

History 206 History of East Asia



Cover of a Tokugawa period version of *Water Margin* with all the heroes as geisha

This course will deal with the history of East Asia from the earliest civilizations to the present, focusing mostly on China and Japan. Rather than trying to cover every aspect of the evolution of East Asian societies we will look at various different ways that individuals in Asia have tried to adopt to and change their world. The first part of the course will focus on the Chinese model: the set of questions and answers about human societies that were developed in China and adapted and modified throughout the rest of Chinese and Asian history. In the second part of the course we will focus on the modern transformation of Asia. This is a process that had a lot to do with the arrival of "westerners," (who may have been Japanese) but also a lot to do with trends that already existed in Asia. It also added a new set of personal choices on top of the old ones, and in many cases led to the creation of powerful states that were eager to help individuals make these choices. Today East Asia is one of the most modern and powerful parts of the world, and we will study both how that came to be and the price Asian people paid to get there.

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The syllabus and pretty much everything you will need for the class are on D2L

Books

- Watson, Burton. *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. (This has been re-printed many times, you can use whichever version you want, but be sure to get the Watson translation. Some of the older editions transliterate the name as *Chuang Tzu*) -This is available as an e-book through the library.
- Sugawara no Takasue no Musume. *The Sarashina Diary: A Woman's Life in Eleventh-Century Japan*. (Reader's Edition) Translated by Sonja Arntzen and Moriyuki Itō. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. Be sure to get this version, not the old Morris translation. -This is available as an e-book through the library.
- Fukuzawa Yukichi. *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*. Translated by Eiichi Kiyooka. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Again, this has been reprinted many times and an old edition is fine.
- Yang, Rae. *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. .
- This is available as an e-book through the library.

Note: There is no textbook for this class, but if you would like a good survey of East Asian history I recommend.

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, and James B Palais. *East Asia: a Cultural, Social, and Political History*. There are several editions of this

Topics and Readings

This class is fairly thematic. We will not be going through every emperor, shogun and war in East Asia, but we will be more or less chronological. Each segment of the class will focus on a theme that is particularly important during that period and throughout East Asian history. Each week you will need to read and think about at least one (sometimes more) of these readings before Monday. I would like to make this a discussion-based class, but that depends on you doing the reading. To do well on the exams and other assignments you will need to rely on the readings and your class notes. Taking notes in class is the most important way of thinking about what we are doing. Most days I will start the class by asking what the main things we learned last time were. If you can't look at your notes and answer that question you are probably doing something wrong.

Week 1 8/27 The World of the Ancestors

The Shang created the first "state" in East Asia, although the Shang royal system was as much a warrior clan as a state. This week we will look at the family as the model unit of political and social organization.

-[Selections from the Book of Songs](#) -*Songs* is one of the Five Classics and thus a foundational text in Chinese and East Asian culture. Although later thinkers would present it as a unified whole, it is in fact a hodgepodge of poems about different aspects of Shang and Zhou life.

Week 2 9/5 The World of the Sage

With the decline of the Zhou a new class of experts and texts emerged. Moral excellence and technical skills became something that could be learned from books and teachers. This week we will look at both what these teachers taught and also the teacher-student relationship and what a school of thought is.

-Selections from [Analects](#) The most important of the Chinese philosophical texts. We will go through most of this in class, but it would not hurt to read this beforehand.

-Selections from [Mencius and Xunzi](#) As *Analects* was not always entirely clear, the later members of the school had to fill in the gaps and explain things.

-Read *Zhuangzi* These are the core chapters of the most interesting of the Daoist texts (sorry, Laozi).

For our discussion day I would like you to write a short (500 words or so) essay in which you compare two or more of his stories. This book is mostly in the form of parables, all of which are making some point. Explain how two or more of them are making more or less the same point, or where they are disagreeing. (This is pretty easy, Zhuangzi contradicts himself a lot.) Before noon on the day before our discussion you should post your essay on our discussion board. Before midnight the day before our discussion you will need to post a short response to someone else's essay. This should either be adding another example to what they said (You are right! Here is another place where Zhuangzi says something like that) or something that contradicts them Be prepared to discuss what you have found in class.

Week 3 9/10 The World of the Court

The rulers of the Qin and Han transcended the old Shang family-state and the military warring state and created an Emperor and a court that were the center of the political and moral universe. We will look at the evolution of the court as the center of the elite world and the relationship between ruler and minister.

-'[Biography of Li Si](#)' From Sima Qian *Records of the Historian*. -Sima Qian was the model for all later Chinese historians, and this is his biography of Li Si, who was the Prime Minister to the First Emperor (the guy with the terracotta warriors.) Li Si is a fine example of a Legalist, and also of the small man that Analects warned us about.

-'[The Accomplished Rhetoricians](#)' from Kinney, Anne Behnke. *Exemplary Women of Early China: The Lienü Zhuan of Liu Xiang*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. These are from a Han collection of biographies of famous women.

