Interpretations: The Dream of the Red Chamber
(Shitouji, also known as Hongloumeng, or The Story of the Stone)

MW 11:35-12:50

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Office Hours:
Professor Lu, Thursday, 12 - 2 pm, HGS 307.
Professor Bloch, TBA.

Is This the Right Class for Me?
If you read both modern and classical Chinese with ease, please come instead to EALL 618, the graduate course I am offering this semester on the novel.

Goals of the Class:
This course has two major goals: first, to read and study the entirety of this monumental novel in translation; second, to conceptualize, research, and write a research paper (10-15 pp) based on both primary and secondary sources. This course fulfills the Interpretations requirement of the major in the Humanities.

Over the course of thirteen weeks, we will read the entirety of The Story of Stone in David Hawkes’ five-volume translation, which you can acquire either at the Yale Bookstore or online. You should regard it as an opportunity to dive deep into a text whose all-encompassing nature has been remarked on since its publication in the eighteenth century. This is a reading-intensive course, but no particular background is required. **There are no prerequisites.**

This novel occupies a singular space in Chinese culture of the last three centuries, having inspired sequels, board games, stage versions, multiple films, video games, phone apps, television series, and even a theme park. At the same time, the novel occupies a peculiar place in Chinese literature. It is at once a work of great imagination, but also one of the richest sources for historians. Vanishingly few other pre-modern sources reveal, for example, what the allowance of a concubine was, as compared to a principal wife. But on the other hand, using the novel as a historical source is a tricky matter: even beyond the fact that our protagonist is a reincarnated stone, there are many other details whose relationship to reality is not at all clear (the enormous wealth of the Jias or their peculiar ethnic identity, to name two obvious examples). You should leave this class having read and appreciated perhaps this compelling work of fiction, but also with a sense of what eighteenth-century China was actually like.
**Course Mechanics:**
You will be assigned to one of two sections, but we will all be together Mondays, when the class format will be that of a “leminar,” half-lecture and half-seminar, taught by Professor Lu. On Wednesdays, your section will rotate between Professor Bloch and Professor Lu.

**Readings:**
You’ll need to buy all five volumes of the Hawkes and Minford translation. All other readings will be available for you to download.

***NB: Our text for classroom discussion *is* the Hawkes and Minford translation. **Everyone MUST read the designated chapters in English.** Please do not take this class if you cannot comply. **This class is an appropriate one to take if you do not read or speak Chinese or if you know nothing about pre-modern China, but not a good class to take if you cannot dedicate the time to completing the reading.**

**Background information and Optional Reading:**
For a very general introduction to the period, please consult:

Some of our readings are drawn from *Approaches to Teaching The Story of the Stone*; this volume has at its end an excellent English-language bibliography. For basic explanation of the novel’s complicated and fraught textual history, please consult Andrew Schonebaum’s essay ”Editions and Translations” (*Approaches*). We will talk about this a bit during the second class.

The secondary readings form three big sections: the first, on ways of reading the novel, some traditional and some not; the second, on a cultural and historical context for the novel; and the third, on the novel’s afterlife. We are not even dabbling in the massive traditional Chinese scholarship on the novel (which has its own name, *hongxue*, or “redology,” but feel free to come and chat with Professor Lu about it).

**Course Requirements:**
This class will culminate in the production of a paper that is ten to fifteen pages in length. Since for many of you this is your first such research paper, all assignments build toward it. In order, you will be expected to submit: a short description of your topic (of 100 words or less); a short bibliography; a short version of your final paper (of 3 pp); and then the final paper. We will be happy to consult with you before each of these steps.

**Grading:**
A seminar is what you bring to it. If a lecture class is a restaurant meal someone else has prepared for you, a seminar is a potluck. So do all the readings, and come prepared to talk. The results—a conversation among peers and scholars—can be magical.

40% Participation and Attendance
60% Final Paper

Syllabus:

Jan 20  Introduction and Class Mechanics
Jan 22  *The Story of the Stone*, chapter 1
Jan 25  Jan 27  *The Story of the Stone*, chapters 2-5
Feb 1   Feb 3   *The Story of the Stone*, chapters 6-10
Feb 8   Feb 10  *The Story of the Stone*, chapters 11-20
Feb 15  Feb 17  *The Story of the Stone*, chapters 21-30
Feb 22  Feb 24  *The Story of the Stone*, chapters 31-40

Paper précis due date.

Feb 29
Mar 2

The Story of the Stone, chapters 41-50
Matthew Sommer, “The Penetrated Male in Late Imperial China,” Modern China 23.3 (1997), 140-180.

Mar 7
Mar 9

The Story of the Stone, chapters 51-60

Bibliography due date.

Mar 14
Mar 16

SPRING BREAK
SPRING BREAK

Mar 21
Mar 23

SPRING BREAK
SPRING BREAK

Mar 28
Mar 30

The Story of the Stone, chapters 61-70
Jonathan Spence, Treason by the Book, 24-41.
Evelyn S. Rawski, “The Banner Story of the Stone,” Approaches to Teaching, 144-158.

Apr 4
Apr 6

The Story of the Stone, chapters 71-80
Craig Clunas, Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China, 141-165.

Short paper due date.

Apr 11
Apr 13
The Story of the Stone, chapters 81-90

Apr 18
Apr 20
The Story of the Stone, chapters 91-100

Apr 25
Apr 27
The Story of the Stone, chapters 101-110

May 2
May 4
The Story of the Stone, chapters 111-120

Final Paper: May 11. Electronic submission please!