

# An Analysis of the “Literature +” Teaching Reform of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature under the Background of New Liberal Arts

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, the construction of new liberal arts is facing the educational responsibility of “building a liberal arts talent training system that can reach the world level and has Chinese characteristics”, which undoubtedly puts forward higher new requirements for the teaching of colleges and universities. Therefore, the first thing colleges and universities need to do is to consolidate the curriculum system, grasp the curriculum construction, and continue to promote the curriculum teaching content update to better respond to the new liberal arts construction requirements. However, under the background of the new liberal arts, modern and contemporary Chinese literature, as a compulsory core professional course for Chinese major students in colleges and universities, still has some problems in its teaching, such as reduced class time arrangement, poor learning enthusiasm of students, and single choice of course teaching content. Based on this, this paper puts forward the teaching reform strategy of “literature +”, aiming at cultivating a group of composite applied talents who are more in line with the requirements of the new liberal arts construction, hoping to provide some references for your peers.

**Keywords:** New liberal arts; Modern and contemporary Chinese literature; “Literature +”; Teaching reform

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## 1. Introduction

The “new liberal arts” emphasize the integration of new technologies into the courses of literature, philosophy, language, etc., to realize the discipline reorganization of traditional liberal arts courses and the intersection of arts and sciences, to provide a guarantee for students to carry out comprehensive interdisciplinary learning <sup>[1]</sup>. Modern and contemporary Chinese literature, as an important compulsory course for Chinese major students in colleges and universities, mainly explains and analyzes various excellent literary works, leads students to have a deep

understanding of the connotation of these literary works, and finally achieves the purpose of cultivating students' ability to analyze and understand literary works independently. Under the background of the new liberal arts, it is necessary for the course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature to actively reform its teaching to further promote educational reform and the construction process of the new liberal arts in colleges and universities.

## **2. The particularity of the course teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature**

The development of literature from the May Fourth Movement in 1917 to the present is all within the teaching scope of modern and contemporary Chinese literature courses in colleges and universities<sup>[2]</sup>. Specifically, the main purpose of modern and contemporary Chinese literature is to study and explore the occurrence and development of Chinese literature in the past 100 years, to examine which authors and writers were born in important fields, and what literary phenomena, ideas, and movements appeared in the past 100 years<sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, when teachers teach this course, they are bound to touch on the social and cultural development trends behind these literary works<sup>[4]</sup>.

In the process of the formation and development of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, a series of external factors, such as culture, politics, world, local and reality, in addition to the literary noumenon, will exert an important influence on it. All these are important contents of the course teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature<sup>[5]</sup>. As for the knowledge content of ideological trend movements, most teachers will devote several class hours to explaining it in detail. As for other literary history phenomena or related knowledge points, they will usually analyze and explain the works of various writers. However, the explanation of these contents often takes up more than half of the total class time<sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, to not reduce the history of literature to a general theoretical introduction, the teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature will also introduce knowledge related to the appreciation of works<sup>[7]</sup>. It can be seen that the course teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature not only covers more than one hundred years of Chinese literature development history but also records the changes of Chinese people's thoughts, emotions, and lives. It can reflect the interpretation and construction of the humanistic spirit by modern and contemporary intellectuals to a certain extent and has unique educational significance.

## **3. The construction of new liberal arts and the development opportunities of modern and contemporary Chinese literature course teaching**

The course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature mainly explains to students the literary trend of thought, literary schools, literary writers and their works after the "May Fourth Movement", and guides them to learn and master the overall picture of the development of Chinese literature in the past century more systematically, to achieve the purpose of improving students' historical cognition, value orientation and aesthetic concept<sup>[8]</sup>. However, with the continuous development of the social era, all kinds of new industries and new technologies have gradually emerged and developed rapidly. In this situation, the needs and requirements for talents in all walks of life have changed significantly. Therefore, many colleges and universities have strengthened the construction of science and engineering courses, which has led to the gradual weakening of the position of literature courses, and the course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature has been gradually ignored. The proposal of "new liberal arts" provides a good opportunity for the construction and development of college literature courses. The Ministry of Education pointed out that the construction of the new liberal arts needs to

shoulder the educational responsibility of cultivating liberal arts talents in the new era who “know China, love China and can take on the great task of national rejuvenation”<sup>[9]</sup>. It can be seen that the proposal of the new liberal arts undoubtedly greatly affirms the important value of liberal arts curriculum teaching. As an important part of the teaching of liberal arts, the course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature should firmly grasp the development opportunities brought by the construction of new liberal arts, give full play to its curriculum advantages, and contribute to the cultivation of liberal arts talents in the new era.

