

CHINESE CIVILIZATION TO 1700

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Office hours: Tues/Thurs. 1:30-2:00
Wed. 1:00-3:00
And by appointment

Course Materials

The following books are available for purchase at **Amherst Books**:

The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600, by Valerie Hansen. ISBN 978-0-393-97374-7

A Tale of Two Melons: Emperor and Subject in Ming China, by Sarah Schneewind
0872208249

Confucius: The Analects, tr. D. C. Lau 0872208249

Mencius, tr. D. C. Lau 014044346

Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings, tr. Burton Watson 0231106890

Stories from a Ming Collection, Cyril Birch 0802150314

Emperor of China: A Portrait of Kang Hsi, Jonathan D. Spence 067972074X

Copies of these books and other readings are on reserve at Frost Library or on line for the course. *A Collection of Readings*, Part I and Part II, will be available at the History Department Office, Chapin 11. There will be a fee to cover the expense of photo-copying.

Course Description and Requirements

This course is designed to introduce students to a broad array issues and sources in Chinese history and culture from the earliest records to the eighteenth century. No familiarity with China or previous experience in the study of history is required. We will explore meanings in texts and other sources, relating traditional Chinese philosophy, religion, art, fiction, historical narrative, statecraft, and social thought to their historical contexts and to current events. Class meetings include brief lectures, which supplement readings from *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600*, and reading and discussion of primary sources and interpretive articles. The first requirement is to **read the assigned material in preparation for class**. If you know that you will be unable to attend a class, inform me of the reason in advance. **Regular attendance and completion of all writing assignments is required; repeated absence will lower the grade; and plagiarism or other serious violation of the honor code will result in failure of the course.** Repeated unexcused absence will lower the grade. The grade is based on the following:

- 1) Six brief response papers. Use the response prompts on the syllabus to prepare for class, choose six to revise and submit by the following class, **3 before and 3 after Oct 23 (20%)**.
- 2) Two five-page papers on assigned topics, **due Oct 12 and Nov 12 (50%)**
- 3) One 7-8 page paper designed by the student in consultation with the instructor, **due Dec 14 (30%)**.

Tues, Sept 4 **Introduction: Geography, Language, and History**

Handouts:

Some Chinese Words

Book of Changes, the hexagrams.

Course Web Site (Moodle):

Introduction-geography

Thurs, Sept 6 **Western Zhou: History and Sources**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 17-53.

Dennerline, *Mandate of Heaven Lost: the Spring and Autumn World*, pp 1-4;

Edward Shaughnessy, "The Composition of 'Qian' and 'Kun' Hexagrams of the *Zhouyi*," in *Before Confucius*, pp. 197-212, and "Western Zhou History," pp. 320-25 and 331-38.

Response: What question arises in your mind from these readings? Why this question? How might you imagine finding an answer?

Tues., Sept. 11 **Eastern Zhou, Confucius and the Analects**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 55-79.

Dennerline, *Mandate of Heaven Lost: the Spring and Autumn World*, pp 4-15.

Confucius: The Analects, tr. D.C. Lau, early selections, 479-436 B.C.E.:

4:1-14, 16-17;

5:1-6, 8-12, 15, 17-21, 23-25, 27-28;

6:1-14, 16, 18-23, 25-27;

7:1-3, 5-8, 12, 14, 16-17, 19-20, 22-24, 26, 28-30, 33-35;

8:3, 5-7.

Response: The concept of *ren* – "humanity" or "benevolence" – was entirely new. Given what you think or believe about other issues raised in these passages, What question might you want to ask the sage? Why this question? What sort of answer might you expect?

Wed, Sept 12

View: "Confucius" (2010). Film streamed on line for this course. Two copies on reserve at Frost Library: PN1997 .K66494.

Thurs., Sept. 13 **Confucius: Mentor and Patron**

Read: D.C. Lau, "The Disciples as they Appear in the Analects," in *The Analects*, Appendix II.

Response: Choose two disciples, introduced by D. C. Lau, whom you would like to compare, contrast or otherwise discuss in class. Why these two?

Tues, Sept 18 **After Confucius: Heaven, Kingship, and the Way**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 79-95.

Mo Tzu (Mozi), "The Will of Heaven," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, pp. 46-49;

Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching, selections;

Confucius: The Analects, tr. D.C. Lau, student selections.

Response: Everyone agrees there is a Way, or a path, that can lead to peace and personal fulfillment, but these three schools disagree on what determines it, how you can find it out, and how to apply it. Choose one argument and show how you might use it against the others.

Thurs, Sept 20 **After Confucius: Human Nature and the Way**

Read: *Mencius*, 2A:6; 3A:4-5; 7A1-15, 26, 27, 30;

Chuang Tzu (Zhuangzi), selections;

Hsün Tzu, "Man's Nature is Evil," pp. 157-171.

Response: As humans are we inclined to do either good or evil? What are the implications of your answer? Staying within the parameters of ancient Chinese culture, draw on the texts for a short list of points in support of one position and come prepared to argue it.

