

History 206 History of East Asia



New Women, September 1933, Kwon Jinkyu Museum

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 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

-Ditter, Alexei, Jessey Choo, and Sarah Allen, eds. *Tales from Tang Dynasty China: Selections from the Taiping Guangji*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017.

This is a collection of some of the earliest “fictional” stories from China, and we will be using them to understand daily life, family, government, commerce and religion. Like a lot of early sources they are hard to understand if you don’t have a background, so it is important to pay attention to the introductions to the individual stories.

-Izumo, Takeda. *Chushingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers): A Puppet Play*. Translated by Donald Keene. New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.

The story of the 47 *ronin* is the most famous story about samurai in Japanese culture, and we will be looking at only one of the many versions of the story that were popular. We will primarily be interested in what it tells us about the samurai class and what it tells us about broader Tokugawa society.

-Yuasa, Katsuei. *Kannani and Document of Flames: Two Japanese Colonial Novels*. Translated by Mark Driscoll. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2005.

Our most polemical book, these two stories look at imperialism and colonialism in Korea. They are both good stories on the complexities of colonialism, including issues like class, gender and assimilation. We will also use this to discuss *tenka* and the rise of Japanese militarism.

-Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro *Son of the Revolution*. New York: Knopf, 1984

The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) had a massive effect on Chinese life, and it is usually what people are thinking about when they talk about Maoism. This book looks at how the Cultural Revolution destroyed Liang Heng’s family and how he lost faith in Mao and the revolution. Possibly our darkest book, and our best picture of a totalitarian state, but also possibly the easiest to relate to, since it is a coming of age story.

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 discuss at least one (sometimes more) of the readings before Monday's class. Readings will be posted on the Perusall site so that we can discuss them as a group.

Week 1 8/24 The Shang and 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, East Asian ideas about religion, and at the creation of "Chinese" culture.

-[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. This will be the first reading we will do on Perusall, and it could be the first reading you do a full source analysis for, if you choose. We will be reading in mainly to understand the importance of ritual and correlative thinking in Chinese society.

First Map Quiz-Provinces of China

Week 2 8/31 The Warring States and 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. All of our readings come from leading thinkers of the three main "schools of thought" of the period, Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism, and we will look at their answers to the two big questions that faced the elite in this period. How do we fix Chinese society, and how should you live your life?

-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. (If you are doing the Confucians as a source analysis you should probably do all of them together.)

-['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.

-[Selections from Zhuangzi](#) Zhuangzi is a pretty weird guy, who in some respects does not fit well with the other classic thinkers, but we will mostly be focusing on his ideas about non-action, which are probably the most relevant to the political and ethical issues that the others were dealing with.

Each of you will write a brief (2+ page) essay on one or more of these sets of thinkers. This is part of your quiz grade.

For this assignment you need to write a short essay aimed at a Warring States ruler. You need to try and convince him -EITHER- that one of these schools of thought has a good answer to the major questions of the day (How to run China, or how to live as a good person) -OR- explain the differences between any two or more of these thinkers or schools.

You will need to draw on the readings for this. What exactly are these people saying or what examples are they giving that help prove your points? Be sure to include some quotes from the people you are talking about, and think about some of the examples we talked about in class.

Week 3 9/9 The Han and 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.

-[“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. In these case they are famous elite women looking out for their families interests.

-[“The Ruler's Techniques”](#) from *Huainanzi* This is basically *Emperor for Dummies*, from a Han dynasty text that synthesizes a lot of classical philosophy.

Week 4 9/14 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. We will spend a lot of time on Buddhism, which became the main cultural force that tied East Asian societies together.

-[Readings on Korean Buddhism](#) -Showing both the importance of Buddhism and of the Chinese model more generally

-[Kukai](#)- An account written by an important early Japanese Buddhist

-[Family Instructions of the Yan Clan](#) -Chinese elite families began to fend for themselves more and more in the age of disunion. This makes a nice comparison with the Accomplished Rhetoricians from last week.

Week 5 9/30 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.

Read *Tales from Tang Dynasty*

9/23 Turn in Identification terms

For our mid-term assignment each of you will be writing a series of identification questions. I will give you a set of terms (People, events, ideas,) and you will have to write about a paragraph explaining what this thing is and why it matters. To make it more interesting, I would like you to select some possible terms and then you and your fellow students will vote on which ones I should use.

This is part of your quiz grade

Week 6 9/23 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.

-[Early Chinese Histories on Japan](#)-Accounts of early Japan from Chinese sources.

-[Taika Reform Edicts](#) -Some of the early edicts about reforming Japan along Chinese lines.

-[Selections from *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon*](#) Sei and her “things elegant and splendid” are the best example of the elite culture of poetry, art and literature of Japan and East Asia.

Week 7 10/7 The world of warriors and samurai

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, both at the time and as they are remembered today.

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

Read Chushingura

Week 8 10/14 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 10/21 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 10/28 World of the Reformers and Revolutionaries, Part One

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 *Kannani and Document of Flames*

Week 11 11/4 World of the Revolutionaries and Reformers, Part Two

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 [“My Views on Chastity”](#) and [“On Conducting Ourselves as Fathers today”](#)
Lu Xun was the most famous May Fourth writers, and here he tells about his ideas on family.

Week 12 11/11 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 11/18 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.

-[The Story of Iron Man Wang](#) from *China Reconstructs*, Sept, 1977. This is the story of a model worker at Daqing, China’s model industrial unit, from a propaganda magazine.

-[On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the people](#). Mao Zedong <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/index.htm>
Mao on how to deal with class politics in 1957. This is a fairly complex reading that may involve some research to figure out Mao’s points.

-[The Thirty-Six Stratagems](#) from Gao Yuan. *Born Red: A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987. The creation of the Red Guards in a school.

-Read *Son of the Revolution*

Week 14 12/2 World of the Salaryman

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.

-Krystn Lee Yang [“The Salaryman”](#) – A short story about being a businessman in Korea

-He Xinghan [“People of the Work Unit”](#) What a Chinese Work Unit was like. From Dutton, Michael. *Streetlife China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Final Exam

Grades

-First book paper 15%

-Second book paper 15%

-Source analysis papers 20% You will choose four of our short primary sources to write analysis papers on.

Note that 50% of your grade comes from the papers, and you can write as many as you want and keep the high grades.

-Reading discussions 21% Each week you will should discuss at least one of the assigned readings on Perusall. You need to do at least 10 of these discussions in the course of the semester, so a bit less than 1 a week. Each of these will be worth up to 3 points, so it is possible to get extra credit in this section

-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 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 take home exam, mostly essays and ID questions, just like the assignments we have done before.

Source analysis papers

Each of you will write at least four analysis papers on the source readings on the web page. You must do at least one of the source analysis papers before week 5. If you wish you can write more than three and keep the high grades. Guidelines for this are on d2l Write-ups are due the Monday of the week after we cover them. If you don't see anything you like on here, let me know, and I can find some other readings.

Reading discussions Each week you will have the opportunity to discuss our readings on Perusall. This is a great way to get me (or your fellow students) to help you understand difficult parts of the reading, or to work out what you would like to say about the reading in your analysis paper.

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%

Mid-term grades Each of you will receive a mid-term grade. This will be based on your quiz grade up to Week 6, and the first of your primary source papers (Even if you have already written more than one.) The purpose of mid-term grades is to let you know how you are doing in the class.

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 d21. 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/>

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