

HIST 1320: History of China

Professor Gina Anne Tam

gtam@trinity.edu

Section 1: 9:55-11:10 AM, NH 040
Section 2: 11:20-12:35 PM, NH 040

Office: Chapman 220H
Office Hours: W, 2-4, T/Th 9-9:30

Introduction

China today is renowned for its scale. The third-largest country, second-largest economy, and largest population, China also boasts to have the longest continuous history of any civilization. In this class that covers China's pre-modern history, we will explore the deceptively simple claim that China's history spans five thousand years. From the invention of writing to the arrival of gunboats, this class will explore a number of themes: How are broad cultural philosophies adopted, applied, and adapted over time? How do technological advances change how people interact with their land, their neighbors, and their governments? What is "Chinese" society, and how does that definition change through interactions with foreign peoples and states? How do Chinese identities relate to geography, gender, and body?

This course will focus not just on *what* we know about Chinese history, but *how* we know it. Through a variety of primary and secondary readings, as well as several papers and projects, you will understand how historians create history. These skills will help you develop skills of critical thinking, argumentation, and empathy that will serve you in your professional and personal development.

Learning Outcomes

- 1.) Analyze major historical events and processes that have given China its cultural character, as well as how that character has changed over time.
- 2.) Identify and articulate the perspectives and values of diverse peoples, groups, institutions, and cultures of China.
- 3.) Gather and evaluate information from scholarly sources and primary documents concerning the perspectives and values of the people of China.
- 4.) Discuss the significance of ideas, texts, performances, or cultural artifacts within an historical framework.
- 5.) Apply the interpretive or analytical methods that characterize the study of history.

Required Books

Robert E. Hegel. *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China* (Also on ebrary)
Burton Watson, *The Chuang-Tzu* (1996) OR Burton Watson, *The Zhuangzi* (2003)

Recommended Books

Patricia Ebrey: *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (Second Edition, 2010)

How to read the textbook: I have suggested that you purchase and read Patricia Ebrey's *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*. Selections germane to the lectures are noted on the weekly schedule. I will not proctor quizzes on the textbook; as such, the textbook is for your reference and study habits only.

Assignments and grading

Participation (10%): Success in this class requires that you attend regularly and come prepared to actively participate in discussion. Attendance will be taken, and missed classes will negatively affect your grade.

Reading Quizzes (10%): Throughout the semester, we will have a mix of pop quizzes and short summaries assigned for the readings on which you do not write longer papers. There will be a total of eight summaries OR quizzes; I will drop your lowest grades and average the rest.

- *For quizzes:* These are pop quizzes; you will not be warned ahead of time. If you are not in class, you will not get credit for it (i.e., no make-ups unless you are absent for a documented emergency or excused university activity).

Map Quiz (2%): Besides the reading quizzes, there will be a short map quiz on September 4th. Content and study guides can be found on T-learn

Papers: You will be required to write three papers throughout the semester. Each paper should be within word count, using a professional font (Times New Roman is a good choice), and should have your name at the top. Make sure you properly cite sources using a citation style of your choice. Below are short summaries of the papers you will write; further instructions will be circulated in class.

- *Paper 1 (12%):* Paper one will be an in-depth reading of one story from Burton Watson's translation of the *Chuang-tzu*. Students will pick one story and analyze it in a 1000-1300-word paper. In this paper, please include the following: A summary of the story; an analysis of what the story reveals philosophically about Daoism in China; and how we, as historians, can use this source to better understand the society and everyday life of the Warring States period.
- *Paper 2 (12%):* For paper two, you will be required to visit the San Antonio Museum of Art's Asia collection. Please pick *one object* for which to write a primary source analysis (1000-1300 words). Please plan on visiting the museum at least *one week* before the due date of your paper. Your paper should include the following: a physical description of the object; an explanation of how this object was made and used in Chinese society; and how we, as historians, can use this object to better understand Chinese society. You are not required to do outside research for this paper, but you should be able to put the object into historical context. It is up to you to figure out what you need to know to properly analyze the object. Please also include a photo of the object for reference (a cell phone photo is fine).