## **4. Existing problems in the course teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature under the background of new liberal arts**

### **4.1. The schedule of course hours has been reduced**

In recent years, with the continuous reform and development of the education system in colleges and universities, the setting of various general courses, professional basic courses, and practical activities in and out of class has been significantly increased<sup>[10]</sup>. Under this influence, the class hours of the course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature have been reduced. Some universities even cut the course’s class schedule by nearly half, to just four hours a week. Obviously, this poses a great challenge to the teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. In actual teaching, to catch up with the teaching progress, many teachers can only explain relevant basic knowledge to students in a hurry but fail to incorporate more malleable content. Only in this way can students successfully learn the development knowledge of modern and contemporary Chinese literature for more than 100 years<sup>[11]</sup>. Under such circumstances, students often have only a partial understanding of this course, and their cognition of modern and contemporary Chinese literary writers and their works is limited to the basic framework, and they cannot fully understand the emotions and connotations of these literary works. Therefore, in the context of the new liberal arts, teachers must think about teaching methods that are more adaptable to the new situation to better meet this challenge.

### **4.2. Students’ enthusiasm for learning is poor**

At present, many students do not have a high enthusiasm for the study of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. There are two main reasons for this: First, for those students who are passively transferred to the Chinese major, their enthusiasm for the study of literature courses is not very high, and they usually just pursue not failing the exam and successfully getting the graduation certificate<sup>[12]</sup>. Second, for students who take the initiative to major in Chinese, some of them hope to realize their literary dreams by studying Chinese literature. However, the curriculum of modern and contemporary Chinese literature is more systematic and disciplinary, and the content is rather boring, and the time for text analysis is limited, so it is easy to lead to some students’ strangeness and rejection of their learning. In addition, under the pressure of college entrance, many students have very limited literature reading and reading experience in middle school. They will be affected by the employment pressure after entering university, and it is difficult for them to spend more time and energy on researching literary works, which will also affect the teaching effect of modern and contemporary Chinese literature courses to a certain extent.

### **4.3. The teaching content of the course is single**

In the past, teachers’ explanations of modern and contemporary Chinese literature were mostly representative works of writers, and occasionally, some popular works were involved<sup>[13]</sup>. However, on the whole, the selection of course teaching content is still relatively simple, and the lack of integration with other subject knowledge easily

leads to students' knowledge being narrow, closed, and divorced from reality, which is not conducive to students' application of what they learn.

## **5. Practice exploration of “Literature +” teaching reform of modern and contemporary Chinese literature under the background of new liberal arts**

### **5.1. Combining modern and contemporary Chinese literature with text experience to transform the teaching mode**

Under the background of the new liberal arts, teachers should actively change the teaching mode when carrying out the teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, insist on taking students as the main body, and pay more attention to students' in-depth understanding and personal experience of literary works to ensure the teaching effect. For this reason, teachers may wish to combine the course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature with the text experience. For example, they can reproduce the cultural context and historical background of literary works with the help of modern technological means, so that students can be immersed in it, so that they can get an immersive learning experience, and urge them to have a dialogue with the author and literary works in a three-dimensional and visual learning context. In this way, not only can students fully stimulate the enthusiasm of learning, but it also promotes students to have a more profound thinking about literary works.

In addition, to bring students a more authentic text learning experience, teachers can also organize students to perform classic literature works, guide students to review classics, and interpret their literary connotations by guiding them to in-depth study of scripts. Take the performance of the classic drama *Thunderstorm* as an example. First, teachers can ask students to read the work independently according to the guided reading task, ask them to analyze the personality characteristics of each character according to their own cognitive experience, and guide students to pay more attention to the complexity of each role. For example, Zhou Ping is not only Zhou Ping in the shadow of Zhou Puyuan but also Zhou Ping, a rebel. Secondly, under the guidance of the teacher, students should discuss the script according to the relevant materials provided by the teacher, analyze and interpret the script from many different angles, and dig deep into its meaning. In this process, teachers need to provide timely advice and guidance for students and answer questions and doubts. After that, teachers can encourage students to give full play to their creativity, let them adapt and rehearse the play reasonably based on retaining some original elements, and put forward some targeted improvement suggestions if necessary. Finally, after the students' performance, teachers need to make on-site comments on the students' performance and encourage students to conduct self-evaluation and peer evaluation to ensure the comprehensiveness of teaching evaluation. In this way, through the complete script performance activities, students can realize the effective dialogue with classical literary works and can also deeply feel the cultural connotation and value implication contained in them, which is conducive to the further development of their literary understanding ability.

