

The Chinese Pleasure Book topics **Asia 200**

Each of you may write a short 5-7+ page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due Monday, May 4th and should be turned in as a Word file on d2l. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-Nylan seems to think that there are a lot of similarities between these writers, to the point that we can talk about “pleasure theories in early China”. Do you agree? What is there that holds all these people together into a coherent group? Or is Nylan wrong, and there are important divisions among them?

-What does pleasure have to do with elite politics in this period? How do the things Nylan talks about help with things like creating political factions, getting a job, tying the empire together or whatever? The chapters on Mencius and Xunzi are probably the most important here.

-Nylan discusses a lot of things that are part of pleasure. Which are the most important of these for elite Chinese of this period? None of the people in the book would probably deny that the other stuff is important, but they are clearly making a case for something. Are the most important things well-chosen words and music? Friendship and Patterns of Brilliance? Pick at least two things and explain why they are the most important aspects of being a good person.

-Is this book really about pleasure, or is it about duty? Or something else?

-Most of the people in this book are male. Does this matter? Is this an exclusively male (or elite) idea of pleasure, or is it one that is theoretically open to anyone?

-In this book is pleasure something you do by yourself, or with others?

-How important are writing and language in this book? To what extent could an illiterate peasant (or a woman without a classical education) participate in these things?

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

-You need to have a thesis that provides a clear and significant **answer** to the question. Please underline your thesis statement.

-The body of the paper needs to have a **clear structure**. How are the points you are making advancing your argument? The paper should not be a list of observations but the clear development of your position. Some of these points must be more important than others, logically prior to others or whatever. You need some way to organize your ideas.

-The paper needs to be well-supported by **evidence** from the readings. Use quotes or references to show how your points are coming from the readings. You do not have to do outside research for this paper, but it helps. If you do outside research be sure to cite your sources properly. For citations of our readings a page number is fine (Satrapi p. 123).

Spring 2020

***Speed Tribes* topics**

Asia 200

Each of you may write a short 5-7+ page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due Monday, Feb 10, and should be turned in as a Word file on d2l. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-Would Joris Luyendik consider Greenfeld a good journalist? Is *Speed Tribes* a book that gets beyond the standard myths of Japan, or one that reinforces them?

-Is this book really about people rebelling against the system? Or is it really about how regimented and controlled even the “rebellious” parts of Japanese society are?

-To what extent are these really different ways of living, or just a phase that some of these people are going through? How many of these people are really outside the official Japanese system?

-Are these people really rebelling against the system? Or are they just as organized and hard-working as salaried men, just doing different things?

-Does it matter in this book if you are female? Or are opportunities pretty much the same for both genders?

-What is the Japanese government’s attitude towards the things going on in this book? Is this stuff illegal, and if so what does that mean and what is done about it?

-Based on what you found out in the on-line journalism stuff you wrote about, how much has Japan changed since this book was written? You will probably have to find more than one on-line thing for this.

-Klein discussed how James Michener tried to represent the “real” Asia to American audiences. What would he think of Greenfeld’s book? How similar are the two in their goals and methods?

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

-You need to have a thesis that provides a clear and significant **answer** to the question. Please underline your thesis statement.

-The body of the paper needs to have a **clear structure**. How are the points you are making advancing your argument? The paper should not be a list of observations but the clear development of your position. Some of these points must be more important than others, logically prior to others or whatever. You need some way to organize your ideas.

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Spring 2020

ASIA 200

Assimilating Seoul

Each of you may write a short 5-7+ page paper answering one of these questions. I would like each of you who are writing about this to turn in a draft paper as a Word file on d2l by noon, Friday 5/3. Ideally this should be a full draft, entirely complete with citations, a title and everything. If all you have is an outline or some ideas that is fine, but the more you give me to make suggestions on the more I can help. Turning in a full draft is worth up to 50 quiz points.

The final paper is due Monday, May 6. and should be turned in as a Word file on d2l. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-How much did war and independence change the city and its people?

