

MID-YEAR REPORT for Fulbright Professors

NAME: Mary Rose Shaughnessy PhD
HOST INSTITUTION: Nanjing University
FIELD OF SPECIALIZATION: American Literature

A. Administrative Details

1. Selection and notification: What improvements should be made in selection procedures, notification of selection, preliminary announcements and program information, general communications?

I felt all notification procedures went very well on the American side. I appreciated all the individual contact via phone as well as mail. I felt that Mary Ernst and Nada Gunnoe were very understanding, responsive, helpful. On the Chinese side, however, there was no follow-up or confirmation from either Nanjing University or the Ministry of Education. I wrote many letters during the summer to the Chairman of the Foreign Language Department, Huang Zhongwen (whom I had brought to Chicago and introduced to my university, with the result that there is a faculty-student exchange this year). No one confirmed my appointment in writing, so that I was beginning to wonder if they were expecting me. I encountered problems at customs in Beijing because I had no official document. I do not think we should arrive in China without a letter from the Ministry of Education confirming our appointment to a university.

2. Transportation Arrangements: Did you have any problems arranging your travel from the US to China and onward to your host institution? Did unaccompanied baggage arrive ok? Do you have any suggestions with regard to shipping of effects, including books?

All travel arrangements went smoothly on Northwest; my only difficulty, again, came once I was under Chinese jurisdiction. CAAC destroyed my large suitcase, which had come 7000 miles with no problem. I suggest anyone flying CAAC have indestructible luggage.

I sent more than 30 boxes of books, which were broken down into 45 in Hong Kong and shipped to the Shanghai Consulate, from thence to Nanjing. They all arrived about the time that I did. My only problem came in unpacking that many boxes in the hottest time of the year in Nanjing. That, plus the chaos of opening week and the damp classrooms gave me bronchitis which I had for 5 weeks. I think I was too ambitious in buying and bringing so many books to China. I have enough books for several years.

I also sent many videotapes through the pouch. They arrived a little late and had me worried, as they represent hours of work; however they arrived safely. But I carried 10 tapes in through customs and had them confiscated for "viewing" to see if there was anything objectionable. If I had been met or had a document from the Ministry or from the University, I wouldn't have had this trouble.

3. Orientation: What comments or suggestions do you have for improvement of the orientation in Washington? In Beijing?

The Washington orientation was most helpful in that we got to meet the other Fulbrighters and to hear the experiences of past Fulbrighters and researchers, including ones from our universities. We also made fruitful contacts there that resulted in contacts here in China; e.g., thru meeting Kent Morrison I was recommended to a teacher in Xinjiang, who has been writing to me and invited me to come to Xinjiang to give some lectures. I received much helpful information in Washington.

The Beijing orientation was helpful psychologically as a reception. By that time I was feeling very let down, since I had been in Beijing about a week and still had not got my tapes back from customs or met anyone from Nanda. At the embassy, things began to happen. I complained to someone from the Ministry of Education and finally a member of the Nanda waiban showed up, took my passport, retrieved my tapes, and claimed me and my luggage, assuming responsibility.

4. Logistical Arrangements abroad: Comment on availability & adequacy of the following:

A. Housing: I feel very fortunate to have 3 rooms (sitting room, bed room, and extra bedroom which I use as a TV/Lib) plus bath and kitchen with gas stove. Since I have so many books and videotapes, I need a lot of space, and this place suits me perfectly. I entertain here, have my classes in to watch videos, have decorated the place with Chinese art and a Chinese canary. However, I could just as easily been given one-room in the other building. There is no guarantee that the Fulbright will get this space. I have noticed, however, that the British Council, the Japanese Embassy, and the German Embassy teachers all seem to pass on their quarters to their replacements, complete with books, electric ovens, xerox machines, heaters, tools, kitchen utensils, etc., whereas the Fulbrighters give all they have to the Chinese and make the next Fulbrighter start over from scratch. I feel we should help each other, since the Chinese do not help us. We should have this space and leave things in it for the succeeding Fulbrighter, as the other teachers do for their successors.

B. Household Furniture and Furnishings: There were 2 beds, several desks, book cases, 2 large chairs, a frig and TV, a table when I came. I got some extra desks to make a TV wall unit. I've made it very comfortable; however, it took a while to collect things. Last year's Fulbrighter didn't leave even a heater here. As I mentioned above, we should help each other.