-'[The Ruler's Techniques](#)' from *Huainanzi* This is basically *Emperor for Dummies*, from a Han dynasty text.

Week 4 9/17 Cosmopolitan China, Buddhists and the spread of civilization

After the Han China entered one of its most cosmopolitan period. Countless barbarians flowed into China as invaders, merchants, mercenaries and missionaries. We will look at both Sino-barbarian relations and the problems of trying to draw a sharp line between China and the rest of the world.

-Selections from the [Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch](#) -This is one of the key texts of Zen (Chan) Buddhism. This section deals mostly with the teacher-student relationship and what a school is.

-'[Family Instructions of the Yen Clan](#)', Guidelines for how an elite family was supposed to live.

-[Silla Buddhism](#)- Some readings on how Buddhism spread to Korea.

Each of you will write a source analysis on one of the sources we did over the last two weeks.

Week 5 9/24 The World of the poets and calligraphers

On the edges of China a series of states made the transition from clan-based to imperial rule. In Japan in particular the system that developed was quite different from that in China, and we will focus on the creation of Heian Japan and its culture.

"[Cult of beauty](#)" from Ivan Morris *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan* This is a secondary source (so you can't do a primary source analysis on it) describing the culture of Heian Japan, based on the *Tale of Genji*. This is an optional reading that you can do instead of/ as well as the introduction to *Sarashina Diary*

-Read *Sarashina Diary*

For our discussion day I would like you to write a short (500 words or so) essay in which you explain which two or more of the footnotes you found most helpful. The footnotes are pretty important in this book, since she often is not very direct. Pick out a footnote or two and explain how they helped you understand what was happening in the book. Before noon on the day before our discussion you should post your essay on our discussion board. Before midnight the day before our discussion you will need to post a short response to someone else's essay. This should either be adding another example to what they said (You are right! Here is another place where Sei says something like that.) or something that contradicts them. Be prepared to discuss what you have found in class.

Week 6 10/1 The world of warriors, nomads and pirates

At the end of the Heian period the *bushi* became far more prominent in Japan. We will look at warrior rule and what it meant in Japan, at the Mongols and their impact and the states that succeeded them, and at the pirate kings. While many histories leave the people on the borders of the major states out of their histories, they were quite important

-[Selections from Yoshitsune](#) This is a classic warrior story, the selection is about the death of Yoshitsune and Benkei.

-[Secret History of the Mongols](#) -A great description of the creation of a nomadic empire.

Week 7 10/8 The World of Rivers and Streams

From the Song on, a series of transformations in the economy and technology opened up new opportunities for those outside the elite. We will look at the nature of the Tang-Song transition and what we can learn about the lives of ordinary people during this period.

-["The Tiger Killers"](#) This is a story about bandits from one of the most popular works of Chinese vernacular culture, *Water Margin*. (This is from the Dent-Young translation)

-["Dou Yi"](#), A short biography of a Tang businessman that reveals a lot about the commercial and cosmopolitan economy of the capital.

Week 8 10/15 The World of the Shi

Shi is a Chinese term which is usually translated as "gentry." Yi Korea, Ming and Qing China and Tokugawa Japan were dominated by a bureaucratic elite that ran society both formally through the state and informally through their economic and cultural positions.

-Chong Yagyong on [Exam learning and the importance of study](#). He was an important Korean scholar.

-["The Luckless Scholar Rises in Life"](#) by Feng Menglong. This is a Ming short story about the exam system.

-Selections from [City and Country Life](#) by Ishida Baigan He was a Tokugawa period teacher who encouraged Confucian ideas among the merchant class.

Week 9 10/22 World of the Treaty Ports

Although foreigners had been coming to East Asia for centuries the period from 1400 on saw a great increase in the importance of maritime trade. We will examine conflict between Asian and foreign states and cooperation between individual people.

-["Opium and Orientalism"](#) This is an account of China from a foreign visitor.

-[Defending Confucian Orthodoxy](#) Some readings from Korea on the foreign threat.

Week 10 10/29 World of the Reformers

Throughout East Asia the challenge of imperialism led states and elites to launch radical programs for reform. The most successful of these reforms were in Japan, and the New Policies in China and developments in Korea were also influenced by Japan.

-Read *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi* He was the most famous interpreter of Western culture to Japan.

For our discussion day I would like you to write a short (500 words or so) essay in which you explain what Fukuzawa thought needed to change about Japan. Try to be as specific as possible. Where, exactly, in the text are you finding this? Before noon on the day before our discussion you should post your essay on our discussion board. Before midnight the day before our discussion you will need to post a short response to someone else's essay. This should either be adding another example to what they said (You are right! Here is another place where he says something like that) or something that contradicts them (Fukuzawa is actually more traditional than you might think, and his ideas changed a lot over time.) Be prepared to discuss what you have found in class.

