

PAAS 456: Thematic Study of Contemporary Chinese Literature in Translation

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(*Three-Body* author Liu Cixin)

Course description:

What makes contemporary Chinese literature “Chinese” and how does it circulate outside its places of origin? We will begin with a discussion of China’s relationship with the Nobel Prize in literature, including the work of Nobel laureates Gao Xingjian (2000) and Mo Yan (2012). The fiction of Su Tong and Yu Hua also addresses themes of human despair, political violence, and tragedy, but their work approaches historical representation by playing with conventional literary techniques, such as experimental form and narrative style. In the second half of the semester we take a step back from the mainstream masculinist mode of storytelling to read works about urbanism and female sexuality in novels by Chun Sue and Chen Ran, then turn to Hugo-award winning authors Liu Cixin and Hao Jingfang’s science fiction, a genre that is now widely read in translation both in and outside of the academy.

Proposed assignments:

Attendance, Participation	10 %
Weekly online commentaries	10%
Midterm take home exam	25%
Presentation	15%
Final paper workshop/ presentation	10%
Final paper	30%

Chen Ran. <i>A Private Life</i> (1996)
Gao Xingjian. <i>Escape</i> (1989)
Hao Jingfang. <i>Folding Beijing</i> (2012)
Liu Cixin. <i>The Three-Body Problem</i> (2006)
Yu Hua. <i>To Live</i> (1993)
Additional selected readings