

## ASCL 60.13: Literature, Gender Violence, and Trauma in Contemporary East Asia

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### Course Description

This course studies how literature shapes, narrates, witnesses and intervenes in the experience of gender-based trauma in an East Asian context through a theorized close reading of one central text, the Taiwanese author Yihan Lin's novel *Fang Si-qi's First Love Paradise* (2017). An important and influential work that ignited #MeToo movements across East Asia, the novel tells the story of a young, beautiful and literature-loving girl who is a victim of repeated acts of sexual violence by her tutor. The author died by suicide shortly after publishing the novel. Supplementary readings in the course include works on trauma theory, gender violence, conceptions of Chinese femininity and masculinity in relation to letters and literature (*wen*), literature-inspired contemporary MeToo movements in East Asia, and several other East Asian novels on related topics. The goal of the course is to contemplate the relationship between literature and gender-based violence in a non-Western context and to explore the complicated roles literary creativity and aesthetic experience play in human understanding of gender-based violence.

### Content Warning

Because of the nature of the materials, this course will not include trigger warnings for each instance of a topic involving trauma and/or violence. Instead, here is a list of potentially triggering topics that the course will cover: Sexual assault (including the molestation, rape and involuntary sadomasochist abuse of an under-aged girl); suicidal ideation; domestic violence, including abortion caused by violence; attempted murder; the Holocaust; war violence. Students who wish to take the course are required to skim through Lin's novel (will be available on reserve at Baker library), review the course website, and then sign the following acknowledgement on canvas by the end of Week 1:

- By enrolling in this course, I hereby affirm that I have skimmed through the assigned novel, *Fang Si-chi's First Love Paradise* by Yihan Lin, reviewed the ASCL 60.13 website, and have read through the syllabus carefully.
- I understand that the novel and other course materials contain trauma-triggering content. I understand that the instructor will support my academic learning in the class and that I need to seek other resources for support if I feel emotionally or mentally overwhelmed.
- By enrolling in this course, I hereby affirm my understanding that neither the instructor nor the students will record any lectures, discussions, or one-on-one meetings for this course.
- By enrolling in this course, I hereby affirm that I am familiar with the ground rules established by the students and the instructor during Week 1 of the term. I will try my best to follow these rules.

### Learning objectives

By the end of the term, students will learn:

- How to read a literary text closely;
- How to analyze and process difficult human experiences such as trauma and gender-based violence via intellectual engagement with literary and other sources;
- Foundational theories of trauma and gender-based violence;
- How literature, both classical and contemporary, is entangled with gender-based trauma and anti-sexual violence movements in East Asian contexts.

### **Safe and Respectful Learning Environment**

Due to the nature of this course, there may be instances when the material, topics, and assignments present information that you find offensive or contrary to your personal beliefs. In addition, when reading and discussing topics related to sexual violence, explicit language will be presented or used. It is very possible that some participants may find these readings and conversations uncomfortable, inappropriate, or triggering. Please take this into careful consideration before committing to taking this class.

This is an academic course. As such, class discussions will not be used to examine personal experiences or to coach students about coping strategies. If you believe that the topics in this course could be triggering or upsetting to you but would like to continue to take the course, please participate in self-care before and after the class. Here are some resources on campus that may be useful: <https://home.dartmouth.edu/mental-health-resources>; <https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/prevention-education/sexual-violence-prevention-project>.

The instructor of this course is a mandated reporter. As a faculty member, I am required to share disclosures of sexual or gender-based misconduct with the Title IX office. Title IX office is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus where all community members have equal access to Dartmouth's educational and employment opportunities, and strives to promote an environment of sexual respect, safety, and well-being. Therefore, if you choose to share such experiences during the course of the class, either in the classroom or in private communications with me, I will be required to share your name and the details of the disclosure with the Title IX office. (If you would like to talk with someone about your experiences during this course but want to remain confidential, you can find confidential services in the resources listed above or reach out to Title IX office for reference.)

Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. In order to foster and maintain such an environment, the class will discuss and agree on some ground rules during the second meeting of the course.