Tues, Sept 25 **Mencius on Knowing, Kingship and the Way of Governing**

Read: Dennerline, *Mandate of Heaven Revived: Warring States Scholars and Kings* (6p);

Mencius, 1A:1, 3. 4. 7; 1B:5, 6, 8, 12-15.

Response: Draw on the text for a short list of points and show why you think they could or could not be applied to contemporary issues of statecraft (domestic or international).

Thurs, Sept 27 **Xunzi (Hsün Tzu) on Knowing, Heaven and the Way of Man**

Read: Dennerline, *Mandate of Heaven Revised: Ritual, Law, and the Way of Empire*;

Hsün Tzu, tr. Watson, "Dispelling Obsession," pp. 121-138; "A Discussion of Heaven," pp. 79-89.

Response: As a realist and a rationalist, Xunzi both challenged the Confucian tradition and defended it against the others. Can you begin simply to explain how his discussions of "mind" and "Heaven" did this? What questions does this exercise raise in your mind?

Tues, Oct 2 **Ritual, Law, and Empire**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 97-117.

Karen Turner, "Sage Kings and Laws in the Chinese and Greek Traditions," in

Heritage of China, ed. Paul Ropp, pp. 86-111;

Hsün Tzu, "A Discussion of Rites," pp. 89-112.

Response: "Ritual" is a word you might be likely to associate with religious practice or performance. Why does Turner want you to think of it as "old law?" Identify three points in Xunzi's argument about "ritual principles" (the general principles on which Chinese rites were based), that you might use for an answer to this question.

Thurs, Oct 4 **Xunzi and Han Feizi on Law**

Read: *Hsün Tzu*, “Regulations of a King,” pp. 33-56 ;
Han Fei Tzu, selections.

Response: Han Fei Tzu rejected the Confucian world view, including Xunzi’s version, in its entirety. Here you can compare the two on the subject of the “rule of law.” Neither man survived the Qin conquest of the world. If you were their contemporary and had to choose between the two, which side would you choose? Why?

Fri, Oct 5 – Wed, Oct 10

View Film: “The Emperor and the Assassin,” film by Chen Kaige (1999), Streamed on line for this course. One copy on reserve, PN1997 .E4447 VideoDVD)

Tues, Oct 9 Fall Break: No Class

Thurs, Oct 11 **Empire: Qin and Han**

Read: “Biography of Lü Buwei,” in *Shiji*, tr by Kircher;
“Biography of Jing Ke,” from *Shiji*, tr by Derk Bodde;
Jia Yi (Chia I), “The Faults of Qin,” from *Shiji*.

Response: What do you think Chen Kaige himself thinks about the creation of the first empire and why do you think that? Make a short list of clues and compare what’s in the ancient texts for discussion.

Fri, Oct 12: Paper due

Tues, Oct 16 **Han Spirituality: the Historian and the Poet**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 117-49.
Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*, “Biographies of Ch’ü Yüan (Qu Yuan) and Master Chia (Jia Yi);”
Ch’u Tz’u: The Songs of the South, tr. David Hawkes, “Li Sao.”

Response: Sima Qian’s reading of Qu Yuan’s and Jia Yi’s poetry focuses on Confucian and Daoist themes; modern scholars like Hawkes tend to focus on the southern shamanic influences. Choose three passages in the “Li Sao” that you would like to discuss in light of this difference. What questions does this exercise raise in your mind?

Thurs, Oct 18 **The Dialogue between Steppe and Sown**

Read: *Records of the Grand Historian*, “The Hsiung-nu,” excerpts;
Thomas J. Barfield, “The Hsiung-nu Imperial Confederacy: Organizations and Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 41.1, pp. 45-61. **E-RESERVE.**

Response: Sima Qian’s narrative of relations between Han and the Xiongnu focuses on meaningful speeches, conversations, and letters as well as personal observation; the modern anthropologist Barfield focuses on social structures. How would you use one to challenge or complement the other? Choose one or two passages to use as evidence.

Tues, Oct 23 **Buddhism in the Spiritual Landscape**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 153-63, 175-89.

“Hui-yüan,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, ed. W.T. deBary.

H. Miyakawa, “Local Cults around Mount Lu,” in *Facets of Taoism*, selections.

Arthur F. Wright, “Biography of the Nun An-ling-shou,” in *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (Yale 1990), pp. 69-72.

“The Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin,” tr. Company, in *Religions of China in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., pp. 82-95.

Response: Buddhism challenged the social order but Han civilization did not wither away. How might you begin to explain why? Make a short list of points for an argument drawing on these three documents for evidence.

Thurs, Oct 25 **Buddhism in the Spiritual Landscape**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 191-211, 221-45.

“Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, pp. 203-222.

“The Story of Hui-yuan,” in *Ballads and Stories from Tun-huang*, tr. A. Waley.

