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ENGL 19, Seminar 2 - 2025

The background of the slide is a photograph of a Cantonese opera performance. The stage is decorated with red lanterns and a red curtain. Several performers in traditional costumes are visible on stage. A large audience is seated in the foreground, watching the performance.

LEARN THROUGH PLAY

**Professor
King-Kok Cheung**



Cantonese Opera, Poetry, and Song

Study promotes learning and preservation of Cantonese language through Cantonese opera *The Ballad of Mulan* and popular songs. It reveals impact of Cantonese culture on Chinese poetry, American history, and literature. Students learn Cantonese by studying this opera; watching performances of Cantonese opera excerpts (*Purple Hairpin Pickup* from *Purple Hairpin Saga* and *Fragrant Sacrifice* from *The Flower Princess*); and reading Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976 National Book Critics Circle Award winner), which resounds to Cantonese cadence and idioms. Cantonese Opera is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Work to preserve Cantonese language has engaged nonprofit community partners such as Asian Pacific Community Fund, Save Cantonese Organization, Perfect Harmony Cultural Exchange Association, Chinese New Life Women's Club, Southern California Cantonese Association, and Lion's Club. Guests from these groups discuss their efforts to be innovative and entrepreneurial in ensuring its survival.

King-Kok Cheung is UCLA Research Professor of English, Professor Emeritus of English and Asian American Studies, and Special Advisor of the US-China Education Trust. She is author of *Articulate Silences* and *Chinese American Literature without Borders* (both monographs have been published in Chinese), *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, *Asian American Literature: An Annotated Bibliography*, and co-editor of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, and the 2023 recipient of the Association of Asian American Studies Lifetime Career Achievement Award.