### **5.2. Combining modern and contemporary Chinese literature with disciplinary integration to broaden their academic horizons**

The soul of the construction of the new liberal arts mainly lies in breaking through and integrating, that is, breaking through the boundaries of the original curriculum teaching and promoting the organic integration of different disciplines or educational activities<sup>[14]</sup>. Therefore, when teachers carry out the teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, they can combine it with other disciplines to break the teaching boundaries and further broaden students' academic vision.

On the one hand, teachers should break the internal barriers of the curriculum and introduce literary works with similar themes and nature into the teaching at the same time to realize cross-topic teaching. For example, when leading students to discuss the theme of women's independence, teachers can combine literary works such as "The Dead" and "One Man's War" and let students make a comparative analysis of these works, helping them to have a deeper understanding of the main course of the change of women's independence theme along with the development of social times. On the other hand, teachers should break the external barriers of the curriculum, for example, they can combine the teaching of modern and contemporary Chinese literature with philosophy, introduction to literature, sociology, psychology, etc., to help students analyze literary works from different perspectives, to cultivate and exercise students' comprehensive analysis and interpretation ability of literary works. In addition, for contemporary Chinese students, many of them regard "holding a pen in one hand and a camera in the other" as their learning and future development goals. In this regard, teachers can also combine modern and contemporary Chinese literature with film and television art, promote the organic integration of traditional media and modern media, and lead students to deeply analyze the artistic characteristics of film and television works to better meet the learning and development needs of contemporary college students.

### **5.3. The combination of modern and contemporary Chinese literature with ideological and political education can enrich the teaching connotation**

Considering that the course of modern and contemporary Chinese literature is closely related to the history of China's revolutionary development, teachers may wish to combine this course with ideological and political education, dig deep into the ideological and political elements of the course, further enrich the connotation of the course teaching, to realize the effective cultivation of students' ideological values.

On the one hand, teachers can lead students to appreciate classical red literature works in the teaching, to realize the patriotic education of students, to achieve the purpose of stimulating students' national self-confidence and cultivating students' correct view of history. Modern and contemporary Chinese literature is not only the development history of a course, but also the true portrayal of the history of the Chinese people's unremitting self-improvement. It contains a wealth of classic red literature works, showing the century-old history of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, all of which reflect the national spirit of patriotism and perseverance. By explaining these works, teachers can better make students have emotional resonance, give them a strong sense of national pride, and help to further deepen the connotation of teaching. On the other hand, in teaching, teachers should guide students to explore various possibilities of national character transformation under a specific historical background with a scientific spirit to realize the organic penetration of ideological and political elements such as feelings of home and country, social responsibility, humanistic spirit, and scientific spirit. For example, when explaining *Midnight*, teachers should not only lead students to analyze the character image of Wu Sun Fu, but also guide them to think about why the road of national capitalists to save the country by industry is not working, to stimulate students' national consciousness and feelings of family and country<sup>[15]</sup>. In addition, teachers can also connect more with the current real life in teaching and actively infiltrate ideological and political elements with more characteristics of the new era to ensure the practicability of curriculum teaching, to better promote the construction and development of the new liberal arts.

## 6. Conclusion

In general, the new liberal arts construction brings a new development opportunity for the teaching reform of Chinese college literature courses, which is conducive to providing a solid guarantee for the cultivation of liberal arts talents in the new era. Under the background of the new liberal arts, modern and contemporary Chinese literature courses, as an important component of literature courses, should conform to the development trend of the social times and actively explore new teaching ideas. From the perspective of “Literature +”, teachers can combine modern and contemporary Chinese literature with text experience, discipline integration, ideological and political education to further enrich the teaching connotation of this course, fully highlight the characteristics of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, to better train students to become compound liberal arts talents.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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