

Humanities University Study Guide

LIT 531 Chinese Literature

Required Texts

Bedford Anthology of World Literature, Books 1-6. Boston: Bedford-St. Martins, 2004.

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS	READINGS
I		Ancient Literature	
	1	The Ancient Way The Book of Songs	Book 1, 1562-1572 Book 1, 1573-1590
		Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: shih jing
		Essay Topics	E1: In The Book of Songs, please describe its public role, the voices in it, and themes contained there. E2: In "75: Tossed Is that Cypress Boat," how does the poem express emotional turbulence and make a comment on how it feels to feel unsupported, and have to keep one's feelings secret. E3: In "162: The Big Field Brings a Heavy Crop," how does the poem reinforce rituals and practices associated with harvest? According to the poem, what does the act of making offerings and sacrifice accomplish?
	2	Confucius Laozi (Lao Tzu) Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu)	Book 1, 1591-1601 Book 1, 1601-1605 Book 1, 1605-1610 Book 1, 1611-1621
		Author	Please write a brief author biography for each of the authors.
		Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: Daoism
		Essay Topics	E1: What are some of the core values that Confucius espouses? E2: How does Taoism contrast with Confucianism? E3: How do poems in the Dao De Jing explore the idea that reality and the nature of all things is formless? E4: Describe some of the ideas that are contained in Chuang Tzu.
II		Middle Period	
	3	Middle Period Dynasties Tao Qian	Book 2, 294-301 Book 2, 302-317
		Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: gushi
		Essay Topics	E1: Please describe Tao Qian's life, works, and the ideas contained within them. E2: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Back Home Again Chant." E2: Please describe the themes and ideas for each part of the poem. E3: Please describe the "The Gentleman of the Five Willow Tree" and the kind of person who is described there. E4: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Home Again among Gardens and Fields." E5: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which

appear in "A Reply to Secretary Kuo." What are the things that the poet is experiencing at this moment.

E6: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Elegy for Myself."

E7: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Reading The Classic of Mountains and Seas."

4-5	Tang Dynasty Poets	Book 2, 318-353
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key terms: Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Daoism,	
Essay Topics	<p>E1: What were some of the main cultural developments during the Tang Dynasty? Describe the role of the civil servant examinations. Discuss the rise of Buddhism.</p> <p>E2: Describe Wang Wei's life and works. Please describe the themes and ideas in the works.</p> <p>E3: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "To Subprefect Chang."</p> <p>E4: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "The Wang River Collection." What is the relationship with nature in "The Wang River Collection" and in "Crossing the Yellow River."</p> <p>E5: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Hermitage at Chung-nan Mountain."</p> <p>E6: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Seeing Someone Off."</p> <p>E7: Synthesis Question: Describe Wang Wei's attitude toward material success. How would one describe the Buddhist nature of his poetry?</p> <p>E8: Describe Li Bai's life and works. Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Drinking Alone beneath the Moon" and "Drinking in the Mountains with a Recluse"? How do the poems illustrate a sense of the ephemeral nature of life?</p> <p>E9: Please describe the perceptions and themes in "Searching for Master Yung" and "Seeing Off a Friend." How are they related to Daoism?</p> <p>E9: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Ch'ang-Kan Village Song." What are the wife's feelings, and how does the poem capture her sorrow and helplessness? What kinds of feelings are evoked in the wife's reflections of the past?</p> <p>E10: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Sent to My Two Little Children in the East of Lu." Please list specific elements in the poem that support your argument.</p> <p>E11: Please describe the life and works of Du Fu.</p> <p>E12: Describe the theme of friendship in "To Li Po on a Winter Day" and "Dreaming of Li Po." Please compare them to Li Bai's poem, "Teasing Tu Fu"</p> <p>E13: Describe the theme of friendship in "P'eng-Ya Song." Please refer to specific lines and passages to support your argument.</p> <p>E14: Please describe for each poem the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Moonlit Night," "Restless Night," and "Spring Night, Delighted by Rain." Please describe how each poem explores themes of solitude and separation from family and friends. How does the poet explore the individual's relation to nature?</p> <p>E15: Please describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas which appear in "Thoughts, Traveling at Night." How does it reflect an old poet's self-questioning about the ultimate value of his work?</p> <p>E16: Please describe the life and works of Bo Juyi. Discuss some of the major themes and ideas found in his work.</p> <p>E17: Please describe the story and theme of the poem,</p>	

"Watching the Reapers," and please describe the poet's emotional response to the reapers' plight in life.

