**Rationale:**
This seminar examines the entanglements between discourses of feminism and modernity in China. In the Post-Mao or Reform period in the PRC (1979-present), Chinese scholars and activists have been engaging in vigorous debates about the roots of female oppression, the nature of femininity, the definitions of “woman” and “human,” the proper relationship between the state and feminism, as well as the role of “the West” in “Chinese” articulations.

The simple premise of this seminar is that these divergent conversations are worth listening to (one may even say eavesdropping,) but that to do so well we need to retrain our ears. Our reading list, therefore, is comprised almost exclusively of writings by Chinese scholars, some originally presented in English and others in translation. Our challenge is to confront their unfamiliarity or even illegibility, to place them in proper historical contexts, and to tune in to their absences (what they have deliberately or inadvertently left out.) As such, this seminar is an exercise in sympathetic listening coupled with analytic distance.

**Requirements:**
1. Background in Chinese studies and language abilities may help, but it is not required. All of the required readings are in English; those interested and able may do supplementary reading in Chinese for extra credit.

2. The seminar is structured a bit like a hypertext: your response to the initial readings would determine the focus of our discussions in some of the subsequent sessions. For this reason, your active participation and willingness to engage in team-work are crucial to our success.

3. Assignments:
Class participation (30% of final grade): Every student is expected to post their brief responses to the readings by Wed. midnight. In addition, one or two students may be appointed “presenters” to help lead class discussions. You will be graded on both the postings and the class discussions.

Essay 1 (20%): Select one feminist from the list of ten interviewees (see Week 2). Research her background and current projects; read her writings (if available). Enter into a (imaginary or real) conversation with her about the issues we discuss in class. Analyze the extent to which her feminist commitments are integral to the problems faced by and aspirations of the Chinese nation as gleaned from *The State of China Atlas*. Write a
report of your journeys; you may adopt the format of “What would xxx say…,” a constructed dialogue, or others. Due Feb. 15, 4 p.m.

Essay 2 (20%): Select one article or one set of articles from our list of assigned readings. Write a paper to: (1) State what the author is arguing for; (2) infer what she is implicitly arguing against; (3) analyze her premises, ideological commitments, intellectual heritage, influence, and blind spots. This paper (5-8 pages) is due Mar. 1, 4 p.m.

Final project (30%): You may do the final project alone, or in teams of two or three. It is an open space in which you can explore and investigate certain themes discussed in class that interest you. There are no set requirements for the exact format and content. You will make presentations during the last two weeks. A one-page proposal is due Mar. 8 in class and the final report is due on May 10, the day of the scheduled final exam, at 4 p.m.

Reading Materials:
- Those items marked by [E-JOURNAL] can be downloaded from Clio.
- Those items marked by [Class Files] can be downloaded from Courseworks.
- Other items are available in a course pack you can purchase at Village Copier (2872 Broadway, at 112th St., 212-666.0600). These items are marked by [1], [2] and so on in the schedule below.

Class Schedule:

I. THE LURE OF THE PRESENT

Week 1 (Jan. 18)  Introduction: An Exercise in Listening

Assignment for Week 2:
Pick one feminist from the ten being interviewed for the Global Feminisms project (Download “China Site Booklet” from: [www.umich.edu/~glblfem/](http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem/)). Take notes on: chronology of personal development and development of feminist discourses in China; her understanding of “gender” and “feminism;” her awareness of or interactions with “the West;” any terms or expressions that puzzle you. Post on Courseworks and be prepared to make a 5-minute presentation in class on a list of her concerns and your responses to them.

Week 2 (Jan. 25)  Feminist Issues and Concerns, China, circa. 2006

Reading: Transcripts of interviews with Ai Xiaoming, Gao Xiaoxian, Chen Mingxia, Ge Youli, He Zonghua, Li Huiying, Liu Bohong, Wang Cuiyu, Wang Xingjuan, and Zhang Li Xi, in “China Site Booklet” downloaded from: [www.umich.edu/~glblfem/](http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem/). Visit other parts of the website to familiarize yourself with the nature and goals of the “Global Feminisms: Comparative Case Studies of Women’s Activism and Scholarship” project housed at the
Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Note especially the excellent Bibliography.


**Week 3 (Feb. 1) The All China Women’s Federation: Precarious Balance Between State and Feminism**

Reading:


**Recommended:**


**Week 4 (Feb. 8) From Socialist Economy to Market Economy**

Reading:


Recommended:


Week 5 (Feb. 15)  No class; first essay due at 4 p.m.
Reading:

II. MEMORIES OF SOCIALISM (1949-76)

Week 6 (Feb. 22)  The Utopian 1950s
Reading:


Recommended:

Week 7 (Mar. 1)  No class—meet with team members to draft final project proposal; second essay due at 4 p.m.

Week 8 (Mar. 8)  The Cultural Revolution, 1966-76
Reading:


**Mar. 10-18: Spring Break!**

Week 9 (Mar. 22)  The Question of Women (and other analytic categories)
Reading:


Recommended:
Chinese translation of Tani Barlow, “Politics and Protocols of Funü,” in 妇女政治与礼仪


III. FORGOTTEN ORIGINS OF CHINESE FEMINISM, 1890s-1940s

Week 10 (Mar. 29)  The Late-Qing Rupture: Inventing Women’s Rights and Inner-Outer (nei-wai) Boundaries
Reading:


Recommended:


**Week 11 (Apr. 5)  Eugenics and Discourses of Motherhood in the May Fourth Period**

Reading:


Recommended:


**Week 12 (Apr. 12)  Breathing Space**

Reading: to be assigned (possibilities: body; sexuality; actresses; rethinking the May Fourth paradigm)

**Week 13 (Apr. 19)  Presentation of final projects**

**Week 14 (Apr. 26)  Presentation of final projects**

May 10 (Thur.): Scheduled final exam 1-4 p.m.; final project due at 4 p.m.