

HH4091 Special Topics in History - Interdisciplinary History

Women and Medicine in Chinese History

Semester 2, AY2019-20

This syllabus is provisional and subject to change

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Office: HSS 06-18

Office hours: By appointment

Meeting time: Monday 11:30-15:30

Venue: LHS-TR+46

Course Description

This course examines the important history of women and medicine in China by focusing on one of the most prominent areas: women's reproductive health. It discusses how a variety of actors conceptualized, discussed, constructed, or even contested Chinese women's reproductive health and bodies from the imperial period to the twentieth century. Employing a thematic rather than a chronological approach, this course covers a series of prominent themes related to women's reproduction, ranging from theorizations of the female reproductive body in classic works, to pragmatic and scientific practices in managing reproductive ailments such as menstruation, miscarriage, childbirth, and prenatal and postpartum care. This course also analyzes the important role that science and technology played in the development of women's reproductive health. Through a focused study on women's reproductive health in the Chinese context, this course aims to equip students with historical knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and analytical skills to reflect on issues about women, medicine, and science in other cultural and national contexts.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students will learn:

- How to develop a solid understanding of themes and topics central to gender, medicine, and science in Chinese history;
- How to read, analyze, and employ a variety of historical sources in the study of medical history (eg. medical canons, health technologies, and visual texts such as advertisements and posters);
- How to identify and analyze contemporary questions and phenomena related to women's reproduction and health from a historical perspective;
- How to conduct independent research and construct a historical essay about women's reproductive health and bodies in the Chinese context and beyond.

Assessment:

You will be assessed on the merit of the following **FOUR** evaluation items.

Weekly Reflection Notes (20%)

Each week you are required to submit a short reflection note on the course material or in-class discussion questions assigned in the previous week. Some discussion questions will be uploaded to Blackboard before each seminar session (from week 2 onwards), but note that others will appear during the class.

Your reflection note will be due in hard copy before each class (starting from week 3).

In-Class Group Presentation (20%)

You are required to present as part of a group during class time. You are asked to analyze a historical case or a contemporary phenomenon that addresses at least one of the themes discussed in this course by including some visual or audio texts (photos, images, films, TV programs, or posters) as your primary sources. The presentation topics will be assigned at week 2.

Critical Analysis (20%)

A critical analysis is a review of literature presenting the state of the field on your chosen topic for the final essay. This critical analysis should be no longer than 3 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt., 1-inch margins). Select at least one item from the bibliography of the syllabus with other related academic publications related to your study. Consult me when you choose your topics.

Due Date: March 9th

Final Essay (40%)

This piece will be an elaborated version of your critical analysis, which includes both your analysis and research findings of your chosen topic. **Your final essay should be around 5000 words in length** (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt., 1-inch margins).

Due Date: April 27th, by 5pm (submit via Turn-it-in)

Course Policies and Requirements:

General Rules

You are required to attend all the seminar sessions and complete all the readings by the time indicated in the syllabus. Come to class having thought about the material and be ready to actively discuss it with your instructors and classmates. Your absence in seminar without an MC will mean an automatic zero for any attendance and participation marks awarded for that week. You will be given the opportunity to make up the grade by handing in an additional response paper of 500 words on the course readings from your missed session.

Academic Integrity:

Academic plagiarism is strictly forbidden in this class.

If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, go to the academic integrity website <https://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/Pages/academic-integrity-policy.aspx> for more information or ask me.

Late Submissions

Any late submission will be subject to a penalty of a deduction of marks from the overall grade.

Course Outline:

Week 1 (January 13th): Introduction: Women in Chinese Medical History

Readings:

Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960–1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1–18.

Angela Ki Che Leung, "Recent Trends in the Study of Medicine for Women in Imperial China," *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in China* 7, no. 2 (2005): 110–26.

Yi-Li Wu, "Reproduction," in *The Making of the Human Sciences in China*, ed. Howard Chiang (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 101–123.

Week 2 (January 20th): *Theorizing the Medical Body: The Androgynous Body, "Blood as the Leader," and "Flourishing Yin"*

Readings:

Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History*, 19–58.

