

Humanities Seminar Program

## Chinese Poetry Then and Now

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*Mondays 1 PM – 3 PM*

*September 26, October 3, 10, 7, and 24, 2022*

Location: Rubel Room classroom at the Poetry Center (1508 E Helen St)

Audience: Hybrid (in-person audience plus live online audience)

### **Course Description:**

China is a land of poetry because poetry is not only the longest continuous form of creative writing in the country but also because poetry has been a defining feature in the life of China's elite, from their participating in the civil service exams to their performing rituals on official and leisurely occasions. The ideas for poetry and its genre formation, however, are a subject of constant debate throughout history, the most radical of which took place at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Chinese men of letters embarked on a journey of modernity. In this seminar, we will trace the origin of poetry and examine the different conceptions of poetics at the critical moments in the development of China's poetic culture. Meanwhile, we will also read exemplary poems from different periods to appreciate the triumph of the human spirit and the power of imagination by Chinese poets.

**Text:** All readings are in English translations and will be made available at the website <https://arizona.app.box.com/folder/164206649816>.

### **Schedule:**

Week 1

Lecture Theme: *The Book of Songs* and Early Conception of Poetry

Keywords: Rite/Ritual, Poetic Articulation, Didacticism

Reading: Poems from *Shijing* and by Qu Yuan, Tao Yuanming

Week 2

Lecture Theme: The Golden Age of Poetry in Tang Dynasty

Keywords: History, Nature, Man

Reading: Poems by Li Bai, Tu Fu, Wang Wei

Week 3

Lecture Theme: Forms of Emotions

Keywords: Love, Nostalgia, Melancholy

Reading: Poems by Su Shi, Liu Yong, Li Qingzhao

Week 4

Lecture Theme: Permanence and Change in Modern Poetry

Keywords: Vernacularism, De-regulation, Modernity

Reading: Poems by Xu Zhimo, Dai Wangshu, Bian Zhilin

Week 5

Lecture Theme: The Revenge of Misty Poetry

Keywords: Ambiguity, Synesthesia, Poethood

Reading: Poems by Bei Dao, Gu Cheng, Han Dong, Yu Xiuhua