

History 205, Traditional China, Fall Semester 2008, M/W/F 1:00-1:50 pm

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Office: Clough Hall 301, Fridays 2-4 pm and by appointment

This syllabus and all course materials are available on Moodle

(This syllabus is subject to revision at the professor's discretion)

Course Description

Beginning with the earliest evidence of human civilization in the region, this course traces the emergence of political states within China and their eventual unification into a single empire, an institution that persisted for millennia. Throughout this process the development of literature, religion, philosophy, and material culture in Chinese society all played a role in shaping the character of what became modern China. (As the first of a two part series, this course is followed by Modern China offered spring semester).

Course Goals

Although the subject for the course is Traditional China, the main point of the course is not to know everything about Traditional China, which would be impossible in any case, but to offer a general survey and additionally provide some depth by focusing on a limited number of important themes. This is achieved through critical analysis of primary sources and discussion of specialized readings. Through this method and not lecture alone, it is expected that students will not only gain factual knowledge related to Chinese history but also acquire an interest in learning independently by asking and seeking answers to *their own* questions, learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas and points of view, and learning to express themselves both orally and in writing.

Grades

To achieve the course goals, grades are based on performance in a variety of areas:

20% of the final grade is based on daily participation in discussions; this includes bringing to *each* class five well thought out questions for potential discussion, and then actively participating in the discussions. Occasionally students will have the opportunity to lead these discussions. Discussions are intended to provide opportunities to give verbal expression to thoughts and to exchange ideas with peers and the instructor.

20% is based on occasional writing exercises. These are intended to assist in the absorption and synthesis of the material and in achieving the course goal of learning to articulate ideas in writing.

20% is based on occasional short quizzes that draw from the readings and lectures. Quizzes are designed to reward diligence and consistency in study.

20% is based on midterm paper and presentation. The midterm essay is essentially a preliminary version of the final paper discussed below.

20% is based on final capstone essay and presentation. Refer to the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* for assistance, and please also feel free to use the Rhodes Writing Center in Barret 122 in the process of drafting and revising papers. The two possible questions for the final exam are provided below:

FINAL ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 1) In the course of its development, China has seen many changes (political, cultural, linguistic, economic, geographic, and otherwise) yet the Chinese themselves have tended to see continuity across the centuries. How is China of 1600 different from earlier periods and how is it the same? Do you see greater continuity or change?

OR

- 2) What have we covered in this semester (event, person, philosophy, etc.) that especially captured your interest and why? Draw from the assigned readings as well as at least one *published* outside source (book or article) in composing a ten page essay on your chosen topic, providing a summary definition of the subject, historical context, and explaining the significance.

In general, Papers are graded on a 20 point scale according to the following schema:

2 points – thesis statement (A clear, concise statement of no more than one sentence answering the exam question).

2 points – outline (Use the first page in the blue book. One sentence per essay paragraph for a total of 5-7, including one each for introduction and conclusion. See attached handout as an example).

2 points – introduction (Opening paragraph of your essay introduces the topic, states your thesis, and provides a preview of the paper's main points).

2 points – conclusion (Last paragraph of the essay recapitulates your thesis, summarizes the main points and ties the essay together)

2 points – mechanics (Paragraphs, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)

2 points – persuasiveness (Is your argument believable? Do you include adequate evidence?)

2 points – organization (Follow your outline. Is there natural progression? Or is it a jumble of unrelated ideas?)

2 points – focus (Stick to the topic, no rambling. Leave out extraneous or irrelevant material, even if it is true. Whatever you say must clearly support your argument).

4 points – evidence/support (Refer to specific examples covered in the lectures or readings to support your argument)

Be sure to begin the first page with a thesis statement and outline. What I don't want is free association writing without any forethought, or unsubstantiated opinion, such as "I think." **Remember**, this exam is an argument-driven essay, not a survey of the literature we have covered. Refrain from summarizing everything we have covered; rather, be selective about which examples you cite in supporting your main point. This is the FOCUS portion of your grade as stated in the essay study guide above. Please review this study guide and the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* for assistance. This may save you time and effort and will certainly produce better essays.

Course Texts

Loewe, Robert. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*. Hackett, 2005.

Ebrey, Patricia, ed. *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. New York: The Free Press, 1993.

Hansen, Valerie. *The Open Empire*. New York: WW Norton, 2000.

Van Gulik, Robert. *The Chinese Gold Murders*. Harper Paperbacks, 2004.

Waley, Arthur. *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*. Stanford University Press, 1982.

(any additional readings will be available on Moodle)

Policies

In this course we are committed to Rhodes standards: "Freedom of thought, a civil exchange of ideas, and an appreciation of diverse perspectives are fundamental characteristics of a community that is committed to critical inquiry. To promote such an academic and social environment we expect integrity and honesty in our relationships with each other and openness to learning about and experiencing cultural diversity" (Student Handbook 27). In this spirit, this class is to provide a safe space for critical thinking and the free exchange of ideas.

