

# Response Paper 1

See Response Paper Rubric and Guidelines

# 1st paper -- Paper thesis

Make an argument (not obvious statement)

Be small and specific

Avoid general statements

Try to understand “why” and “how”

Unseen connections in the story

The way it is written

Time and author

On Blackboard

How to Write an Argumentative Essay

Developing Strong Thesis Statement

# Texts you can write about

Liang Qichao, “On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People”

Chen Duxiu, “On Literary Revolution” (1917) BB

Lu Xun, “A Madman’s Diary” (1918) CA 8-16

Lu Xun, “Medicine” (1919) BB

Yu Dafu, “Sinking” (1921) CA 31-55

Ding Ling, “Miss Sophia’s Diary” (1927) BB

Shen Congwen, “Xiaoxiao” (1929) CA 82-94

Film: *A Girl from Hunan*, compare to “Xiaoxiao”

Mao Dun, “Spring Silkworms” (1932) CA 56-73

Xiao Hong, “Hands” (1936) CA 161-173

# Next time: thesis exercise

1. Bring the first paragraph, containing the thesis, to the class (print, hard copy)
2. in-class exercise

## IMAGINE:



A debate with a friend who have also read the story/ seen the film



Explaining the story to someone who didn't see the film

# The thesis statement must be debatable

## **Example of a non-debatable thesis statement:**

The New Culture Movement has prompted transformations of Chinese culture in early twentieth century.

## **Example of a debatable thesis statement:**

Although many believe that the New Culture Movement has caused much positive cultural transformations of Chinese culture, it has also seen much social problems...

# The thesis needs to be narrow

## **Example of a thesis that is too broad:**

Drug use is detrimental to society.

## **Example of a narrow or focused thesis:**

Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence.

New cultural movement → new woman → Sophia's problems

# Suggested topics

The following are some suggested topics only. You are welcome to choose your own topic based on your interest, as long as they are related to our discussion during the semester.

1. Compare the major points of Liang Qichao's "On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People" and Chen Duxiu's "On Literary Revolution," and their contributions to the development of modern Chinese literature.
2. Review Lu Xun's short stories. How are they related around the recurring themes in his writing: relationship of the educated/revolutionary and the mass, the indifferent bystander, the feudalistic system as a man-eater, and (the lack of) hope.

3. Yu Dafu's "Sinking" and Ding Ling's "Miss Sophia's Diary" are both about the life and perplexities of the youth of the May Fourth generation. How do these stories present their problems, such as nationalism and patriotism (the former), and feminism and its practical challenges? More particularly, how does "Sinking" narrate a story of the nation and a generation by means of the personal? How does "Miss Sophia's Diary" portray the image of a "New Woman"?

4. Shen Congwen's "Xiaoxiao": life in the countryside vs. life in the city; the traditional vs. the modern; traditional gender roles and its modifications in practice (Xiaoxiao's relationship with her little husband; why is she not drowned);

5. Mao Dun's "Spring Silkworms": the major contradiction: the modern, foreign and capitalist vs. the traditional, local and feudalist; the socially ostracized;

6. Xiao Hong's "Hands": social treatment of the disadvantaged; the protagonist's attitude toward education and the discriminated treatment she receives; the narrator's representation