ARH 4930: Tradition and Innovation in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art  
University of Florida Spring 2014 - Section 1B53/Graduate 19H3  
Monday Period 4-5 (10:40am-12:35pm) and Wednesday Period 4 (10:40-11:30 am)  
Room FAC 116

Prof. Guolong Lai (email: glai@arts.ufl.edu)  
Office: FAC 119; Tel: (352) 273-3072  
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday Period 3 (9:35-10:25 am) and by appointment

**Description:** This course will explore the ways in which Chinese artists and architects of the 20th century have defined modernity and their traditions against the complex background of China’s social and political history. A key issue for modern Chinese art is the complicated relationships between traditions and innovations—the degree to which Chinese artists choose to continue the old traditional practice or adopt the new Western techniques and the extent to which they rejected either of them. Basing upon their particular understandings of the Chinese traditions and Western techniques, many artists took these positions amid the social and political upheavals of the modern era. Through examining art works in different media, we will investigate the most compelling of the multiple realities that Chinese artists have constructed for themselves and for the public.

**Objectives:** This course will introduce students to the rich artistic traditions in modern and contemporary China, and provide them with a solid grounding in Chinese art history so that students can reach a better understanding of the cultural history of modern and contemporary China. The emphasis will lie in student’s ability to grasp key facts, basic concepts and main issues of Chinese art, to understand the historical and artistic context within which these artworks were produced, to discuss both iconographic and stylistic development in Chinese art, and to analyze critically visual culture of modern and contemporary China.

**Requirements and grading:**

**Class attendance** (30%) – Students should be aware that some of the material covered in lecture is not available from the textbook. It is, therefore, essential and highly advised to attend all class meetings. Any absence will adversely affect your grade; two tardy counts as one absence; the perfect attendance will be rewarded with a bonus point.

**Reading reports** (15%), **class participation and presentation** (15%) – Students are responsible to complete each weekly reading assignment and hand in a reading report after discussion. Students must be prepared to answer questions related to the reading assignment and lead the class discussion when assigned.

**Midterm paper** (10%) – A small essay on “Tradition and Innovation in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art” (5-10 pages, double-paced)

**Final paper and presentation** (30%) – 10-15 pages, double-paced, research paper on chosen topic related to the class. Graduate students are expected to do more work, reading and presentation, writing longer papers in this class. See the instructor for more details.

**Grading scale:** A = 93 or above, A- = 90 – 92, B+ = 87 – 89, B = 83 – 86, B- = 80 – 82, C+ = 77 – 79, C = 73 – 76, C- = 70 – 72, D+ = 67 – 69, D = 63 – 66, D- = 60 – 62, E = 59 or below
*Students are expected to participate in class discussions and turn in assignments on time.
*All papers should be printed; no assignments or papers will be accepted over email.
*Student’s class participation is evaluated not according to the amount of talking that student
does, but rather according to whether that student contributes thoughtfully and constructively,
based on a careful consideration of the class reading assignments.

Other Important Information:
Make-up tests, extensions, and incomplete grade will be given ONLY in cases of emergencies
or serious illnesses with proper documentation. In all other cases (Family obligations, religious
holidays, disabilities etc.), extensions may be granted only if informed well BEFORE the
deadline.

No cellular phone or laptop web-surfing during the class.
Disability accommodations can be requested by contacting the Office for Student Services,
P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261 and then bring the instructor the provided documentation.
Be aware that cheating and plagiarism will result in a failing grade.
Be assured that I want you to learn and to receive the best grades you deserve. So come to see
me during my office hour or make an appointment to discuss any difficulty you have
encountered in this course.

Reading Reports:
The purpose of the reading reports is to help you think through the chapters and articles while
reading them, and to prepare you for class discussion. The basic structure should be first a
summary of the gist (the basic structure) of the article; then your comments, responses, and
questions (and prepare the questions in a thoughtful way so that you can discuss and answer
them in class). Hand in the reading reports after each class discussion (1-2 pages, single spaced is
ok).

Textbook:

Weekly Schedule:
Week 1 (1/6, 8): Introduction and Overview: maps, pinyin, and chronology.

Week 2 (1/13, 15): Chinese Art in the Age of Imperialism: The Opium War to the Treaty of
Shimonoseki, 1842-1895.
290-305.

Week 3 (1/22): Art in the Creation of a New Nation: the Overthrow of the Qing and the Early
Republic, 1895-1920.
#2: Chuang Shen, “Archaeology in Late Qing Dynasty Painting,” Ars Orientalis, Vol. 24 (1994),
pp. 83-104.

Week 4 (1/27, 29): Art in the New Culture of the 1920s.
#3: Clunas, Craig. "Chinese Art and Chinese Artists in France, 1924-25." Arts Asiatiques 44
Week 5 (2/3, 5): Modern Art in the 1930s.

Week 6 (2/10, 12): The Golden Age of Guohua in the 1930s.


Midterm paper due.

Spring break 3/1-9

Week 9 (3/10, 12): Ink Painting, Lianhuanhua, and Woodcuts under Mao, 1949-1966


Week 12 (3/31, 4/2): Alternative Chinas : Hong Kong and Taiwan.


Week 14 (4/14, 16): The New Millennium, and the Chinese Century?