### **Reading Materials**

Textbook: Yihan Lin, *Fang Si-chi's First Love Paradise*, translated by Jenna Tang. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2017. You will need to purchase this book in hard copy and bring it to the class for every meeting.

All other readings will be uploaded to the Canvas course website. You can access them on your laptop or tablet (but not on your phone) in class. Meanwhile, hard copies of those books are available on reserve at the library.

### **Assignments and Grading Scale**

1. Class participation (10%): You can miss one class without permission during the term. For the second absence, please contact the instructor prior to the class to receive approval, or you will lose one class participation point for each class you missed.

Because of the nature of the course, class participation does not mean you have to speak up in class, although all are encouraged to do so. Class participation also includes making efforts to stay present in the class, contributions to making the classroom a safe and respectful learning environment, and efforts to support other students.

2. Response posts (25%): Starting in the second week of the term, each student must submit a response of 300 words in response to a prompt posted on Canvas by 8pm the day before each class.
3. Leading Discussion (15%): From Week 3 to Week 7, each class session will begin with a 20-minute discussion in which a group of 2-3 students will lead a conversation on the critical/theoretical article for the meeting.
4. Literary Reference Form (10%): At the beginning of Week 2, the students will be put in pairs and each pair will be assigned a different portion of Yihan Lin's novel. Each pair will read the assigned portion more carefully than usual and take notes on all the literary references that appear in those pages (i.e., literary authors, literary works, or passages from those literary works, or literary trends, etc., mentioned in the novel). All students will then contribute their findings via a shared Excel form of literary references.
5. Mid-Term Paper (15%): The mid-term paper is an 8–10-page short paper (Times New Roman 12 pt, double spaced) in which you will discuss Lin's novel in relation to one or several literary references selected from the collaborative Literary Reference Form.
6. Social Engagement Project (10%): This course will have a Social Engagement Project in collaboration with WISE, a local organization that advocates for survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence, as well as the Social Impact Practicum program (SIP) at the Dartmouth Center for Social Impact.
7. Lesson Plan (15%): For the final assignment of the course, you will choose one literary or filmic work from East Asia, or by an author with an East Asian origin, or about East Asia, that deals with the topic of sexual violence, and pair it with a critical article that is not included in our course. You will then imagine yourself as the instructor of a 60-minute class who must teach the materials to your classmates, and you will compose a lesson plan that consists of a 30–40-minute lecture and 20-30 minutes of discussion or a class activity.

## **Dartmouth's Academic Honor Principle**

All academic activities will be based on student honor. Students should re-familiarize themselves with the Academic Honor Principle on the Dartmouth website:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/index.html>

For the proper citation of sources, see:

<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>

## **Student Accessibility and Accommodations**

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Apply for Services webpage](#); [student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu](mailto:student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu); 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

## **Principles for Using Generative AI**

In this course, we acknowledge that GenAI has remarkable potential as a supplementary tool for brainstorming, thinking, writing, and revising. Meanwhile, we need to bear in mind its limitations. I will have different AI policies for different assignments, and will communicate with you when assigning them.

## Weekly Schedule

### Week 1 Introduction

- Meeting 1: Introduction to the Course

Readings: Mary Oliver, “Lead.”

Mark Brackett, *Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive* (New York: Celadon Books, 2019), 7-27; 48-67.

Tuning-in: Guest Visit by Laura Beth White from the Student Wellness Center to discuss techniques, strategies and resources students can rely on to recognize, embrace, and regulate their feelings, especially when feeling overwhelmed by the readings or discussion.

- Meeting 2: Introduction to the Novel

Readings: *FSCFLP* 1-100 pages; “About the Author.”

Jenna Tang, “Literary Catharsis: Jenna Tang on Translating Lin Yi-Han’s Only Novel, *Fang Si-Chi’s First Love Paradise*: On Taiwanese Literature, Trauma, and Redefining ‘Home’.”

*Consent Quiz due by Sunday*

### Week 2 Approaches to the Novel

- Meeting 1: The Cultural Context

Readings: *FSCFLP* 100-end of “Paradise Lost”

Rong Huan, Xiaotian Jin. “Reproducing and Resisting Sexual Violence: Narrative, Genre, and Power Structure in *Fang Siqu’s First Love Paradise*,” *Biography* 45, No. 4 2022, 439-454.

