



## Carol Osborne Curriculum Project Lesson Plans

(I have omitted mention of the library visit, individual conference sessions as students selected and narrowed their research topics, and some of the instruction in research methods and MLA documentation that also formed part of this unit. I have tried to focus, instead, on the lessons in research and writing skills that were unique to our study of the short stories and our investigation into topics associated with China. These plans contain general comments about the focus of the short story discussions; more detailed questions and reading quizzes can be found in a separate file. Lecture notes, slide shows, and other instructional materials are also located in separate files.)

### I. Introduction

- a. Give a brief overview of the unit. Then, use Human Bingo as an icebreaker to have students begin interacting with one another. By designing the Bingo cards so that they contain questions related to China, you will also prompt the students to begin assessing their own individual and collective knowledge of this culture. Move then to a general discussion, surveying the students to determine their familiarity with the topic. (I had the students list all they knew about China, we pooled this information, and then we discussed 1) why our knowledge was so limited, and 2) why learning more about China could be important to their generation.)
- b. Show the Slide Show, “Impressions of China,” to stimulate interest in various aspects of Chinese history and culture.
- c. Explain the Research Project (see handout).
- d. Mini-Lecture: “Contemporary Literature in China.” Introduce the first reading selection and give out the Descriptive Writing Assignment.

### II. Wang Anyi’s “The Longtang”

- a. Discuss Wang Anyi’s “The Longtang,” noting her use of figurative language, temporal and spatial organization, perspective, tone and mood. Begin with the use of detailed images; then note comparisons and contrasts; examine the organization; and finally, analyze the tone. By the conclusion of the discussion, students should have been exposed to the following terms: genre, setting, simile, metaphor, personification, diction, imagery, symbolism, perspective, tone, mood, parallelism, and perhaps even cumulative and periodic sentence structure.
- b. Talk a bit about the words they looked up, the use of a dictionary, the rich history of words that many writers are aware of and draw on. Also address the situation we are in during this unit: in translations, so much of the writing style is of the translator, who is trying to stay true to the original piece.
- c. After the teacher models peer editing strategies, using sample descriptive paragraphs projected for the entire class, the students will pair up and peer edit one another’s descriptions of place. Revised drafts are due in the next class.
- d. Slide Show, “The Hutangs of Beijing and the Longtangs of Shanghai”
  - i. Compare the tone/mood of the excerpt from the web with the tone/mood created by Wang Anyi
  - ii. Use the picture of the room in the *shikumen*, typical of those rented to writers in the early part of the century, to lead into a brief introduction to Lu Xun

- e. Lu Xun's "Hometown" Take up descriptive writing.
  - f. Discuss "Hometown," noting the way Lu Xun depicts the sentiments of the young intellectuals, many of whom participated in the May Fourth movement, in contrast with the Confucian traditions of the past. Call attention to the author's use of parallel characters, setting, and symbolism.
  - g. Mini-Lecture: "China: Ten Propositions"
  - h. Practice summary skills, using an article about the Chinese press (thus giving students background information before they begin accessing information from the *China Daily* and other Chinese media outlets):  
Bernstein, Richard. "China's Press: Still Not Free, but More Freewheeling." *New York Times Online*. Web. 27 Aug. 2009.
  - i. Give a brief introduction to the next story by explaining the situation in Shanghai during WWII. Ask students to pay attention to gender and class differences as they examine the relationships between characters.
- III. Zhang Ailing's "Sealed Off"
- a. Discuss "Sealed Off," focusing on setting, framing devices, depictions of gender and class, and character motivation.
  - b. Explain methods used to determine the credibility of a source.
  - c. Examine sample annotations (from credible and not so credible sources) and have students practice writing annotations (including summary and evaluative commentary), using sources they have gathered (including one source that would **not** be respected by an academic audience).
  - d. Remind students that the final research proposal is due the next class.
- IV. Mo Yan's "Old Gun"
- a. Mini-Lecture: "History of Modern China" with accompanying slide show
  - b. Discuss "Old Gun," focusing on the changes Mo Yan notes in three successive generations, linking this depiction to the history lecture. Call attention to the importance of setting, and let the students compare their interpretations of what happens at the story's conclusion. This would be a good time to talk about the role of historical and cultural contexts in the interpretation of literature.
  - c. Practice synthesizing information from different sources. (I gave the students three articles about the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan, one from the *New York Times* and two from the *China Daily*. After reminding them that the *China Daily* is the English-language newspaper in the People's Republic of China, practicing self-censorship to avoid antagonizing the government, I gave them the following instructions:  
After reading and noting the important points in each article, write 2-3 paragraphs suitable for an academic audience in which you explain the controversy over the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan, synthesizing the information you pick up from the two sources. Show that you know how to paraphrase, use a direct quotation, and use internal citations properly. Finally, (and this is the hardest part of the challenge), make your critical evaluation of the sources you have used evident within the paragraphs without taking the focus from the topic you are addressing, the Dalai Lama's visit.
- V. Shen Congwen's "Meijin, Baozi, and the White Kid"
- a. Mini-Lecture: "Marriage Customs in China"
  - b. Discuss Shen Congwen's story, with emphasis on the nature of folk tales, the meta-narrative that surfaces in this story, and contrasts that are established between ancient times and the present.