E18: Please describe the story and theme of the poem, "A Old Charcoal Seller," and please describe the poet's emotional response to the charcoal seller's plight in life.

E19: Please discuss perceptions, feelings, and ideas in "Buying Flowers." What is the poet saying about the relative wealth and/or comfort of city dwellers versus the poverty of the rural inhabitants?

E20: Please discuss perceptions, feelings, and ideas in "Idle Song" and "Autumn Pool"? How are the poems related to the poet's religious outlook?

E21: Please discuss perceptions, feelings, and ideas in "Winter Night." How does the poem relate to an old man's sense of isolation?

E22: Please discuss perceptions, feelings, and ideas in "Madly Singing in the Mountains." How does he express the joyfulness of reaching the final stages of the creative process?

III Early Modern China		
6	Ming Dynasty Literature	Book 3, 820-831
Essay Topics	E1: Describe the main historical developments during the Ming Dynasty. E2: How did historical events affect literary production? E3: Explain how political and artistic endeavors came together during the Ming Dynasty.	
7-8	Wu Chengen (1500-1582): <i>Monkey</i>	Book 3, 832-911
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of the main character, critical scenes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	
Essay Topics	E1: What is the structure of <i>Monkey</i> ? E2: How is finding out that the monsters are really heavenly beings significant? E3: How does the <i>Monkey</i> represent independence and a love for freedom? E4: How does <i>Monkey</i> rebel and fight limits? Please describe and list scenes that illustrate your points.	
9	Early Qing Dynasty	Book 4, 764-772
	E1. Describe the historical contexts of the Qing Dynasty. E2. What kinds of expansion did China undergo during the Qing Dynasty? E3. What was the role of scholars during the Qing Dynasty? E4. How were government officials chosen during the Qing Dynasty? How did civil service exams expand during the Qing Dynasty? E5: How is nature dealt with in the Qing Dynasty poetry?	
10	Pu Song-Ling (1640-1715)	Book 4, 772-782
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key stories and include any ideas and themes.	

Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	
Essay Topics	E1: What is the structure of stories by Pu Song-Ling? E2. What were some of the main achievements of Pu Song-Ling? How were his short stories received? E3. What is the significance of the supernatural? How does the supernatural form a presence in Pu Song-Ling's "The Wise Neighbor"? What is the role of the fox spirit? E4. What is the role of illusion and apparitions in "The Mural?" What does the bodhisattva say about the myriad transformation of illusion? How do they chronicle movements of the human mind itself?	
11-12	Cao Xueqin (1715-1763) and Gao E (1740-1815): Story of the Stone	Book 4, 783-883
Author	Please write a brief author biography of the two authors who contributed to the Story of the Stone.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of the main character, critical scenes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	
Essay Topics	E1: Describe the contexts of The Story of the Stone. E2. What was the purpose of writing the story? How long is it? Why is it so long? E3. How is The Story of the Stone a window on the Chinese aristocracy? What is the role of the civil service exams in the formation of the shen-shih? E4. What is the origin of the stone? E5. What happens when Jia Bao-yu visits the land of illusion?	
IV Modern China		
13	Lu Xun (1881-1936)	Book 6, 331-365
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of the main character, critical scenes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	
Essay Topics	E1: Describe Lu Xun's political views. How was he reformist or revolutionary? What were some of his beliefs? E2. What is the structure of The Biography of Ah Q? E3. What were some of the difficulties for the supposed biographer of Ah Q as he attempted to chronicle a life? E4. According to the biographer, what is the one flaw that prevents Ah Q from being a perfect man?	
14	Bei Dao (1949-)	Book 6, 547-552
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	

Essay Topics E1: Describe the life and times of Bei Dao. Why did he go into exile? What was his role in the "Cultural Revolution"? How did he relate to the "Gang of Four"?
 E2. What were some of the characteristics of the work of the Misty school of poets?
 E3. Discuss some of the themes in "The Answer."
 E4. Describe the Bei Dao's use of images in "An End or A Beginning."

15 Gao Xingjian (1940-)

Book 6, 1217-1255

Author Please write a brief author biography.

Literary Analysis Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of the main character, critical scenes.

Literary Terms Please briefly define key literary terms:

Essay Topics E1: How and why is Gao's work considered avant-garde?
 E2. In "Dialogue and Rebuttal," according to the man, their conversation develops from what to what?
 E3. What development in the interaction between the girl and the man, now dead, does the rebuttal exhibit?

V **Finals**
 16 Review, Essay, Exam