EAS/REL 327: Religion, Poetry, and Memory in Ancient China
Fall 2012, T 1:30-4:20
Prof. Martin Kern
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Office hours: W 3:00-4:00, 210 Jones Hall

The seminar explores the interplay of religious and aesthetic—especially poetic—practice in ancient China and how the performance of texts and the use of images and objects in religious and social spaces contributed to the formation of Chinese cultural memory and identity. Combining anthropological, art historical, and literary analysis, the emphasis is on close analysis of original texts (in translation) and artifacts, including objects in the Princeton Art Museum.

Readings: 150 pages/week

Writing Assignments:
(a) Weekly postings on Blackboard;
(b) Midterm paper 12 pages;
(c) Final paper 15-20 pages.

Grading:
(a) Class participation 50%;
(b) Midterm paper 20%;
(c) Final paper 30%

Week 1: The Shi Qiang Pan / Princeton Art Museum Visit

Week 2: Memory, Performance, Truth
* Rosalind Thomas, Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece, 101-127.

Week 3: Art, Divination, and the Beginnings of Ancestor Worship
* Sarah Allan, The Shape of the Turtle, 124-170, 199-203.

Week 4: Performance and Identity
* Stanley J. Tambiah, Culture, Thought, and Social Action, 123-166, 382-389.
* C.H. Wang, From Ritual to Allegory, 1-51.
* Selections from the Classic of Poetry (Sacrificial hymns).

**Week 5: Origin and Reproduction**
* C.H. Wang, From Ritual to Allegory, 73-114.
* Selections from the Classic of Poetry (Daya).

**Week 6: Writing and Remembrance**
* Jan Assmann, Religion and Cultural Memory, 81-121.

**Week 7: The Beginnings of Political Philosophy**
* Martin Kern, “Ideologies of Kingship in the 'Yaodian': Style, Argument, and Purpose” (ms.).
* Selections from the Classic of Documents.

**Week 8: Tombs and Souls**
* Stephen Owen, An Anthology of Chinese Literature, 204-212.
* Wu Hung, The Art of the Yellow Springs, 7-84, 234-241.

**Week 9: The Spirit Journey**
* Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, Picturing Heaven in Early China, 149-233, 394-400.
* Stephen Owen, An Anthology of Chinese Literature, 162-188.

**Week 10: Writing for the Dead—and for the Living**

**Week 11: Truth and History**
* Wai-yee Li, “Knowledge and Skepticism in Ancient Chinese Historiography,” in Christina Shuggleworth Kraus (ed.), The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts, 27-54.

Week 12: The Historian’s Voice
* Stephen Owen, An Anthology of Chinese Literature, 135-144.