- VI. Yan Lianke's "Black Bristle, White Bristles"
  - a. Discuss Yan Lianke's story, noting the political satire and discussing Mao's influence on China.
  - b. Practice MLA formatting of Works Cited page.
- VII. Wang Shuo's "Hot and Cold, Measure for Measure"
  - a. Discuss Wang Shuo's story, perhaps returning to some of the earlier pictures of Tiananmen Square and other landmarks of Beijing and discussing the effects of the new market economy.
  - b. Homework in lieu of a quiz: Have students create at least five discussion questions for "The Fish," ones that will lead readers to understand and interpret the literary work. Students should show what they have learned about valuable approaches to interpretation through the discussions of the literature thus far in the course.
- VIII. Alai's "The Fish"
  - a. After students use their own questions to discuss the story in groups, conduct a large group discussion of "The Fish" in light of Buddhist and Taoist concepts about man's relationship with nature.
  - b. Peer Editing: Research Projects
  - c. Homework in lieu of a quiz: Have students create at least five discussion questions for "The Floating City," ones that will lead readers to understand and interpret the literary work.
  - d. Mini-Lecture: Hong Kong
- IX. Xi Xi's "The Floating City"
  - a. Show Slide Show, "Hong Kong"
  - b. After students use their own questions to discuss the story in groups, conduct a large group discussion, drawing connections between the background information on Hong Kong and details in the narrative. Note that the unit began and ended with descriptions of place, and contrast the styles of writing employed by Wang Anyi and Xi Xi.
  - c. Peer Editing: Annotated Bibliographies
  - d. Ask the students to answer the following questions: What new sources or research tools have you used as a result of this project? How have you grown in your ability to access and use information? Then have them sort the following items into five distinct categories and label each category with a description of what the items in that category have in common. (This should alert students to the unique attributes of general search engines, databases for newspapers, databases for scholarly journals, web sites, and books. The ultimate goal is to remind students that their bibliographies should reflect college-level research.)

Historical Abstracts  
 Google.com  
 History Resource Center  
 Access World News  
 Lexis-Nexis Academic  
 J-STOR  
 ChinaDaily.com  
 Bing.com  
 Cambridge History of China  
 Science Direct  
 Academic Search Premier

Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese  
 Culture  
 Yahoo.com  
 CulturalChina.com

X. Sharing the Projects

- a. In groups of five (with each member having a different research topic), students will give a ten minute presentation to their peers. While they will need to employ visuals from their projects, they should concentrate on oral communication skills and refrain from reading from the written product. Students evaluate one another's performance using the Oral Presentation rubric. Each group selects the two best presentations, and these students move to the next group and present one more time for the new audience of three.
- b. Take up Annotated Bibliographies and Research Projects, along with the student's responses to these questions: What new research tools did you use as a result of this project? Besides learning more about your topic, what new discoveries did you make as a result of conducting this research?
- c. Review for the Midterm Exam.

XI. Unit Exam

- a. The exam fell on October 1, so I showed some clips from China's 60 year anniversary celebrations before passing out the tests!