-How did the Japanese government try to control and discipline Koreans? What were their main tools and methods and how effective were they?

-The title of the book is *Assimilating Seoul*. What does Henry mean by assimilation? Did Koreans assimilate, and if so, how?

-How did the relationship between Japan and the Koreans change in the course of the book? How do the settlers fit in?

-Orientalism, among other things, deals with the idea that colonized people are backwards and need to be helped to become civilized by the colonizers. Why did Japanese claim Koreans were backwards? How did they try to 'help'?

-Are the Koreans in this book collaborators? What does that mean, and how would people like the Korean medical students in the sanitation chapter respond to it?

-A lot of the things in this book deal with public spectacles. Parades, shrine festivals, expositions, lectures, etc. What purpose did these serve? What were the Japanese trying to do with these events, and what impact did they have?

-Why do *kisaeng* matter so much in this book?

-What role did Shinto and shrines play in changing Koreans?

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

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***Buddhist Fury* topics Asia 200**

Each of you may write a short 5-7 page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due one week from today. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-Are Thai Buddhist monks political or religious figures? Both? Neither?

-How do physical places, like Wats or Mosques or The Temple Mount/Dome of the Rock relate to religious conflict in our readings?

-The American model of religion is usually built around faith, reading stuff and believing in it. What other things can religious groups do/provide? Which of these are most important in defining them?

-It is acceptable for Buddhists to use violence? Why or why not?

-How similar are the Buddhists described by Jerryson and the Muslims described by McCargo?

-What caused the upsurge of violence in Southern Thailand?

-What is the Thai government's attitude towards Buddhism? How do members of the religions view the Thai state? (You can include Islam here as well.)

-Is *Buddhist Fury* really about religion at all? Why?

-What does religion have to do with identity? How do people use it to define themselves and their communities?

-How does Buddhism represent the Thai state? Is this controversial at all?

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

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Crossing the Bay of Bengal topics Asia 200

Each of you may write a short 5-7 page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due one week from today. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-James Scott talks about making society “legible”. How do governments try to do this around the Bay of Bengal? How well does it work?

-Were Chinese or Indian workers “free”, according to Adam McKeown and/or Sunil Amrith? How was freedom defined, and why did this matter?

-Both the kibbutz article and the “Oceans' Crossings” chapter deal with creating a new society in a new place. How different are these two examples? Specifically, how much does it matter that the kibbutz people were deliberately trying to create a new society and the Bay of Bengal migrants were not?

-What are the main similarities and differences between the push and pull factors that brought Japanese to Manchuria and “Indians” across the Bay of Bengal?

-The British Empire is very important in this book. What did the Empire think of all these migrants moving around? How did the British try and shape and control this movement and how well did it work?

-When was the Bay of Bengal world that Amrith talks about created? Why then? Or, when did it end, and why? Or you could do both in one essay.

-Which was the most important factor in creating or destroying the world of the Bay of Bengal that Amrith discusses: politics, economics, or culture?

-What effect did nationalism have on the Bay of Bengal world? How was nationalism different from some of the other ways of creating identity that were important in the Bay area?

-What is a diaspora? How does moving elsewhere change people and the society back home? (You could draw on Xu Guoqi for this.)

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

-You need to have a thesis that provides a clear and significant answer to the question. Please underline your thesis statement.

-The body of the paper needs to have a clear structure. How are the points you are making advancing your argument? The paper should not be a list of observations but the clear development of your position. Some of these points must be more important than others, logically prior to others or whatever. You need some way to organize your ideas

-The paper needs to be well-supported by evidence from the book. Use quotes or references to show how your points are coming from the readings. You don't need to do any outside reading, but it may help. Anything taken from an outside source needs a full citation. For things from our readings a page number in parenthesis is fine.

An Excess Male topics **Asia 200**

Each of you may write a short 5-7+ page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due one week from when we finish discussion, and should be turned in as a Word file on d2l. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-All of the men connected to the main family have other families. How do they create these and what do they get out of them? How do they provide things that the main family does not?