“Han Yü’s Counterattack on Buddhism and Taoism,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, pp. 426-37.

Response: Once established, Buddhism provided its own opportunities for challengers. Are these three examples evidence of a common theme or are they better understood by their differences? Make a short list of points for an argument.

Fri, Oct 26-Mon, Oct 29

View: Valerie Hansen, “The Beijing Qingming Scroll and its Significance for the Study of Chinese History,” **On Reserve (ND 1049 C4525 H27 1996).**

Tues, Oct 30 **Contending Empires, Commerce, and Neo-Confucian Response**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 261-97, 315-26.

“The Great Learning” and “The Doctrine of the Mean,”

“Zhu Xi on Spirit Beings,” tr. Gardner, in *Religions of China in Practice*, pp. 106-119.

Response: The “Great Learning” and the “Doctrine of the Mean” were ancient texts used by Zhu Xi as the basis for a Neo-Confucian worldview. Make a short list of points for an argument about how his treatment of gods, ghosts, and ancestors is or is not consistent with the ideas in those texts.

Thurs, Nov 1 **Popular Culture, Ideal Worlds**

Read: “Precepts for Social Life,” by Yüan Ts’ai, excerpts, in *Family and Property in Sung China*, tr. P. Ebrey;

“The Canary Murders” and “The Lady who was a Beggar,” in *Stories From a Ming Collection*, ed. Cyril Birch.

Response: Yuan Ts’ai’s practical advice for family management reflects the social norms that Confucian scholars hoped to influence. So do the popular stories. What do Yuan’s reflections and the stories have in common? How do they differ? What questions does

Tues, Nov 6 **Ming Taizu and the Farmer**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 335-42, 365-76.
Sarah Schneewind, *A Tale of Two Melons*.

Thurs, Nov 8 **Ming Taizu and the Farmer**

Read: Schneewind, *A Tale of Two Melons*.

Mon, Nov 12: Paper Due

Tues, Nov 13 **The Ming Empire and the Changing World**

Read: Hansen, *The Open Empire*, 376-407.

Edward Dreyer. *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433*, pp 1-9, 187-93, Appendix I-III. I. *Ming Shi* biography of Zheng He (1739); II. *Liujagang Inscription of 1431* – both inscriptions are basically to Tianhou; III. *Changle Inscription of 1431*.

Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat*, chapter 4: “Geography Lessons,” 84-116.

Response: Dreyer offers an explanation of Zheng He’s voyages from the perspective of the Ming court. Brook relates the experience of some international voyagers in late Ming times to the international exchange of knowledge. Try using each of these historical accounts to inform your reading of the other. What questions arise?

Thurs, Nov 15 **Urban Culture at Ming’s End**

Read: Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat*, chapter 3: “A Dish of Fruit,” 54-83.

“The Pearl Sewn Shirt,” in *Stories from a Ming Collection*.

Response: Choose one. 1) If gender is defined as “a cultural construct, the distinction in roles, behaviors, and mental and emotional characteristics between females and males developed by society,” do you think this story does or does not challenge the gender system as you understand it in Ming China? 2) The setting for the story is contemporaneous with the world Brook describes in his discussion of the porcelain trade and consumers’ tastes. Try using each to inform your reading of the other. What questions arise?

Thanksgiving Break

Tues, Nov 27

Manchus and Modern Empire: The Ch'ing (Qing)

Read: William Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing*, 1-30. **E-RESERVE.**
Jonathan Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. xi-xxvi, 7-59.

Response: In the readings for Nov 27 and Nov 29 the emperor reflects on his own role in achieving peace and enlightened rule. In your view do his methods do more to enable or to impede the achievement of these goals? Why? These two days provide essential context for your responses and discussion during the week of Dec 4-6. Any or all of these sources may constitute the core of a term paper. If you want to design a topic focusing on this period or on these issues, or a topic drawing on them, you should be thinking about it now.

Thurs, Nov 29

Kangxi: the Man and the Ideal

Read: Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, 31-62.
Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. 61-139.

Tues, Dec 4

State, Society, and the Scholar-Officials

Read: Huang Liu-hung, *A Complete Book concerning Happiness and Benevolence: A Manual for Local Magistrate in Seventeenth-Century China*, excerpts.

Response: Huang suggests ways for a magistrate to make use of existing institutions, beliefs, and social practices to achieve peace and justice. In your view, do these methods do more to enable or to impede the achievement of justice? Why?

Thurs, Dec 6

State, Society, and the Scholar-Officials

Read: Chang Ying, "Remarks on Real Estate," in H. J. Beattie, *Land and Lineage in China*, Appendix III (pp. 140-151)

Response: Zhang Ying (Chang Ying) suggests ways for the scholarly landowning class to maintain itself. In your view do these methods do more to enable or to impede the achievement of enlightened rule? Why?

Tues, Dec 11

Reflections: Chinese Civilization Past and Present

Read: Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. 142-175.

Fri, Dec 14: Term Paper Due