C. Food: The dining hall for foreigners (teachers and students) here at Nanda is not bad. There is suan nai (yoghurt), niu nai (cow's milk), mian bao (bread), kafei & cha available at every meal. Dining hall hours: 6:30-7:30 a.m.; 11-12; 5-6 p.m. There are some good desserts including puding, pingguo pie, and cookies. The main courses are also pretty good. If you get bored with the food, you can go to the "yellow restaurant" on campus where there are other items, or you can have banquets there.

D. Schooling for Children. I have no direct experience of this, however there are two school age children here with a researcher this year. They attend the local Chinese school, since they speak Chinese, (also Japanese and English). They seem to have a wonderful time; they are in the Young Pioneers and know all the martial arts and communist youth songs.

E. Local Transportation. Nanjing is a wonderful city for transportation. Nanda is located right in town. By bike you can get anywhere in 15 minutes. Cabs aren't expensive (if you can find one). Buses are easy to get (though crowded of course).

There are also many interesting tourist spots--a huge park, a mountain, pagodas, "old Nanjing" with its Confucius temple and free market areas. The city is also on the train line to Shanghai (5 hrs), Suzhou (4 hrs), and Wuxi (3 hrs). You can't feel isolated here.

F. Clothing: You can get many items right here in Nanjing--long underwear, cotton padded shoes and jackets, down jackets, hand-made wool sweaters--all inexpensive. Moreover, you can buy material and have your clothes copied for a few kuai (but bring zippers). What they don't have here are good warm boots, gloves, wool socks, nightgowns, bathrobes, wool hats.

G. Health and Medical Care: I have visited the clinic regularly since I arrived and had bronchitis. Nanjing is not a healthy place. It is polluted; temperatures rise and fall during one day. We all have colds and coughs and upper and lower respiratory infections constantly. Bring your own antibiotics, because the clinic will not give you penicillin, lest you have an allergic reaction. The doctors in the clinic are very kind, but they do not speak English; the building is dirty & depressing, especially when you are sick. If you are REALLY sick, you can go in town to the workers' hospital, but they don't speak English there either. Some of us have just gone to the pharmacies in town and gotten medicines for all the different ailments and collected our own dispensaries. We have also tried traditional Chinese medicine, even acupuncture. It's an interesting place to learn about Chinese medicine. You can plan on having a lot of colds here, but you can also do research on Western vs. Chinese remedies.

H. Banking, Cashing Checks, Using Credit Cards in the PRC: I've done all these things. I opened a bank account (takes about a month to clear your check through Hong Kong). Every time I go in to draw money, there's a wait. Credit cards are useful if you're buying items in tourist hotels. With an American Express card you can get \$700 (on your card) with no service charge at the bank. Visa takes a service charge, as do travelers checks. Be sure to bring checks, because students may ask you to write a check for \$26 to send in with their TOEFL registration. (They'll pay you back in renmin bi.)

Part B. Professional Activities:

I. Academic Assignment: Describe in detail the academic assignment to date, to provide information useful to future grantees offering instruction in the same field. Include teaching circumstances, interpreter, relation of your work to the host institution curriculum, the role and status of the exchange professor, size of classes, preparation and level of students, voluntary or required attendance, examination procedures, attendance class list.

Though the department wanted me to teach senior comp (the senior thesis) as Carol Neubauer did last year, I insisted that I would not do it but wanted to teach undergrad and grad American Lit and a video course. They let me do it, and now call what I am doing "providing electives." They found some one else to teach the comp--another foreign expert, a man. (Normally they give men the first choice here, so I had to really insist to make them give me first choice and ask him to teach the comp.)

I have 3 classes, each meeting once a week for 2 hrs:

1. American Lit. Survey, an elective for 27 undergrad students. Their level is not up to the difficulty of the material, e.g., Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne & Melville. Last year they read mostly Hemingway, and they prefer modern writers. Moreover, they have 20-24 hrs of class a week and can't spend much time preparing. I have resorted to quizzes to force them to read the works ahead of time. When I come in class, they are all reading aloud. AMERICAN LITERATURE: THE MAKERS AND THE MAKING (2 vol) is their text. I take attendance, and they are usually always all present. I can't get them to discuss or volunteer so I basically lecture, but they do not know how to take notes. If I want them to write something down, I must write it on the board. They are gentle and shy. But we're making some progress: they really studied for the final; I think they were worried they would fail.

