the way stories of traumatic experience are told. This course examines the narratives of traumatic experience in contemporary Chinese literature and film. Our focus will be on the representation of traumatic experience in selected historical episodes in modern Chinese history. Drawing on various approaches to trauma in film studies, literary criticism and social theories, we will analyze the portrayal of trauma in selected films, literary texts and memoirs. We will also investigate how historical trauma in the collective memories of the Chinese people shaped and reshaped the Chinese national identity, through popular conceptions and imaginations.

Taught in English.

Course objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to

1. gain a general understanding of “trauma”;
2. have a general knowledge of approaches to “trauma” in film studies, literary criticism and social theories;
3. demonstrate basic skills for analyzing literature and film with reference to their historical, social and political contexts.

Literary texts:

Lu Xun: “Preface to Outcry”

Yu Hua: *To Live*. Trans. Michael Berry. New York: Anchor, 2003.

Eileen Chang: *Lust, Caution*. Trans. Julia Lovell. *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film*. New York: Pantheon, 2007. 3-48.

Films:

A City of Sadness (1989, dir. Hou Xiaoxian)

To Live (1994, dir. Zhang Yimou)

City of Life and Death (2009, dir. Lu Chuan)

Aftershock (2010, dir. Feng Xiaogang)

Home Coming (2016, dir. Zhang Yimou)

Theoretical perspectives:

Theoretical perspectives in this course help you understand how trauma can be understood in different ways. The following works will be summarized in lectures, and short excerpts will be read and discussed in class.

Jeffery Alexander. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*

Arjun Appadurai. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*.

Michael Berry. *A History of Pain*

Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience*

Sigmund Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

Joshua Hirsch. *Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust*

Diana Lary. *The Chinese People at War*

Susan Sontag. *Regarding the Pain of Others*

Johnathan Spence: *The Search for Modern China*

Class Methods: Lecture, in-class discussion, written assignments

Method of evaluation and assessment:

Attendance	10%
Participation/group discussion	10%
5 Quizzes	10% (2% X 5)
2 Short assignments	20% (10% X 2)
Essay proposal	5%
Essay	45%

Schedule of classes:**Jan. 9-11 Introduction**

Reading: *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (selection, to be read in class);
Beyond the Pleasure Principle (Selection, to be read in class).

Jan. 16-18 Trauma, history and national narrative

Reading: *A History of Pain* (selection, available on OWL);
“Preface to Outcry” (available on OWL);
To Live 3-38.

Jan. 23-25 Imagining trauma

Film: *The City of Life and Death* (part 1).
Reading: *Afterimage* (selection, to be read in class);
To Live 38-74.

Jan. 30–Feb. 1 Witnessing and trauma narrative

Film: *The City of Life and Death* (part 2).
Reading: *Regarding the pain of others* (selection, to be read in class);
To Live 74-110.

First written assignment (10%) due on Feb. 1.**Feb. 6-8 The need for a voice**

Film: *City of Sadness* (Part 1).
Reading: *Unclaimed experience* (selection, to be read in class).

Feb. 13-15 Cultural otherness and social alienation

Film: *City of Sadness* (Part 2)

Reading: *Unclaimed experience* (selection, to be read in class).

Essay proposal (5%) due on Feb 15.

Feb. 18-26: Spring reading week.

No class meeting.

Feb. 27 Trauma as a haunting ghost

Reading: *The Chinese People at War* (Selection, available on OWL)

Eileen Chang: "Lust, Caution." (available on OWL)

Mar. 1 The essay workshop

No reading

Mar. 6-8 Social deformation and collective trauma

Film: Home coming (Part 1).

Reading: *To Live* 110-144.

Mar. 9 Huron China Day Event

China Day event: Mar 9 14:30-16:30, Kingsmill room

All students of CHN3654G are invited and are encouraged to attend the event.

Mar. 13-15 The lost home

Film: Home coming (Part 2)

Reading: *To Live*, 144-179.

Second written assignment (10%) due on March 15.

Mar. 20-22 To live with history

Film: *To Live* (Part 1)

Reading: *To Live* 179-214.

Mar. 27-29 To live with trauma

Film: *To Live* (Part 2)

Reading: *To Live* 214-232.

Mar. 29-31 Eco-scape and trauma

Film: *Aftershock* (Part 1)

Reading: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (selection, to be read in class).

Apr. 3-5 Trauma and the lost identity

Film: *Aftershock* (Part 2)

Reading: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (selection, to be read in class).

Apr. 10 Course conclusion

Reading "Translator's afterword" *To Live*, 237-245.

OWL

Students must consult OWL for this course regularly. All course materials and announcements will be conveyed by this and no other means.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices, including laptops, tablet computers, smart phones, etc., can be used in the

classroom for pedagogical/academic purposes only (such as note taking, reading, research, etc.), and for no other purposes (such as gaming, social networking, etc.).

