



CHES5103 Selected Themes on Chinese Literature: The Crime Genre

2020-21, Term 2, Fridays, 3:30pm – 6:15pm

Teacher: Prof. King-fai Tam (kingfaitam@gmail.com)

Teaching Assistant: TBA

This course will study a body of Chinese fictional works with a focus on the depiction of crime in its many facets: the perpetrator, the victim, the investigator, the commitment of the crime, the investigation, the punishment, the social and historical settings in which the crime occurs and the material and psychological circumstances surrounding it. It will adopt a loosely chronological approach, beginning with the treatment of crime in literature in the premodern period, through various stages in the twentieth century and ending with the contemporary period. It focuses mainly on the development in the Chinese mainland, but will also touch upon that in Hong Kong and the other areas of the Sinophone world.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you should:

- Have gained a decent knowledge of the development of the crime genre in modern Chinese literature
- Be able to carry out an informed discussion on the characteristics of the crime genre
- Be aware of the major critical issues related to the Chinese crime genre

Learning Activities

Class will meet for three hours per week, usually divided into a lecture and a tutorial segment. Students are expected to finish all the required readings before class. A few weeks in the semester after the introduction of the basic critical issues of the course, students (individually or in groups) will give short presentations on selected topics. There will also be one short written assignment and a final paper.

Assessment Scheme

Attendance and participation account for 15 % of the final grade of this course. Students will be judged by their thoughtful contribution to class discussion. Students are required to give presentations of 15-20 minutes on topics related to the readings. There will be one short written assignment of about 1200 words, on a given topic. At the end of the semester, students have to submit a final paper (3000 – 3500 words) on an appropriate topic for which they must consult the instructor beforehand.

Course Grading System:

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|--------------------------|-----|
| Participation | 15% |
| Presentation | 20% |
| Short written assignment | 25% |
| Final paper | 40% |

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic_honesty/. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

Course Schedule

The readings given below are tentative and are subject to revision.

WEEK 1 (January 15): Defining the Terms

Readings:

Stephen Knight, "Golden Age," *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013

WEEK 2 (January 22): Pre-20th Century Literary Depiction of Crime: Moral and Cosmic

Dimensions Readings:

George Hayden, *Crime and Punishment in Medieval Chinese Drama*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1978; selections

WEEK 3 (January 29): Detective fiction comes to China

Readings: trans. Harold Shadick, *Travels of Lao Ts'an*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990; selections

WEEK 4 (February 5): The Crime Genre as Entertainment and Scientific Textbook

Readings:

Sherlock in Shanghai: Stories of Crime and Detection by Cheng Xiaoqing, trans. Timothy Wong, Honolulu:

University of Hawaii, 2007; selections

(February 12): No Class, Lunar New Year

WEEK 5 (February 19): The Criminal or the Counter-revolutionary of the 17-Year Period

Readings:

Jeffrey Kinkley, "Politics," *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000

WEEK 6 (February 26): The Crime of Forgetting

Readings:

Wang Shuo, *Playing for Thrills*, trans. Howard Goldblatt, Penguin, 1998, selections.

Chen Koon Chung, *Fat Years*, translated. Michael Duke, New York: Transworld Publishers, 2011.

WEEK 7 (March 5): The Spy as the Criminal

Readings:

Selections from Mai Jia, *The Decoded*, trans. Olivia Milburn and Christopher Payne, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2014

Film: *The Message* (風聲), Dir: Chen Kuo-fu, Qunshu Gao; 2009

WEEK 8 (March 12): Crime Fiction and Legal Studies

Readings:

He Jiahong, *Hanging Devils, Hong Jun Investigates*, trans. Duncan Hewitt, Penguin, 2012

He Jiahong, *Back from the Dead: Wrongful Convictions and Criminal Justice in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016; selections

March 17 Short Assignment Due

WEEK 9 (March 19): Hong Kong Crime Literature

Readings:

Chan Ho-kei, *The Borrowed*, trans. Jeremy Tiang New York: Black Cat, 2016, selections.

WEEK 10 (March 26): Hong Kong Crime Film

Film: *Infernal Affairs* (無間道), Dir: Andrew Lau, Alan Mak, 2002, and another TBA

(April 2): No class; Easter

WEEK 11 (April 9): The Chinese Detective in the West I

Readings:

Robert Van Gulik, *The Chinese Maze Murder*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012

WEEK 12 (April 16): The Chinese Detective in the West II

Qiu Xiaolong, *When Red is Black*, New York: Soho Crime, 2005

WEEK 13 (April 23): Summation

April 28 Final paper due