2. American Authors, an elective for 20 2nd year graduate students. Their level is just right. They are wonderful; I love them. They are either already teaching English or are going to teach it. They ask questions, do thorough analyses when asked, are mature, close knit. I brought individual copies of all the works to give them for their personal libraries. Some come from places like Harbin and Xinjiang where the libraries are inadequate, so I think they should keep their copies to have some primary materials to teach from back home. The only problem they have is that their approach to literature has been to look at it as social documentation, e.g., "The Fall of the House of Usher" is a symbol of the decay of the South. They project interpretations. Being alone is always bad, they think; it shows alienation from people. Another weakness they and others have is that they only want to know what the latest literary views are. I guess they think we revise our opinions about our writers every few years (like they do). I have been stressing the 19th century, to give them some idea of the roots of American literature.

3. Images of America, a film class, an elective. There are about 17 students taking it for credit and 40-50 attending. This class has been a constant source of frustration. My tapes are all BETA NTSC 4.43. I wrote many letters asking them if they had any equipment to run this format; no answer. I brought them and bought a 7-systems VCR & TV in Hong Kong so that I could play them and see and record Chinese TV. When I arrived, they were all very eager to have my tapes, but they had no means of transferring them, so I lent them my machine for about 3 weeks. Finally I reclaimed my VCR, after they had copied 80-100 hours of programming. In the film class, however, they gave me no help, initially scheduling the class in a basement room with no audio-visual facilities at all! By repeated demands, I got the class moved to an AV room, but the technician speaks no English, nor does the person who recorded the tapes, nor does the librarian from whom I get the tapes. Problems I have encountered in this class include: no electricity; film in progress when I arrive; film not projecting; no way to stop and explain, so I have to shout above the roar of the sound track; students wandering in and out from adjacent classrooms; interference with my selections; but above all, inability of students to understand more than 1/3 of the film without my telling them what is going on. When I learned that the English dept. is regularly showing my films on Friday afternoons, I decided that my mission was accomplished; they could carry on without me. I suspect all they wanted was my tapes. My means of assessment in that class is to have them write papers--4 of them, sort of reviews of the films they have seen. They seemed really to think about these films; their favorite I believe was PLACES IN THE HEART. The course was a worthwhile experiment, but there are too many problems, and the department won't help solve them.

These classes we foreigners teach earn only 2 hrs of credit as opposed to the 3 hrs credit for courses taught by Chinese teachers. Students who take our classes have to take more courses, and do more work, than students who take all courses from Chinese teachers. (I wonder whether the department takes us seriously as teachers.) Even so, we get a high turnout from the students, even for electives.

My class lists are in Chinese, so I have students give me their names in pin yin, together with their student numbers. There is a liaison person from the department, a teaching assistant, who is very sweet and well-meaning and a good friend; she is deputed to bring down regulations and messages to us. She cannot cut through the bureaucracy to solve our problems; another foreign expert, however, has the deputy head of the English section as his liaison person. As a result, he has not had any problems. I believe it has something to do with his being a man.

Besides these 3 classes, I also work 2 hrs a week with the Foreign Language Research Institute, a part of the wai wen xi. However, the dept. does not really condone or even recognize this as part of my hours. I do a tutorial with one of the members every week. I also help various graduate students who are writing articles on 20th century writers for the History of 20th Century Literature that Nanjing is ambitiously trying to produce. I really like working with the people in

the research institute, especially Zhang Zhiqing and Liu Haiping. The Fulbright should insist on working with them as part of the agreement with Nanda.

2. Professional relationships with A. host institution, B. dean and department heads, C. faculty associates, D. students. Please indicate those who have been most helpful to you in carrying out your assignment to date.

A. Aside from the banquets at the beginning, given by Jiangsu Province, the Department, the English section, I have not had much contact with any heads. Most of our contacts are with the waiban. Any contacts we have with university academic personnel other than the liaison person from the department are chiefly owing to the fact that that person has been assigned to be kind to us or has hopes that we might be helpful to him/her. You cannot count on anyone being helpful except the liaison person.