For advice or questions at the museum, please contact Shawn Yuan:
shawn.yuan@samuseum.org

- *Paper 3 (12%)*: For paper three, please choose one court case from *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China* and write a primary source analysis of the text (1000-1300 words). Your paper should include the following: a summary of the court case; an analysis of the possibilities and limitations of this case as a historical source; and how we, as historians, can use this court case to better understand Qing society.

Final Project (20%): For this group project, you will assume the identity of a *hypothetical* Chinese family in imperial China, and give a group presentation on biography of each of your family members. The composition of your family (which you may define loosely), and the time period you choose, will be entirely up to you. Some examples include:

- A widow and her two children in Han dynasty China
- A magistrate, his wife, and his father living in the Ming dynasty
- A band of sworn blood brothers launching a rebellion in the Song dynasty
- A merchant and his two sons traveling the silk road in the Tang dynasty
- A Mongol prince and his three wives living in the Yuan dynasty
- A farmer, his infant son, and the daughter they adopted to one day be the son's bride in the Qing dynasty

Let your imagination be your guide! Any group of 3-4 people whose fates would have been intertwined is perfectly acceptable.

You will then be graded on two parts:

- Your group will give a 15-20 minute presentation where you present the biography of your family. Each person must present for at least 4 minutes. Your presentation should be a *cohesive* story of your family. It should include the following:
 - A biography of your family
 - Where did they live?
 - What was their everyday life like?
 - What challenges did they encounter?
 - What were the important moments in their life?
 - A reflection on how a historian might study them, had they existed. What does the life of your family tell us about the broader society that they lived in?
 - For your presentation you will be graded on the extent to which you cover the above material, cohesiveness of your presentation, feasibility of the narrative you tell (i.e., how realistic would it be that these people would have even existed in the time/place you outline).
- Part two of this project is your own personal reflection on the individual you chose. In particular, you should focus on what it is possible to know about this person. What kinds of traces of their lives would they have left behind for historians? In other words, how would we know they existed, and what would we know about them? What parts of their lives would most likely remain in obscurity? This should be 500-700 words.
- Please also include in your personal reflection a bibliography of the sources you used, and a short (2-3 sentences) explanation of how you contributed to the group project (not included in the word count).

Midterm Exam (15%): This exam will consist of three sections. The first section will require students to identify people, places, and events covered in the class. The second section will ask students to analyze and explain the significance of key primary sources. The final section will consist of a thematic essay.

Take home final (7%): This will be an online essay reflection that will go live during finals week.

Policies

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class unless you must miss it for illness or another emergency. Absences or consistent lateness will negatively affect your grade. Missing or being late for six classes (not including excused absences) will result in a zero for your attendance grade. Missing or being late for seven or more class will result in an automatic fail for the course.

Paper submission instructions: All written work should be submitted as word documents on T-learn. Please include your name and your section number at the top of the paper. For papers 1, 2, and 3, please submit them *before* the start of class time on the day they are due. Summaries, when they are due, are to be uploaded by 5 PM the day before class discussion. The due dates for all other assignments are noted on the syllabus. If you need an extension, you must speak with me; I will not accept a late paper if you don't talk to me first.

Technology inside the classroom: Cell phones must be switched off and remain off for the duration of each class. Laptops are permitted for class activities only. Taking notes and accessing readings are appropriate uses; social media, email, entertainment, or googling topics you find interesting are not. Inappropriate use of technology will result in being asked to leave class.

If you have any questions, you may email me at gtam@trinity.edu. Give me 24 hours to respond.

Honor code

All students are covered by a policy that prohibits dishonesty in academic work. Under the Honor Code, a faculty member will (or a student may) report an alleged violation to the Academic Honor Council. It is the task of the Council to investigate, adjudicate, and assign a punishment within certain guidelines if a violation has been verified. Students who are under the Honor Code are required to pledge all written work that is submitted for a grade: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work" and their signature. The pledge may be abbreviated 'pledged' with a signature.

Students with disabilities

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations in this class, please speak with me privately early in the semester. All discussions will remain confidential. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Disability Services for Students. If you are not already registered with DSS, please contact their office at 999-7411 or dss@trinity.edu.