-May-ling is supposedly an in-demand commodity. How much control does she have over her family and life?

-If you assume that Chinese and Japanese families are both “East Asian” families (which is not entirely true, but run with it for now) how have the purpose and structure of families changed over time? If you want you can also deal with how probable you find King’s guesses about how this will change in the future.

-In these readings, is a family built around love, or around money? Or something else?

-How do governments and society influence the structure and functioning of families in these readings? How did people respond to this?

-What is the purpose of families in these readings? Note that there are a lot of things you can draw on in our readings. Pick the ones that work best for you, you don’t have to do all of them. You can also focus on their purpose for the people in them, or for society, or both.

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

-You need to have a thesis that provides a clear and significant **answer** to the question. Please underline your thesis statement.

-The body of the paper needs to have a **clear structure**. How are the points you are making advancing your argument? The paper should not be a list of observations but the clear development of your position. Some of these points must be more important than others, logically prior to others or whatever. You need some way to organize your ideas.

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***Night Draws Near* topics Asia 200**

Each of you may write a short 5-7 page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due one week from today. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

-What “went wrong” in Iraq, according to Shadid?

-What are the main social groups in Iraq during this period? How are their problems and attitudes different?

-Joris Luyendijk claimed that journalism is mostly the stuff editors think readers will be interested in, regardless of how accurately it portrays the society they are talking about. What are the questions Shadid thinks Americans have about Iraq? How does he answer them? Is he trying to get his readers to think about any other questions?

-As a journalist, Shadid was always trying to find people and sources that would help him say something about Iraq. What are the best interviews or sources he finds? What points does he make with them?

-Why are so many Iraqis unhappy with the Americans and the occupation by the end of the book? What do they do about it?

-Is Shadid like James Mitchner at all? How are their goals and methods in writing about the world similar or different?

-Choose one or more pieces of journalism on Iraq, and explain how they are similar or different to Shadid's approach and conclusions.

-How do Iraqis cope with the situations they find themselves in? How well does this work for them?

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

-You need to have a thesis that provides a clear and significant answer to the question. Please underline your thesis statement.

-The body of the paper needs to have a clear structure. How are the points you are making advancing your argument? The paper should not be a list of observations but the clear development of your position. Some of these points must be more important than others, logically prior to others or whatever. You need some way to organize your ideas

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***The Fat Years* topics**

Asia 200

Each of you may write a short 5-7 page paper answering one of these questions. Your paper should have a title and a clear thesis, which should be underlined. The paper needs to be clearly written and well-supported by evidence. The paper is due one week from today. Here are some possible topics you may use, but you can also come up with your own. If you do come up with your own topic be sure to clear it with me first.

- According to the author, are Chinese people willing to accept being 90% free? Why? What does being 90% free even mean?
- Most of the characters in this book are intellectuals. What does this mean, and what do these sorts of people do or not do in China?
- How is the vision of China's future in "Folding Beijing" different from that in *The Fat Years*? How similar are they?
- Who are the most important characters in the story, and how do they help the author make his point? What is that point anyway?
- How free are the Chinese people in *Fat Years*? How does the party control people? How well does it work?
- Why does Lao Chen fall in love (or back in love) with Little Xi? How does this change him?
- Why do Lao Chen and Little Xi leave China? Why do others not?
- What role do the Party and its members play in this story and in China?
- According to He Dongsheng, how did China manage to enter its Golden Age of Ascendancy?
- This book was banned in China. Write a memo to the Politburo explaining why it should not be, and why in fact this book is one the Party should be fine with.

-Your grade on the paper will be based on the quality of your argument and how well you support it with evidence.

-You need to have a thesis that provides a clear and significant answer to the question. Please underline your thesis statement.

-The body of the paper needs to have a clear structure. How are the points you are making advancing your argument? The paper should not be a list of observations but the clear development of your position. Some of these points must be more important than others, logically prior to others or whatever. You need some way to organize your ideas

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