

**HUMS 401/EALL 318**  
**Interpretations: The Dream of the Red Chamber**  
**(*Shitouji*, also known as *Hongloumeng*, or *The Story of the Stone*)**

MW 11:35-12:50

Professor Tina Lu  
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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 “seminar,” 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:

Naquin, Susan and Evelyn Rawski, *Society in Eighteenth-Century China*. ix-27, 50-54, 88-93, 97-127.

Kuhn, Philip. “The Prosperous Age,” *Soulstealers*. 30-48.

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  
Jorge Luis Borges, "The Book of Sand."

Jan 25  
Jan 27

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 2-5  
Charlotte Furth, "Five Questions for a New Reader of *The Story of the Stone*," *Approaches*, p. 78-94.

Feb 1  
Feb 3

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 6-10  
Haun Saussy, "The Age of Attribution: Or How the *Honglou meng* Finally Acquired an Author." *CLEAR* 25 (2003): 119-132.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594284>  
David Hawkes, "Introduction," *The Story of the Stone*, v. 1, 15-46.

Feb 8  
Feb 10

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 11-20  
David Rolston, "Chang Hsin-chih on How to Read the *Hung-lou meng*," *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 316-340.

Feb 15  
Feb 17

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 21-30  
Lisa Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Fictions of Embodied Transparency," *Narrative* (16:1) January 2008, pp. 65-92.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219272>

Feb 22  
Feb 24

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 31-40

Andrew Plaks, "The Chinese Literary Garden." In *Archetype and Allegory in Dream of the Red Chamber*. pp. 146-177.

**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  
Susan Mann, "Grooming a Daughter for Marriage: Brides and Wives in the mid-Qing Period." *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities*, 93-119.

**Bibliography due date.**

Mar 14

SPRING BREAK

Mar 16

SPRING BREAK

Mar 21

SPRING BREAK

Mar 23

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.  
Optional: Wai-yee Li, "Beginnings: Enchantment and Irony in *Hung-lou meng*," *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, pp. 152-201.

**Short paper due date.**

Apr 11

Apr 13

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 81-90

Andrew Schonebaum, "Chinese Texts and Editions," *Approaches to Teaching*, 9-15.

John Minford, "Preface," *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 4. *The Debt of Tears*, pp. 15-30.

Apr 18

Apr 20

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 91-100

Charlotte Furth, "Blood, Body, and Gender: Medical Images of the Female Condition in China, 1600-1850." *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities*, 291-314.

Apr 25

Apr 27

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 101-110

Keith McMahon, "Eliminating Traumatic Antinomies: Sequels to *Honglou meng*," *Snakes' Legs*, pp. 98-115.

May 2

May 4

*The Story of the Stone*, chapters 111-120

Tina Lu, "The End of Stone." *Approaches*, pp. 103-114.

Final Paper: May 11. Electronic submission please!