

ASH 3990 AD: Traditional China

Right and wrong, success and failure—these are all empty
The green mountain ever remains
Even the most brilliant sunset soon fades to darkness
--*Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms*

Monday 12-2:45 (Building 51, Room 1102)

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Course Description

Traditional China evokes a vision of a virtuous emperor in the center, who, with the help of a cumbersome bureaucracy, broadcasts to the empire timeless Confucian ethical principles such as loyalty and filial piety, so as better to govern a stable and compliant agrarian society. Fortunately, this apparently rigid mold proves, more often than not, to be plastic. Broken up by periods of chaos and upheaval, traditional China, in fact, features a flamboyant pageant of characters--megalomaniacal emperors, devious palace women, sycophantic poets, wandering scholars, calculating merchants, scheming ministers, Daoist mystics, and rebel peasants who claim appointment from Heaven—who collectively flaunted, challenged, and reshaped its structure.

Course Parameters

Chinese History I (Traditional China) begins a two-semester survey of Chinese history. The course traces Chinese civilization from its pre-historical origins to end of the 18th century. It is designed to provide the student with an understanding of the historical evolution of China's cultural, economic, political and intellectual traditions. This course investigates the construction—the political and ideological underpinnings--of the three core institutions of Chinese civilization: the patriarchal family, the bureaucracy and the imperial monarchy. These institutions form a political, social and ethical ideal, an ideal rarely realized and often corrupted to fit the needs of those in power.

We will analyze the alternately complementary and contradictory relationships between a series of important paired concepts: state and family, civil and military, Chinese and non-Chinese peoples, *yin* and *yang*. How were Chinese histories constructed? What does this tell us? What was the relationship between history and legend in traditional China?

Objectives

1. Developing an understanding of central themes and topics of political and social institutions in imperial China.
2. Gaining a greater appreciation of the depth and diversity of the Chinese culture and the Chinese people.
3. Develop skills in critical and analytical thinking.

4. Gain a new perspective on history. History is about context. The facts, dates and names, stripped of context, are meaningless and dull.
5. Improve skills in writing history papers.

Disability statement

Students with disabilities who seek reasonable accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework must first register with the UNF Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in Building 10, Room 1201. DRC staff members work with students to obtain required documentation of disability and to identify appropriate accommodations as required by applicable disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After receiving all necessary documentation, the DRC staff determines whether a student qualifies for services with the DRC and if so, the accommodations the student will be provided. DRC staff then prepares a letter for the student to provide faculty advising them of approved accommodations. For further information, contact the DRC by phone (904) 620-2769, email (kwebb@unf.edu), or visit the DRC website (<http://www.unf.edu/dept/disabled-services>).

Course Expectations

1. Attendance. It is important. Participation and attendance is 20% of the grade!
2. Bring an active and limber mind to class. While I will launch into five to fifteen minute mini-lectures from time to time, I am not going to lecture for two and a half hours. Be ready to participate, to ask questions and to answer questions. I will provide thought-provoking questions to prompt conversation. Your engagement and participation can make the class better.
3. Complete the readings. If you have done the reading and engaged your mind in the material, it will make it much easier for you to contribute to discussion.
4. Complete assignments in timely fashion.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating may be grounds for failing the course. Penalties for plagiarism and academic dishonesty can be found on-line at <http://www.unf.edu/clifford/ca1.html>.

Classroom Decorum:

- *No visible or audible cell phones. I do not like cell phones.
- *Arrive on time and stay for the duration. Late arrivals and early departures distract classmates and teachers alike. .
- *If you must eat and drink, do so quietly and unobtrusively.

Assignments/Grading Breakdown

Participation/Attendance: 20%

Midterm: 20% (10/15)

Papers (3), 2 short 5-page (15 %/each, due 10/1 and 10/29) and one long (30%, 10-15 page), due 12/10 at high noon. Topics TBA.

Required Texts

Luo Guanzhong, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Moss Roberts trans., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Rossabi, Morris, *Khubilai Khan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

Spence, Jonathan, *Emperor of China*, (New York: Random House, 1988).

Hansen, Valerie, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600*, (New York: WW Norton, 2000).

Schneewind, *Tale of Two Melons*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006).

Van Gulik, *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*, (Dover, 1976)

Sunzi, *The Art of War* (Cleary trans.), (New York: Shambhala Pocket Classics).

Topics and Readings (subject to changes/additions)

August 27 Introduction, Geography and Language

For 9/10: (www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html)

Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600*, 1-53.

Excerpt from *Book of History*, "Tribute of Yu" (Handout)

Art, Myth and Ritual (Blackboard)

September 10 From Oracle Bones to the Nine Tripods

For 9/17: Confucius, *The Analects*

Sunzi, *The Art of War*

Hansen, 55-95

September 17 War and Peace: Sunzi and Confucius

For 9/24: Cotterel, Arthur, *The First Emperor of China*, (New York: Penguin, 1983), 16-32 (Bb).

selections from Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*

Hansen, 97-111

September 24 The Great Wall, the Terracotta Soldiers and the Tiger of Qin

For 10/1: "The Grand Historian" folder (Bb), selections from Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian* and Loewe, *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*, 137-151

Hansen, 112-149

October 1 The Great Han Empire in the Eyes of the Grand Historian

For 10/8: "Chinese Buddhism," Blackboard

Hansen, 150-190

Luo Guanzhong, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Moss Roberts trans.

www.kongming.net

October 8 **Three Kingdoms: Legend and History**

For 10/15: Blackboard Folder: Articles by Debary and Hinsch

October 15 **Women and Gender in Imperial China**

**Midterm

For 10/22: excerpts from Schafer, Edward H. *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*, 7-39, 258-264. (Bb)

excerpts from the *Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry* (Bb)

Han Yu, "The Memorial on the Bone of the Buddha" (Bb)

Hansen, 191-220

Chen, "Empress Wu and Proto-Feminist Sentiments in T'ang China" (Bb)

Jowen Tong, *Fables for the Patriarchs*, 83-100, 143-168 (Bb)

October 22 **Tang China, An Open Empire**

For 10/29 Hansen, 221-297.

Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty*, 29-53.

October 29 **The Small Empire—Song China**

For 11/5 Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*

Hansen, 299-367

November 5 **The "Barbarian" Paradigm**

For 11/19 Schneewind, *A Tale of Two Melons*

Hansen, 369-407

November 19 **The Ming Dynasty—An Open and Shut Case**

For 11/26 Van Gulik, *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*

November 26 **Law and Order in Traditional China**

For 12/3 Spence, Jonathan, *Emperor of China*

December 3 **Kang Xi, a Model of Imperial Kingship**