- Meeting 2: A Comparative Perspective

Readings: *FSCFLP* “Paradise Regained” and “Epilogue.”

Lisa Chu Shen. “From Lolita to Fang Siqu: Sabotaging the Narrative of Rape across Cultures,” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, Vol. 62, Issue 3 (2021), 285-302.

### Week 3 Gender and Trauma Basics

- Meeting 1: Gender Studies

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5 (Dec., 1986), 1053-1075.

Readings: Amia Srinivasan, "The Conspiracy Against Men." In *The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 1-33.

- Meeting 2: Trauma Studies

Readings: Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York, Basic Books, 1992), 1-32.

Readings: Bessel van der Kolk. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2015), pages TBD.

### ***Literary Reference Form Due by 8pm Sunday***

#### **Week 4 Masculinity and Literature: A Chinese Case**

- Meeting 1: Literary Tradition and Gender Violence

Readings: Selected classical Chinese works quoted in the novel

David Der-wei Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists Through the 1949 Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 1-11.

Miya Qiong Xie, "Chinese Literary Tradition and Sinophone Writing of Sexual Violence in Lin Yihan's *Fang Si-qi's First Love Paradise*."

- Meeting 2: The Lyrical and the Masculine

Readings: Excerpts from Eileen Chang, *Little Reunions*.

David Der-wei Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists Through the 1949 Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 179-190.

Tuning-in: Abby Tassel, Director of Multi-Disciplinary Interview and Training Center (MITC) At WISE.

#### **Week 5 Telling and Healing**

- Meeting1: Tell to Live: Guest Lecture by Susan Brison, Dartmouth College.

Readings: Susan Brison, *Aftermath* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002; new edition 2022), 1-22; 101-118.

- Meeting 2: Write to Heal

Readings: Sophia Richman, *Mended by Muse* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 54-101.

### **Week 6 Literature, Trauma and Testimony**

- Meeting 1: Literature after Trauma

Readings: Theodor W. Adorno, “Cultural Criticism and Society” (1949), *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967), 17-34.

Cathy Caruth, “Introduction,” in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2016), 1-10.

- Meeting 2: LitLab Parallel Storytelling

In this LitLab class, you will all submit a personal experience that you feel comfortable sharing (not necessarily related to trauma) to a beta AI agent called “Resonance Finder,” have it find passages from literary works that resonate with your experience for you, read those passages, and rewrite your experience.

### ***Mid-term Paper Due by 8pm Sunday***

### **Week 7 Literature and #MeToo in East Asia**

- Meeting 1: MeToo in East Asia: Guest Lecture by Linshan Jiang, Colby College.

Reading: Leigh Gilmore, *The #MeToo Effect: What Happens When We Believe Women* (Columbia University Press, 2023), 1-19.

Short intros of Shiori Ito, *Black Box* (2017), and Nam-Joo Cho, *Kim Ji-young, Born in 1982* (2016), in Karen Thornber, *Gender Justice and Contemporary Asian Literatures: A Casebook* (MLA 2024), 19-26; 141-148.

- Meeting 2: Literature in East Asian #MeToo and Lecture Note Practice

Readings (Choose one):

Nam-Joo Cho, *Kim Ji-young, Born in 1982* (2016).

Shiori Ito, *Black Box* (2017).

Film, dir. Yukihiro Morigaki, *The House on the Slope* (2019), based on Mitsuyo Kakuta’s 2016 novel of the same title.

Chanel Miller, *Know My Name: A Memoir* (2019).

### **Week 8 Rethinking Sexual Violence through Literature**

- Meeting 1: Literature Beyond #MeToo.

Readings: Qiu Miaojin, *Notes of a Crocodile* (1994), excerpts.

Li Ang, *The Butcher's Wife* (1983), excerpts.

- Meeting 2: Sexuality Beyond Consent

Readings: Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (New York: NYU Press, 2023), pages TBD.

### **Week 9 Presentations**

### **Week 10 Conclusion**

*Lesson Plan assignment due by 8pm Sunday*