Class Schedule

January 16: Course Introduction

Week 2

January 21: Origin Myths

- Ebrey, 10-30

January 23: The Shang and the Western Zhou

- “China Focus: 5,000-year-long Chinese civilization verified” *Xinhua News*, May 28, 2018
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/28/c_137213047.htm
- Erik Eckholm, “In China, Ancient History Kindles Modern Doubts” *New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/11/10/world/in-china-ancient-history-kindles-modern-doubts.html>
- Yun Kuen Lee, “Building the Chronology of Early Chinese History” [T-learn]
- Ebrey, 30-42

Week 3

January 28: The Eastern Zhou

NOTE: Map quiz

January 30: Foundations of Chinese philosophy

- Ebrey, 42-59

Week 4

February 4: Discussion

- Selections from *The Analects in Hawaii Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture* [TLEARN]
- Selections from *Mencius*, and *Xunzi* in *Sources of Chinese Tradition* [TLEARN]
- “Confucius Says, Xi Does,” *Economist*, 25 July 2015 [TLEARN]

February 6: Discussion

- Burton Watson, trans. *The Zhuangzi* (Chapter 1, “Free and Easy Wandering”; Chapter 4, “In the World of Men”; Chapter 5, “The Sign of Virtue Complete”; Chapter 7, “Fit for Kings and Emperors”; Chapter 17, “Autumn Floods”; Chapter 18, “Supreme Happiness.” Please also read the short paragraph at the end of chapter 3).

Week 5:

February 11: No class, work on your papers at home

February 13: The Qin and the Early Han

- Ebrey, 60-86

NOTE PAPER 1 Due

Week 6:

February 18: The end of the Han and the period of “disunion”

- *Red Cliff* movie [On reserve and on Trini-TV]
- Ebrey, 86-107

February 20: Buddhism

- “Buddhism and Indigenous Chinese Culture”

Week 7:

February 25: The Sui and Tang

- Mike Dash, “The Demonization of Empress Wu.” *Smithsonian* August 10, 2012, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-demonization-of-empress-wu-20743091/>
- Ebrey, 108-132

February 27: Tang in the world

- SHEN Jiji, “Ren’s Story,” in the *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* [TLEARN]
- “The First Recorded Cinderella Story” in *Hawaii Reader on Traditional Chinese Culture* [TLEARN]

Week 8:

March 3: The Northern Song and the Jurchens

- Ebrey, 136-161

NOTE: Paper 2 due

March 5: The Southern Song

- Ban Zhao, “Admonitions for Women,”; Madame Cheng, *Classic of Filiality for Women*, Song Ruozhao, “Analects for Women,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition* [TLEARN]

Week 9:

March 17: Midterm review

March 19: Midterm

Week 10:

March 24: Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire

- Ni Zan, “Rules for Eating and Drinking”
- Ebrey, 164-189

March 26: The fall of the Mongol Empire and the Rise of the Ming

Week 11:

March 31: The Ming in the early modern world

- Ebrey, 209-219

April 2: Elite and popular culture under the Ming

- Shi Nai’an, *Outlaws of the Marsh* (selections) [TLEARN]
- *The Book of Swindles* (selections) [TLEARN]
- Ebrey, 190-209

Week 12:

April 7: The Rise of the Manchu Empire

- Ebrey, 220-224, 227-228
- William Rowe, “Violence in Ming-Qing China—an overview”

April 9: Discussion

- Huang Liu-hung, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence* (selections)

Week 13:

April 14: Manchu state and statecraft

- Hegel, *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China* (Read introduction and the case you write your paper on, then read the short introductions on the rest of the cases)
- NOTE: Paper 3 due
- Ebrey, 224-227, 228-234

April 16: Barbarians at the doorstep

- Ebrey, 234-244

Week 14:

April 21: Discussion

- “The cause of riots in the Yangtze River Valley” [TLEARN]

April 23: Legacies of Imperial China

Week 15:

April 28: Final Presentations

April 30: Final Presentations

Week 16:

- NOTE: Final reports due May 2 by 5 PM

Final will go live on May 7