In my experience, the Fulbrighter here does not get helped as much as the foreign experts by either the department or the waiban. This is also the experience of the person here from Amity, who is also paid by an outside institution. (Amity is a foundation formed by the Nanjing Theological Seminary to provide teachers with religious affiliation to the colleges of Jiangsu Province. Their religious communities pay \$4000 to Amity, and the teachers' housing and salary are provided out of that.) No one met either of us when we arrived. The department consults with foreign experts about what courses they will teach, but they just put me down for something (which I protested and got changed). Most of us are leaving before the official end of the term. We were told we had to ask permission of the department. Everyone was given permission but me; I was told I had to write a letter to the President. The university is having 1/2 - 1 cu. m. boxes made for foreign experts who are leaving, shipping to be paid for by the department. They do not do this for Amity or Fulbright. I think they treat us more like they do their own Chinese faculty. They know they can count on us every year without their having to do anything to gain or keep our good will. But if some of the other foreign teachers give bad reports, their universities or backers may cancel the programs.

The foreign faculty in general is regarded as a group apart. We live in our own compound, eat in our own dining hall. We have never been invited to department meetings, except at the beginning when Huang Zhongwen told us what he expected and what the regulations are. I have several friends on the Chinese faculty, e.g., Yu Ninping (who shares an interest in women writers and films), but no effort was ever made to bring us together with faculty socially or academically. The members of the research institute are the exception. They have invited me to their meetings and come by to see me. I would say that those faculty who have studied in the States are more inclined to have contact with us foreigners academically and socially.

Relations with students are much better. We are fortunate to live right on campus, next door to where the students themselves live. They come over to talk, borrow books, ask for letters of recommendation. They invite us to their parties; I have them here to watch movies. Students in other departments than

English are also glad to meet English teachers, and they too drop in. At Christmas they gave us cards and gifts and parties. The students are the best part of teaching in China. They cannot get enough information about America; they all hope to get there someday. I would like to take many of them with me. They deserve better than they will get here.

3. Have you had any involvement in the selection of students/ faculty members to be sent abroad? Is your school aware of the Fulbright opportunities in the graduate and research scholar categories?

The wai wen xi has a list of names of those who get to go abroad, and in what order. They do not consult us. I am sure the heads know what the opportunities are, but the rank and file members just know where they stand in line. Is there any way an individual can get out of line and file for himself? Certainly not through the Fulbright, which deals exclusively with institutions, not with individuals, until they have been approved by their departments. Study abroad is another one of the favors or privileges that is awarded to whoever has some rank or influence, unless the funding organization specifically requires that the person be a young scholar who has just finished his/her MA, for example. My university in the States has an exchange with Nanda (through the contact I made for Huang Zhongwen with Chicago State) which requires that the student be an undergraduate. I think that is a good idea.

4. To what extent are you in contact with other Foreign Experts in your department/university? We live together, eat together, travel together, sing together, etc. We are even in contact with foreign experts at other universities in Nanjing. I think the foreign community is one of the richest parts of life here. Since we are not encouraged to join the Chinese community, we are forced to rely on each other. Fortunately, people who come to China are resourceful and eager to help. They enrich our lives. We help each other; we tell each other where to buy heaters and down jackets and train tickets; we keep each other up on the news. The foreign community is a great substitute for the waiban.

5. What assistance from the Embassy/Consulate have you found most helpful? Nanjing is a bit out of the way of the embassy/consulate areas. I found the Embassy helpful when my tapes were confiscated. Mr. Lu tracked down the Nanda waiban for me there in Beijing. I found Lloyd Neighbors helpful in Shanghai when I visited there in September and had no place to stay and he found me rooms. It is nice to know the Consulate is nearby.

Part C: Education Resources

I. What problems have you encountered with regard to distribution of textbooks to your students? What is the students attitude towards the texts you have provided? Is lack of text-books a serious problem?

