

POETRY IN THE CLASSROOM: CHINA



University of Colorado
Boulder

A Professional Development Series for K-12 Teachers

A great poem can be the perfect primary source to introduce students to the social, political and human complexities of important historical periods. Join us for **one or all** of these webinars that feature Chinese poems in translation that can be integrated into your classrooms.

Presenter: Mary Ellen Friends has been a History and Social Studies teacher at Deerfield Academy since 1995. She graduated from Brown University with a BA in East Asian Studies in 1987, and she then studied for two years in Taiwan. She received her PhD in East Asian Languages and Literatures from Yale University in 2019.

Webinar Format and Expectations:

K-12 teachers nationwide are invited to register. **The presentations will be conducted live on Zoom from 7:00 to 8:00 pm ET.** You can sign-up for one, two or all. Teachers will receive the poem(s) and resources to read prior to the presentation. Those who take part in 4 presentations (watch for more on this series including Japanese and Korean poems) and write a short Curriculum Implementation Plan are eligible for a \$75 gift certificate.

January 23 - Strumming My Pain: Young Love, Frustration, and Anxiety in China's *Book of Songs* - This webinar introduces three short poems from China's earliest extant poetry anthology that resonate well with middle and high school students today. Appropriate for courses that cover early Chinese civilization and Confucian thought, the session begins with tips to reduce common barriers to student enjoyment and then explores both the Confucian interpretations and the human-interest elements of the poems. We'll weave in references to classic rock, an old Disney favorite, and current events to keep the conversation lively.

February 13 - Bai Juyi's Social Justice Poems - A great translator of Chinese poetry once remarked that, perhaps due to its seemingly simple language and high-impact messages, the poetry of Bai Juyi (722-846 CE) translates exceptionally well into English. Whatever the case, the two Tang poet's social justice poems featured in this webinar also translate well into middle and high school classrooms. "Who does the weaving/who wears the robe?" asks the speaker in the first poem. In the second poem, we watch Confucian officials feast while regular folk suffer. Our session includes background information on the tradition of government critique in Chinese poetry and ends with ideas for student contributions.

March 5 - The Woman Poet's Lament: Gender Norms and Expectations in Late Imperial China - Nothing would seem more natural, in Late Imperial China, than for an educated woman to write a poem on the Night of the Double Seventh. Tradition has it that, on the seventh night of the seventh lunar month, the Herdboy and Weaver Girl stars, who normally reside on opposite sides of the Heavenly River (Milky Way), have their annual lovers' meeting. On this night, in traditional China, lovers stargazed; girls prayed to the Weaver Girl for skill in weaving and needlework, and the educated elite wrote poems. The eighteenth-century woman poet Xu Quan, then, was acting conventionally when she took up her writing brush on this "lovers' holiday." What was unusual was the thought-provoking poem she produced. This webinar uses a single, beautifully crafted poem as an opportunity to introduce a traditional Chinese holiday, discuss Late Imperial gender expectations, and see how individual women pushed back against those norms. While the content of the poem is most suitable for middle and high school students, information about the "Chinese Valentine's Day" is appropriate for students of all ages.

Register online at <https://tinyurl.com/TEAcourseregistration>

For more information, contact TEA Director Lynn Kalinauskas at lynn.kalinauskas@colorado.edu.

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