

# HIST 096/EALC 41 LATE IMPERIAL CHINA

Fall 2005

Tuesday/Thursday 3:00-4:30 PM, TOWN 303

Prof. Siyen Fei

Office: College Hall 218

Office number: 215-898-3068

Email: [siyen@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:siyen@sas.upenn.edu)

Office hours: Wed 4:30-5:30 PM or by appointment

From an Eurasian empire ruled by Mongols to an ethnically defined Han-Chinese Ming dynasty, then again to a multi-ethnic empire ruled by a minority group of Manchus, the disruptions and transformations in the very idea of “China” in the past seven centuries defies our modern notion of China as a unitary nation with the world’s longest continuous cultural tradition. How to understand the continuities and discontinuities of the last three imperial dynasties of China will be the central focus of our survey.

With no assumption of prior knowledge, lectures open with an overview of Chinese society before the eve of the Mongolian invasion, and then trace the changing visions of ethnic and social orders in the subsequent regimes ruled by three different ethnic groups (Mongolian, Han Chinese, and Manchurian). We will examine and compare bureaucratic operations, cultural ideals, domestic and international policies from above as well as the daily life experiences from below. The course will conclude with an analysis of the collapse of the imperial order at the beginning of the twentieth century, after it was severely challenged by a semi-Christian Utopian movement from within and global drug trade imperialist attacks from without.

**Textbooks** (textbooks are available at Penn Book Store, 3601 Walnut Street and on reserve at Van Pelt Library, Rosengarten Reserve room)

1. F.W. Mote, 2003, *Imperial China, 900-1800*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. DS750.64 .M67 1999.
2. Feng Menglong, 1958, *Stories from a Ming Collection*, translations of Chinese short stories published in the seventeenth century, by Cyril Birch. London: Bodley Head and Grove Press. PL2658.E8 F4 1968.
3. Jonathan D. Spence, 1978, *The Death of Woman Wang*. New York: Viking Press. HQ1767 .S63.
4. Philip A. Kuhn, 2005, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. JQ1508 .K84 1990.
5. Jonathan D. Spence, 1997, *God's Chinese Son: the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*. New York: W.W. Norton. DS758.23.H85 S64 1996.
6. Supplementary readings will be available on course website (<https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu>).

## Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

1. Attendance and participation (30%), including:

All listed readings are required (except for the ones marked [R] which are recommended) and should be brought to class for discussion. Specific study questions will be announced to guide your reading and to focus in-class discussion. We will occasionally have exercises or activities in class. For example, we may hold mini-debates, role play, or you may be asked to sum up the previous lecture or the required readings at the beginning of class from time to time. You will lose 3 points each time you fail to participate.

2. Empirical foundation (30%):

This includes a midterm (15%), and final exam (15%). Exam questions are basically designed to test your ability to identify and state the facts and significance of specific historical periods/events/figures/primary sources.

3. Analysis and synthesis (30 %):

During the course of the semester, you are expected to work on a term paper project (12-15 pages) due on Dec 9<sup>th</sup>. The project should compare the three Chinese empires (Yuan, Ming, and Qing) based on what we read and discuss during this semester. A draft of the first half of the paper (5-7 pages) will be due in week 7 (Oct 20<sup>th</sup>) that addresses the changes and/or continuities between the Yuan and Ming empires in any aspect you choose (political, cultural, or social). Based on the nature of your topic, you will be assigned into a group to present the preliminary findings in class in week 8 (10%). Your first draft will receive comments but no grade.

4. Academic Integrity: please read the university guidelines carefully

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>. Any violation will result in a failing grade and subject to disciplinary actions.

5. Late papers will be downgraded 5 points every day after the deadline. Exceptions will only be made for documented emergencies. Please note that percentages aside, all requirements listed above must be fulfilled in order to pass the course. Failure in any segment (missing an exam, not handing in papers, missing more than two sections...) will result in failure of the whole course.

## Weekly Schedule

### WEEK I: Introduction

Thursday (9/8)      *Does History Matter? From Kaifeng to Shanghai*

#### READINGS:

- Nicholas D. Kristof, “China, the World's Capital,” *The New York Times*, 22 May 2005 and multi-media “Kaifeng-on-the-Hudson.”
- Shanghai: The New World Capital, <http://www.time.com/time/asia/covers/501040927/>

### WEEK II: China on the Eve of the Mongolian Invasion

Tuesday (9/13)      *Video Showing: Storm from the East*

What are the differences between steppe and agricultural regimes? How do these disparities relate to their life styles?

Thursday (9/15)      *Time and space overview*

#### READINGS:

- Mote, Ch 15 and skim Ch 16: Judging from the interstate situation in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, what were the challenges and models for the Mongolian rulers?

### WEEK III: The Mongols

Tuesday (9/20)      *On the Eve of the Mongolian Invasion*

Thursday (9/22)      *Defining the Inner Asian Frontier and the Mongol Moment*

#### READINGS:

- Mote, Ch 17-18.
- Four examination essays from the Ming  
By reading these winning examination essays, can you tell what kind of training and expertise it took to pass the exam? How well did these skills prepare the candidates to govern the empire?
- Selections from *The Secret History of the Mongols*.
- Marco Polo, “From Peking to Amoy,” from *The Travels*.  
Compare the accounts of Marco Polo and the description of Southern Song society by Mote we read earlier. Do you think Marco Polo actually went to China? How should historians make use of his accounts as historical source?
- What is the legacy of the Mongol period in world history? Is the Washington Post right in electing Chinggis Khan “The Man of the Millennium?”
- [R] William of Rubruck's Account of the Mongols
- [R] <http://www.npm.gov.tw/english/exhibition/e-grass09/grass.htm>  
The genealogy of steppe peoples on the Chinese frontier.