One problem I encountered here was getting the textbooks that Carol Neubauer had turned in to the Foreign Language Library for the use of my

students this year. She spent most of her allotment on a 2-vol Am. Lit anthology, but the librarian (who speaks no English) told me I could not have them because Carol had given them to be used "by the teachers," not the students. After much stress, through the accidental appearance of someone from the department, I was allowed to get these books for my students use. They will return them at the end of the year, so there will be these available next year. I bought 15 copies each of all the texts my graduate students will need; there are more students than I was told by Huang Zhongwen last May, so that is a problem. Getting a count of students is very difficult. In fact, students come and go; who knows who is really taking the class until the final gradesheet, and even that is not correct. Students show up registered in class at the beginning just to get the textbooks. Young teachers even come just to get the books they know we will be passing out. Lack of textbooks is a very serious problem here; the department does not provide textbooks for the foreign teachers; fortunately the Fulbright money allows us to have extra books that we can give to other teachers as well.

I spent most of my allowance on a research library. Who will get this after I leave? The English Dept. would like them, but they already have many books, and I fear that faculty will go through and take what they want into their personal libraries. The "Fulbright/Australian Library" contains books that didn't make it into the English Dept. library or anyone's private collection--mostly popular books. This library is in a deplorable condition--books all over, not on shelves. The librarian is a young girl who doesn't know English and so cannot even shelve them. It is primarily a light reading library.

I would like to propose that this research library I brought remain for the use of the Fulbright next year. Why should the next Fulbrighter have to assemble basically the same primary and secondary sources for his/her use, when they are already here? They will not be here, unless they are specifically earmarked for Fulbright use next year. The books are more accessible to students in our quarters than in the libraries, which are often closed. Books given to the main library have a way of never making it into the collections or of not being catalogued for a long time. They are still working on cataloguing books acquired several years ago. What is needed in the collection I have here is more lesser known 20th cen. writers .

2. Which of your host institution's libraries is the most helpful collateral resource for your teaching? Who has access?

There are many libraries here, each with a sort of feudal attitude of territorial domain. The main library has the Foreign Language Reading Room. The collection is spotty. Access is unclear. I've heard stories on both sides--open and closed.

The Foreign Language Dept. has a reserve collection which is open only to teachers. This is where the textbooks we pass on to be used by successive Fulbrighters is housed--biology building basement. It is very difficult even for us to get these books out once they are donated to the FL Dept.

The English Dept. Library is housed in the English Bldg. I think it is open to graduate students as well as faculty, but I don't think graduate students use it

unless they are also teaching courses and are entitled to use of these books. There are a lot of secondary sources and many pirated copies of the Norton Anthology and the Oxford Companions to English and American Lit. (which sell for 5 kuai each in the campus bookstore).

The Foreign Language Research Institute also has a library which those graduate students who are writing articles for the history of 20th century literature can use.

I have kept the books I brought together as a library here which is open whenever I am here. Students come here and borrow books, sign them out and keep them as long as they like. I wish that this library would pass on to the Fulbright rather than into one of the libraries mentioned above.

3. Describe the availability and need for educational materials, audio-visual aids, duplicating equipment, VTR capability.

Since I provided the English Dept with many tapes, they now have quite a collection of American films and documentaries on VHS and 3/4". The films are shown in 202 of the Main Teaching Building. The large screen there is PAL, so American films taped in NTSC will come out B/W even if they are in color. The VHS tapes can be shown in color, but only on a small screen monitor, which is difficult to see in such a large room. The problem in showing films even when they are available is there are no English speaking people to help you. You must speak Chinese, and your technical vocabulary may not be adequate to all the problems that arise.

Slide projectors here are antiques and again who will discuss all your needs with the technicians? I spent one whole afternoon trying to arrange to get a slide projector for a slide-lecture I was giving. The person who had asked me to give the talk did not give me any assistance. Even with the help of a friend, when I arrived at the lecture room that evening, there was no projector. I had to describe everything I was going to show them. We later found that the projector had been put in the office of the person who had asked me to give the lecture, but she hadn't gone there beforehand and would not have known that I wanted it anyway, as she hadn't asked what I would be doing. So we have more or less given up on projectors and video-tapes.

Duplicating is another problem. The only way to get material duplicated is to 1) take it in town and have it done yourself, immediately; or 2) hand it in to the department and wait about 3-4 weeks while they make a stencil and run it off. There are xerox machines around (English Dept., Library), but they are always "huaile." (broken) I recommend that the Fulbrighter use some of the book money on a small xerox machine for the use of the Fulbrighter, such as the British Council has.