Course work:

Please be reminded that your final grade reflects your performance in this course. As the term begins, your grade is zero and will increase with the accumulation of your course work. Please read the following descriptions carefully and decide how to earn your grade.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is calculated by hours attended divided by total lecture hours. An attendance sheet will be passed around during the lecture. It is the student's responsibility to sign the attendance sheet before the end of the lecture. The attendance sheet cannot be signed on a different day. Signing the attendance sheet in place of anyone but oneself is considered cheating and will be penalized.

Participation / Discussion (10%)

The participation/discussion grade reflects your level of engagement in class, the quality of your comments and your contribution to class discussion. When you participate in class discussion, you should not only demonstrate your familiarity with the subject discussed, but also your critical consideration of it. Being prepared before coming to class is a major way to improve your participation. You are encouraged to ask questions. Good questions make great contribution to class discussion.

To earn good participation grade, you need to be active in class discussion and well prepared before class.

Please see the rubrics for assessing participation on the course website.

Reading quizzes (10%)

Reading is the major part of your course work. To help you keep up with the reading schedule, there will be 5 pop quizzes. Each quiz (2%) is a question about the day's reading that you will have no difficulty answering if you have finished the reading. **There will be no make-up for missed reading quizzes.**

To earn good grades from the reading quizzes, you need to study the assigned reading before class.

Essay proposal (5%)

The essay proposal is designed to help you develop ideas for your essay. Details will be explained in class.

Essay (45%)

Literary texts and films examined in this course are dominated by several themes, such as "witnessing," "silence," "memory," "forgetfulness," "representation," "otherness," etc. Why is "witnessing" important to traumatic memory? How is "silence" a symptom of trauma? How is trauma remembered or forgotten? How is trauma represented in different narratives, including history, literature and art? And what role does otherness play in such representation?

Please respond to one of the above questions by exploring the theme of ONE film or literary text discussed in this course. By examining the way the text and film reflect/reconstruct history, explain your understanding of trauma.

You can gain a better understanding of the question you choose to discuss by “doing research,” that is, by referring to historical documents or accounts and/or previous theorization of the theme in question, in support of your argument. You can choose either or both of the following approaches in your research:

A. Historical approach.

Show how you understand trauma by discussing the historicity (how history is represented) in your selected films/literary texts. To do so, you will need to research your chosen subject to find relevant historical documents, and explain how you find association between the historical documents and the texts/films you choose to discuss.

B. Theoretical approach

Show how you understand trauma by analyzing your selected films/literary texts, with recourse to theories of trauma. To do so, you will need to research your chosen subject to find relevant conceptual tools or argumentation of theorists (such as Freud, Caruth, Alexander, Hirsh, Sontag, etc.)

This assignment is a university essay, which means the only task in your writing will be to develop an argument. Your thesis should be clearly stated in the first paragraph (Introduction) and your argument should be summarized in the last paragraph (Conclusion). All your points must be supported by detailed analyses of evidences.

To get a D and above, your written assignment must meet the following basic requirements:

- 1) The essay must consist of an introduction, a body text and a conclusion.
- 2) A thesis statement (one sentence) must be presented in the introduction.

To get a C and above, your written assignment must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The essay must address the main issues discussed in this course.
- 2) The thesis statement must be clear and specific.
- 3) The arguments should be based on analyses of the literary text or film you choose to discuss.

To get a B and above, your written assignment must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The thesis must be organized in an argument-driven manner.
- 2) The essay must analyze **details** of the literary text or film you choose to discuss.
- 3) The essay must show a good understanding of the main issues discussed in this course.

To get an A and above, your written assignment must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The essay must show a perceptive reading of the literary text or film you choose to discuss.
- 2) The writing must be clear and efficient.

Please see the rubrics for assessing the written assignments (20%) on the course website.

To do well in the written assignments, you need to

- 1) understand the requirements of the assignment;
- 2) study the assigned readings critically;
- 3) be familiar with the main issues discussed in this course.

The instructor is more than happy to provide help with the assignment. Yet please understand: 1) The instructor will only give advice and make suggestions; it is the student's responsibility to finish the assignment independently; 2) the instructor's advice and suggestions do not guarantee a higher grade.

The written assignment is to be submitted on the course website. **It is the student's responsibility to confirm that the assignment is successfully submitted.**

Extension is only granted for academic reasons, and must be requested at least one week before the due date. For medical or non-medical academic accommodation, see relative section in the appendix.

Plagiarism and any other misconduct will not be tolerated.



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022-2023

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) . The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect

the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: **Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising**

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: **Go**

Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services at huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload

by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -
[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)