———, "Blood, Body, and Gender: Medical Images of the Female Condition in China," *Chinese Science* 7 (1986): 43–66.

Sabine Wilms, "'Ten Times More Difficult to Treat': Female Bodies in Medical Texts from Early Imperial China," in *Medicine for Women in Imperial China*, ed. Angela Ki Che Leung (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 74–107.

Week 3 (Chinese New Year)-No Class

Week 4 (February 3rd): *Theorizing the Medical Body: Biomedicine and the Anatomical Gendered Body*

Readings:

Tina Philipps Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China: Delivering Modernity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), xxii–xxv.

Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 14–47.

Bridie Andrews, "Blood in the History of Modern Chinese Medicine," in *Historical Epistemology and the Making of Modern Chinese Medicine*, ed. Howard Chiang (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 113–136.

———, *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850–1960* (Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 1–24.

Week 5 (February 10th): *The Field of Women's Medicine*

Readings:

Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History*, 59–93.

Yi-Li, Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 1–14.

Robin D.S. Yates, "Medicine for Women in Early China," in *Medicine for Women in Imperial China*, ed. Angela Ki Che Leung (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 19–73.

Week 6 (February 17th): *The Literate Medical Tradition and Popular Gynecology*

Readings:

Yi-Li, Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China*, 15–53.

———, "The Bamboo Grove Monastery and Popular Gynecology in Qing China," *Late Imperial China* 21, no. 1 (June 2000): 41–76.

Angela Ki Chi Leung, "Women Practicing Medicine in Premodern China," in *Chinese Women in the Imperial Past: New Perspectives*, ed. Harriet Thelma Zurndorfer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), 101–134.

Week 7 (February 24th): *Western Medicine for Women*

Readings:

Tina Philipps Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China*, 40–77.

Shing-ting Lin, “‘Scientific’ Menstruation: The Popularization and Commodification of Female Hygiene in Republican China, 1910s–1930,” *Gender and History* 25, no. 2 (August 2013): 294–316.

———, “The Female Hand: The Making of Western Medicine for Women in China, 1880s–1920s,” PhD diss., (Columbia University, 2015), 75–121.

Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 225–253.

Mid-Semester Break (No Class)

Week 8 (March 9th): Midwifery Practices

Readings:

Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China’s Medical History*, 266–300.

Tina Philipps Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China*, 78–123.

Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China’s Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 154–181.

Week 9 (March 16th): Managing Women’s Reproductive Bodies: Pregnancy and Miscarriage

Readings:

Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China’s Medical History*, 94–133.

Yi-li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China*, 120–146.

Nicole Richardson, “The Nation in Utero: Translating the Science of Fetal Education in Republican China,” *Frontiers of History in China* 7. 1 (2012): 4–31.

Week 10 (March 23rd): Managing Women’s Reproductive Bodies: Childbirth and Postpartum Care

Readings:

Yi-li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China*, 147–223.

Jen-Der Lee, “Childbirth in Early Imperial China,” in *Medicine for Women in Imperial China*, ed. Angela Ki Che Leung (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 108–178.

Week 11 (March 30th): Reproductive Technologies and Products

Readings:

Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 273–334.

Joan Judge, *Republican Lens: Gender, Visuality, and Experience in the Early Chinese Periodical Press* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 115–148.

Week 12 (April 6th): Imperfect Conceptions and Eugenics

Readings:

Yi-li Wu, “Ghost Fetuses, False Pregnancies, and the Parameters of Medical Uncertainty in Classical Chinese Gynecology,” *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in Early and Imperial China* 4, no. 2 (2002): 170–206.

Frank Dikötter, *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 104–118.

Week 13 (April 13th): Women’s Reproduction, the Family, and the State in the Past and Present

Readings:

Charlotte Furth, "Concepts of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infancy in Ch'ing Dynasty China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 1 (1987): 7–35.

Tina Philipps Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China*, 125–166.

Harriet Evans, "Sexed Bodies, Sexualized Identities, and the Limits of Gender," *China Information*, Vol. XXII, no. 2 (2008) 361–386.