## WEEK IV: The Yuan Dynasty: A Multi-cultural Empire

Tuesday (9/27)     *Becoming an Emperor of China*

Thursday (9/29)     *The Fall of the Mongolian Empire*

### READINGS:

- ❑ Mote Ch 19-20.
- ❑ “Grandee’s son takes the wrong career,” in *Eight Chinese Plays from the Thirteenth Century to the Present*, translated by William Dolby. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.
- ❑ The examination debate under Khubilai.
- ❑ <http://www.npm.gov.tw/english/exhibition/eage1010/module1.htm>

Art in a multi-ethnic empire: look at the on-line exhibition and choose one piece of artwork that you feel best characterizes the spirit of the Yuan-Mongolian era.

## WEEK V: The Ming Recreation of the Chinese and the World Order

Tuesday (10/4)     *Zhu Yuanzhang and his Vision of the Ming Empire*

Thursday (10/6)     *The Second-Founding of the Ming and Zheng He’s Treasure Fleet*

### READINGS:

- ❑ Mote, pp. 541-582, 598-617, 636-646, “Mechanics of Government.”
- ❑ Zhu Yuanzhang, *The Placard of People’s Instructions*

What were Taizu's main concerns in his *Instructions*? What was Taizu's vision for local societies? What did he believe was the proper role for the state? What are the similarities and differences between Taizu's various instructions and proclamations and modern-day national constitutions?

- ❑ The Zheng He controversy: look at the following websites and make a list of the points of contention as well as its supporting evidence, and try to determine the value of Menzies’ project.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2446907.stm>

<http://www.1421.tv>

<http://www.kenspy.com/Menzies/Ships.html>

- ❑ [R] 1421: the year China discovered America [PBS documentary]

## WEEK VI: Chinese Society in the Long Sixteenth Century

Tuesday (10/11)     *The Vernacular World View*

Thursday (10/13)     *The Fall of the Ming and the Seventeenth-Century Crisis*

**READINGS:**

- ❑ Mote, Ch 27, 29.
- ❑ Cynthia Brokaw, “Ledgers of Merit and Demerit.”
- ❑ Feng Menglong, *Stories from a Ming collection* and *Preface to the Mountain Songs*.

Find examples from these stories that might represent common people’s views toward life, marriage, family, work, wealth, social class...etc.

**WEEK VII: Mid-term review and exam**

*Tuesday (10/18) Fall Break, no class, essay #1 due on Blackboard*

*Thursday (10/20) Mid-Term Exam*

**WEEK VIII: The Manchu Conquest and Dynastic Transition**

*Tuesday (10/25) Group Presentation: Empires in Comparison: Mongol-Yuan and Ming*

*Thursday (10/27) Dynastic Transition: a Psychological Portrait of Memory and Trauma*

**READINGS:**

- ❑ Lynn Struve, “An artist’s filial trek,” and “Father and son choose opposite sides” in *Voices of Ming-Qing Cataclysm* and “Zhang Maozi: A record of life beyond my due.”

How did dynastic transition impact people’s psychology?

- ❑ Mote, pp. 781-784, dynastic cycle?

**WEEK IX: The Manchu Empire**

*Tuesday (11/1) The Qing Success Story?*

*Thursday (11/3) Imposing a Vision of Moral Order on Local Society*

**READINGS:**

- ❑ Mote, Ch 33-34.
- ❑ Spence, *The Death of Women Wang*.

What kind of sources does Spence use? What conclusions concerning seventeenth-century China does he draw from them? What are the potentials and limitations of Spence's brand of history?

- ❑ Li Yu, “An actress scorns wealth and honor to preserve her chastity.”
- ❑ [R] *In Praise of Martyrs: Widow Suicide in Late Imperial China*.

**WEEK X: High Qing and Its Shadows (soul stealer)**

*Tuesday (11/8) Qianlong and his Cultural Enterprise: Building a Universal Empire*

*Thursday (11/10) Soulstealers: Role Play*

*READINGS:*

- Mote, Ch 35.
- Palace memorials from the Qing court:  
<http://www.npm.gov.tw/exh93/king9304/content.html>
- Philip A. Kuhn, 2005, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

**WEEK XI: Traditional Chinese World Order at Crisis**

*Tuesday (11/15) The Rise of the Opium Regime*

*Thursday (11/17) An Age of Internal Turmoil*

*READINGS:*

- Mote, Ch 36.
- Spence, "Opium in China," in *Chinese Roundabout*.
- Start reading: Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (missionary in China).

**WEEK XII: Heavenly Kingdom?**

*Tuesday (11/22) Taiping Rebellion*

*Thursday (11/24) Thanksgiving Break*

*READINGS:*

- Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*.

**WEEK XIII: On the Edge of Revolution**

*Tuesday (11/29) The Boxer Rebellion, L'oeil du consul: Through the Consul's Eye*

*Thursday (12/1) Reform and Revolution*

*READINGS:*

- R. Keith Schoppa, "The decline of the traditional state, 1780-1901," in *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*.

**WEEK XIV: Final review and in-class exam**

*Tuesday (12/6) Review: the End of the Chinese Empire*

*Thursday (12/8) In-class final exam*

*Friday (12/9) Final paper due at College Hall 218*