The Honor System: As a Rhodes student you are committed to the Honor Code. Students should be clear about what constitutes plagiarism and cheating, and should refrain entirely from engaging in either. Please review the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* pages 37-40. Any violation will be reported to the Honor Council which will then take appropriate action.

Disabilities: Any documented disabilities will be accommodated. This should be done through the Student Disability Services Office who will then work with the instructor to make any recommended

accommodations for the student. See www.rhodes.edu/disability or the *Student Handbook* page 8. Note that it is the responsibility of the student to obtain any necessary documentation and work through the Disability Office; the instructor merely complies with requests from the office.

Attendance: “Students enrolled at the institution make a commitment to participate fully in their education, which includes attending classes. Absenteeism is not to be taken lightly” (*Student Handbook* 12). Besides missing participation points, chronic absences will be noted by the instructor and your grade will suffer.

In-class behavior: Use of cell phones for speaking or texting, newspapers or other unrelated readings, and other distractions such as private conversations ARE NOT ALLOWED in the classroom. During class time, your classmates and the instructor expect that you will be engaged in the course and not serve as a hindrance to teaching or learning.

Making up work: As a policy I do not allow the “making up” of assignments, papers, exams, or even classroom participation. In *documented* cases of extenuating circumstances (i.e. emergency hospitalization) the instructor will make reasonable accommodations. No exceptions.

Availability: If I am in my office with the door open, feel free to stop in, but understand that I do teach two other courses and am not always available. My office hours are Fridays 2:00-4:00 pm; please use that time to visit with me if at all possible. If this does not work with your schedule, I am willing to meet by appointment. I do check email at least once a day, and I will respond within twenty-four hours, but do not expect a response the same day. If you have a genuine emergency please contact the department secretary, Ms. Heather Holt, who can then get in touch with me.

Reading Schedule

Week 1 (Aug 27, 29): Introduction and Prehistory

*Mon 1st NO CLASS

Week 2 (Sep 3, 5): Beginnings of Chinese History: The Shang Dynasty

Hansen 1: (pp 3-53); Ebrey (pp 1-13); de Bary (supplemental)

Week 3 (Sep 8, 10, 12): The Zhou Dynasty

Hansen 2: (pp. 55-95); Ebrey (pp 14-45); di Cosmo (supplementary)

Week 4 (Sep 15, 17, 19): Competing Philosophies: Taoism, Confucianism

Waley (pp 1-100); short essay exercise on philosophies due on the 26th.

*Mon 22nd NO CLASS. Watch film Hero available in streaming format on Moodle.

Week 5 (Sep 24, 26): Competing Philosophies 2: Confucianism and Legalism (Realism)

Waley 100-198; short essay exercise on philosophies due Friday 26th.

Week 6 (Sep 29, Oct 1, 3): Creating an Empire

Hansen 3 (pp 97-149); Ebrey (pp 47-85). Supplemental "Jing Ke Biography," "Jing Ke Comic Book Story," and "Jing Ke poem". Midterm essay topic announced.

Week 7 (Oct 6, 8, 10): Everyday Life in Early Imperial China

Loewe (17-107); supplemental "Han Dynasty Instructions for Women"; Emperor and the Assassin

Week 8 (Oct 13, 15, *17): Everyday Life pt. 2

Loewe (108-199); Emperor and the Assassin

*Midterm Oct 17th, midterm essay papers due at the beginning of class.

*Mon 20th NO CLASS

Week 9 (Sep 22, 24): Buddhism Enters China

Hansen 4 (pp. 153-189); Ebrey (pp 87-111); supplemental "The Lotus Sutra"

Week 10 (Sep 27, 29, 31): China's Golden Age

Hansen 5 (pp 191-219); van Gulik (pp 1-30); supplemental "Classical Poetry" and poem composition exercise

Week 11 (Nov 3, 5, 7): Demise of the Tang Dynasty

Hansen 6 (pp 221-258); Ebrey (pp 112-136); van Gulik (pp. 31-103)

Week 12 (Nov 10, 12, 14): Song Dynasty

Hansen 7 (pp 261-297); Ebrey (pp 137-171); van Gulik (pp. 104-145)

Week 13 (Nov 17, 19, 21): Northern Dynasties

Hansen 8 (299-333); Ebrey (172-191); van Gulik (146-202)

Week 14 (Nov 24): The Mongols

Hansen 9 (335-367)

*Nov 26, 28 NO CLASS

Week 15 (Dec 1, 3, 5): Ming Dynasty

Hansen 10 (369-407); Ebrey (192-266); supplemental "Journey to the West" and "Romance of the Three Kingdoms"

Week 16 (Dec 8): Exam Preparation

***Finals**