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 ATTRIBUTES

This course fulfills requirements for F3 - Historical Forces; F9 - Cultural Perspectives; non-Western histories (Asia, Africa, Middle-East); Periods prior to 1500 CE; and Humanities credits.

COURSE GOALS

Although the subject for the course is Traditional China, the main point of the course is not to know everything about Chinese history, which would be impossible in any case, but to offer a general chronological narrative from the textbook and lectures while providing additional depth by focusing on a limited number of important events and major 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 come to appreciate both the uniqueness of Chinese culture and the universality of the human experience.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This class meets two days a week: Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the interest of variety, Tuesdays typically involve a Powerpoint presentation that complements the text reading for that week, while Thursdays are usually devoted to discussion of primary source readings.

Exams: Two exams will be given in the course of the semester—a midterm and a final, each worth 50 points of your final grade for a total of 100 points. Both exams involve multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. As with quizzes, the reading guides posted on Moodle assist in preparation
for the exams. The final exam is cumulative; however, at the end of the term, any student with an “A” (93% or above) may opt out of the final exam and retain their A grade.

**Quizzes:** A schedule of reading assignments, including text and supplemental readings, is provided below and must always be completed before class. Use the weekly readings guides posted on Moodle to prepare for quizzes. One quiz will be administered nearly every week for a total of eleven, with the lowest quiz score dropped at the end of the semester. Each quiz is worth 10 points, for a semester total of 100 points possible. Each quiz involves five questions covering material from the previous presentation and/or current reading assignments, except for the map quiz based on the map items. Quiz points steadily accumulate and, as such, are designed to reward diligence and consistency.

**Participation:** 20 points based on participation in class, 10 points before midterm and 10 after. Regular and informed contribution to discussions, and the quality of contribution, will be regularly assessed. Persistent silence and unpreparedness disqualify one from participation credit. Be sure to come prepared with textbook and supplemental readings for reference. Occasional presentations to the class on assigned topics fall into the Participation category.

**Papers:** 10 points each for occasional writing exercises, including essay response to one feature film. These are intended to provide an opportunity for creatively engaging the course material. Select one feature film (not documentary) offered during the semester and, after viewing, write a 2-3 page essay analyzing the message it conveys to a contemporary audience—in other words, how do Chinese make their history relevant and meaningful today? Paper must be turned in by Friday of that week.

**Current scores** will be posted on Moodle with your aggregate grade to date automatically figured and displayed.

**COURSE TEXTS**


(all additional readings will be available digitally on Moodle)

**FILMS (available both on Moodle or in the Media Center. Asterisk denotes film is not eligible for essay)**

*Mysterious Mummies of China, Confucianism and Taoism, Emperor and the Assassin, Red Cliff (Chibi),
*Hero, Curse of the Golden Flower, House of Flying Daggers, Mongol: Rise of Genghis Khan
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 this 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). While I seldom take roll, chronic absences will naturally affect your grade adversely.

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: Because I allow you to drop your lowest quiz score, 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.

Availability: If I am in my office with the door open, you are welcome to stop in. Understand, however, that I do teach three courses and am not always in. To ensure availability please use my office hours if at all possible. If this does not work for your schedule, I am happy to meet by appointment. I check email daily, but do not expect an immediate response. If you have a genuine emergency please contact the department secretary, Ms. Heather Holt, who can then get in touch with me.

Reading Schedule

Documentary film *Mysterious Mummies of China* available for viewing on Moodle.

Week 2 (Sep 1, 3): Beginnings of Chinese History: The Shang Dynasty

Hansen 1: (pp 3-53); “Divining with Oracle Bones”

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

Hansen 2: (pp. 55-95); “The Metal Bound Box,” “The Book of Changes,” “Book of Songs”

Week 4 (Sep 15, 17): The Axial Age: Daoism, Confucianism and Legalism (Realism)

“Confucianism,” “Daoism,” “Legalism”; Waley (pp 1-75); note: short essay exercise on philosophies due on Thursday the 24th. The documentary *Confucianism and Taoism* is available in streamed format on Moodle for optional viewing.

Week 5 (Sep 22, 24): The Axial Age 2: Daoism, Confucianism and Legalism (Realism)

Waley 76-150; Waley 151-end, short essay exercise on philosophies due Thursday 24th.

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

Hansen 3 (pp 97-149); “Heaven, Earth, and Man,” “Classic of Filial Piety,” “Women’s Virtues and Vices.” Feature film *Emperor and the Assassin* available for viewing.

Week 7 (Oct 6, 8): Buddhism Enters China


*Week 8 (Oct 13, 15): 13th midterm exam; NO CLASS 15th—Professor presenting at UC Berkeley.

In lieu of Thursday’s class, watch *Hero* and read the three pieces listed below. Consider how, and why, the original story was altered.

*Week 9 (Oct 20, 22): NO CLASS 20th—Fall recess.

Thursday 22nd Read “Jing Ke Biography,” “Jing Ke Comic Book Story,” and “Jing Ke poem,” come prepared to discuss *Hero* and these readings.

Week 10 (Oct 27, 29): China’s Golden Age


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

Week 12 (Nov 10, 12): Song Dynasty

Hansen 7 (pp 261-297); “Song Scholars,” “Women and the Problems They Create,” “The Attractions of the Capital.” Continue *The Chinese Gold Murders*.

Week 13 (Nov 17, 19): Northern Dynasties

Hansen 8 (299-333); Discuss *The Chinese Gold Murders* and turn in 3 page essay on what you learned about Chinese history or culture as illustrated in the book. Feature film *Mongol: Rise of Genghis Khan* available on Moodle.

Week 14 (Nov 24): The Mongols

Hansen 9 (335-367) and “24 Examples of Filial Piety.”

*Nov 26: NO CLASS—Thanksgiving recess

Week 15 (Dec 1, 3): Ming Dynasty

Hansen 10 (369-407); “Proclamations of the Hongwu Emperor,” “Concubines,” “Widows Loyal Unto Death.” Optional supplement “Water Margin,” “Journey to the West” and “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” available on Moodle.

Dec 8th: Exam Preparation

*Finals

-----------------------------

**List of Map Items**

**Reference Maps**: See Hansen and my Powerpoint slides on Moodle.

Yellow Sea, East China Sea, South China Sea, Yellow River, Yangzi River, Pearl River, Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, Taiwan, Gobi Desert, Taklamakan Desert (Tarim Basin), Tianshan range, Kunlun Mountains, Wuhan, Xi’an, Tianjin, Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou (Canton), Hong Kong, Macao, Shenyang (Mukden), Chongqing, Yan’an, Great Wall
Chinese Pronunciation Guide:

- C=ts  Cui Jian
- ui=way Cui Jian
- Xi=hs Xi’an, Jiangxi, Xinjiang
- Xu=hsu Lu Xun
- Shi=shr Hu Shi
- Si=sz Sichuan
- Zh=j Zhejiang, Zhou Enlai
- Q=ch Qing, Qinghai, Chongqing
- ei=ā Taibei