Week 11 11/5 World of the Revolutionaries

In the early 20th century countless groups called themselves "revolutionaries" and offered radical and often violent solutions to Asia's problems. Governments, not surprisingly, replied with oppression.

-["The Henan Campaign"](#) from Zhu Qihua *China 1927: Memoir of a Debacle* Portland: Merwin Asia, 2013 This is about the 1927 Northern Expedition, and shows both the gap between the revolutionaries and the people and the problems among the revolutionaries.

-Kawakami Hajime "[A Letter from Prison](#)" Kawakami was one of the most important of Japan's radicals and was connected to many strands of thought over the course of his life.

-[Kita Ikki](#) "Outline plan for the Restoration of Japan" -Kita was a major inspiration for later Japanese ultra-militarism.

-Mao Zedong "[A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire](#)"

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_6.htm There is lots more Mao stuff on this site, and you can analyze something else if you wish.

-Lu Xun [Soap](#) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lu-xun/1924/03/22.htm>

This is a short story by one of China's most famous May 4th writers.

Week 12 11/12 War and the *kokutai*

The middle of the 20th century was not a great time to live in Asia. A militarist government dominated Japan, and a pair of party-states ran China and the two countries were at war.

-[Selections from](#) Cook, Haruko Taya, and Theodore F. Cook. *Japan at War: An Oral History*. New Press, 1993

-[Selections from](#) Li Danke *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010. -Both of these deal with the experience of ordinary people during wartime.

-Selections from Kang, Hildi. [Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945](#). Cornell University Press, 2005. These are accounts of life and education in colonial Korea, which show some of the reasons people would collaborate with an occupation government.

Week 13 11/26 World of the Party

After 1949 China was dominated by the Party, and we will be looking both at the influence of the party-state inside and outside China and its implications for the rest of Asia and the world.

Read -Read *Spider Eaters* There are lots of personal accounts of the Cultural Revolution, and this is one of the most accessible.

For our discussion day I would like you to write a short (500 words or so) essay in which you explain some of the reasons Rae Yang lost faith in the party. Try to be as specific as possible. Where, exactly, in the text are you finding this? Before noon on the day before our discussion you should post your essay on our discussion board. Before midnight the day before our discussion you will need to post a short response to someone else's essay. This should either be adding another example to what they said (You are right! Here is another place where he says something like that) or something that contradicts them Be prepared to discuss what you have found in class.

Week 14 12/3 World of the Salriman

Since 1945 a series of Asian economies have taken off, starting with Japan. We will examine both why this happened and what it has meant for the lives of people in Asia.

-[Selections from](#) Se-Hui, Cho. *The Dwarf*. -This is a Korean story about the people who are displaced by development.

-["Folding Beijing"](#) Hao Jingfang- <http://uncannymagazine.com/article/folding-beijing-2/>
This is a Chinese science fiction story set in the near future.

Final Exam

Grades

- First paper 20%
- Second paper 20%
- Source analysis papers 30%
- Final Exam 15%
- Quizzes 15% Everything else you do for this class is part of your quiz grade.

Papers

Each of you will write papers on two of our outside reading books. Papers will be due one week after we finish discussion of the book. I will pass out topics after our discussion. If you like you can do more than two and keep the high grades.

Exams

There will be a final exam, given during the final exam period. This will be a partially take-home and partially in-class exam.

Source analysis papers

Each of you will write at least three analysis papers on the source readings on the web page. If you wish you can write more and keep the high grades. Guidelines for this are on d21 Write-ups are due the Monday of the week after we discuss them. If you don't see anything you like on here, let me know, and I can find some other readings.

Quizzes

Anything else you do for this class is part of your quiz grade. This includes the map tests, in-class writing assignments and quizzes, and the various small writing assignments you may be asked to do. At the end of the semester I will total up the quiz points and set the highest number anyone got as 100%

Grading scale

90%+ =A

80-89% =B

70-79% =C

60-69% =D

Less than 60% =F

Attendance policy-- You are expected to come to class every day, but the point is not just to come to class, but to come having done your reading and being ready to talk about it. That said there is no penalty for not coming to class besides the fact that you will not learn anything. If you are not in class it is your responsibility to get the notes from a fellow student and find out what we did and be ready for any upcoming assignments.

-All work is due on the date announced. Almost all assignments are turned in on d2l. Without a medical or other official excuse quiz assignments cannot be turned in late. Other assignments (book papers, major essays) may be turned in late, but unexcused late work will be marked down one grade a day (90 becomes 85, etc.).

Writing statement -The History Department commits itself to developing the writing skills of students throughout the curriculum. In this class, you will complete writing assignments and activities designed to improve your ability to communicate in written formats.

Academic dishonesty-- All students are required to abide by the University's policies on Academic Integrity, as found in the catalog.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment and to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project.

Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the Department of Human Services (1-800-932-0313) and University Police (724-357-2141).

Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at:

<http://www.iup.edu/social-equity/policies/title-ix/>

Fall 2018