

HIST 274/ASIA274 HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL CHINA

Department of History
Prof. Y. H. Tam

Fall 2009
Macalester College
TR, 3:00-4:30, OM 10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course considers the rise and decline of Imperial China as a world power from the earliest times to the 19th century when the impact from the West was strongly felt. While examining a wide variety of significant themes in political, economic, social, and cultural changes in the pre-modern times, we will also look into traditional China's changing international relations. There is no prerequisite for the course. Beginners as well as advanced students are welcome.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Map Exercise	5%
Attendance & Discussion Participation	25%
Weekly Reading Summaries & Responses (2-3 pages each week)	30%
Two Short Papers (8-10 pages, title own choice)	40%

REQUIRED READINGS

Required readings will be assigned from the following books and other books on reserve at the library:

- 1) Reischauer, Edwin O., Craig, Albert M. & Fairbank, John K. *China: Tradition and Transformation*. (Houghton Mifflin).
- 2) Ebrey, Patricia B. (ed.). *Chinese Civilization and Society*. (Free Press).
- 3) Charles O. Hucker. *China's Imperial Past: an Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*. (Stanford U Press)

And recommended readings will be assigned from other publications from time to time.

LATE PAPERS & MAKE-UP EXAMS

Except for medical reasons or family emergencies about which the Dean of Students has been properly notified, late papers and weekly reading summaries and responses will receive a reduction of 20% in grading.

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, 1:20 pm-2:40 pm; Wednesday, 1:20 pm-4:20 pm;
Thursday, 11:20 am-12:20 pm & 1:20 pm-2:40 pm;
And by appointment.

Office: Room 303, Old Main
Tel. 651-696-6262 E-mail: tam@macalester.edu

Please feel free to call me at home (651-457-6529) if necessary. The best time to get hold of me is 6:30-7:30 p.m. on weekdays.

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CLASS SCHEDULE

Week of September 7

08—No Class

10--Orientation Meeting, course introduction, self introduction

[No readings this week]; Map Exercise handed out, due September 17

Week of September 14

15-- Land and People

17--Beginning of Chinese civilization: Prehistory legends, state & religions in Hsia (2205?-1766? B.C.) & Shang (1766?-1122? B.C.) Dynasties

Discussion: What are the significant features of the geographical setting in China? Why are they significant? What do the legends imply in terms of cultural development?

Readings: Fairbank & Reischauer, *China: Tradition & Transformation* (hereafter **CTT**), chapter 1; Hucker, *China's Imperial Past* (hereafter **CIP**), Introduction and chapters 1-2.

Recommended readings: Kwang-chih Chang, *The archaeology of ancient Chinese civilization: Anthropological perspectives*, chs. 1-2.

Map Exercise due September 17.

Week of September 21

22--Age of the Philosophers in the Chou (1122?-256 B.C.): Confucianism, I

24--Age of the Philosophers in the Chou (1122?-256 B.C.): Confucianism, II

Discussion: What are the characteristics in the feudalism in Chou China (cf. European or Japanese feudalism)? What is the central problem of Chinese society as viewed by the classic thinkers? What do their answers have in common? To what extent are Confucians traditionalists or reformers? What are the elements of elitism and egalitarianism in Confucianism? What are the elements of idealism and realism in Confucianism? Is there a common denominator in the teachings of Confucius, Mencius and Hsun Tzu?

Readings: CTT, chapters 2 & 3; CIP, chapter 3; Ebrey, *Chinese civilization: A Sourcebook* (hereafter **CCS**), documents 2-6, 10.

Recommended readings: Cho-yun Hsu, *Ancient China in transition*, ch. 1; and papers.

Week of September 28

29-- Age of Philosophers: Taoism

OCTOBER

01-- Age of Philosophers: Legalism & Other Schools

Discussion: What is the ideal relationship between the individual and society in Taoism? What are the characteristics of an ideal state according to Lao Tzu? How should the ideal ruler behave according to the Confucians the Taoists Mo Tzu and the Legalists? What are the criticisms of Confucianism made by Mo Tzu? by the Taoists? by the Legalists? How do the criticisms of each school reflect its own theories?

Readings: CCS, docs 7-10; CIP, chapter 4; CCS, docs.7, 8, 18.

Recommended Readings: Wei-ming Tu, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*; and Frederick W. Mote, *The intellectual foundation of China*.

Week of October 5

06-- Formation of the imperial system: Ch'in Dynasty (221-207 B.C.)

08-- Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- A.D. 220): Political & Economic Development

Discussion: What weaknesses in the Legalist philosophy can be seen in the way the Ch'in dynasty collapsed? To what extent does the Han represent a new stage in Chinese history? What Confucian teachings were embodied in the imperial institutions of Han times? Taoist teachings? Legalism teachings? Were the governmental institutions of Imperial China based on the assumption that human nature is good? Evil?

Readings: CTT, ch. 4; CIP, chs. 5 & 8; CCS, docs. 11-17.

Recommended Readings: Derk Bodde, *China's first unifier*; Ying-shih Yu, *Trade and expansion in Han China*, ch. 3; Burton Watson (tr.), *Records of the grand historian of China*.

Week of October 12

13-- Disintegration & reunification: Six dynasties & the Sui (589-618)

15-- Buddhism in China

Discussion: What are the positive and negative effects of the periods of disunity on the historical development of China? What was the driving force behind the persistence of the ideal of a unified China during periods of disunity? Considering the appeal of Buddhism to the rulers; to the scholar-class; to artists; to the common people; which sects tended to appeal to each? In what respects can Chinese Buddhism be considered a foreign faith?

Readings: CTT, ch. 4; CCS, docs. 21-24.

Recommended Readings: Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, chs. 1-3; SCT, chs. 12-14.

First paper due October 15.

Week of October 19

20--Growth of the imperial system: T'ang dynasty (618-907)

22--Blossoming of T'ang culture

Readings: CTT, ch. 5; CCS, docs. 25-28 & 30-31;

Recommended Readings: Cyril Birch (ed.), *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, Vol. I, 217-257, 288-299; Arthur Waley, *The poetry and career of Li Po*; William Hung, *Tu Fu, China's great poet*, read as much as you can.

Discussion: What are the outstanding elements in cosmopolitanism and isolationism as exemplified in T'ang China? How would you characterize the leadership and institutions of the early T'ang in the light of Confucian ideals (militia; equal-field system; examination system; character and behavior of Emperor T'ai-tsung, etc.)? How would you define the scholar-official class (literati)? What are the level of economic development of China as suggested by the change to the Twice-year Tax? Who is your favorite poet in the T'ang? Your most favorite works?

Week of October 26

27--Political & socioeconomic changes in the Sung (960-1279)

29--**Fall Break**--No Class

Readings: CTT, ch. 6; CCS, docs. 33-38 & 41-42.

Recommended Readings: James T. C. Liu, *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih*, chs. 4-5; James T. C. Liu, *Ouyang Hsiu*, chs. 3 & 5.

Discussion: What were the causes and effects of the rising merchant class in the Sung? What would be the positive & negative impact of the examination system on Chinese society?

NOVEMBER

Week of November 2

03-- Neo-Confucianism

05--The Mongol Empire

Readings: CTT, ch. 7; CCS, docs. 39-40 & 44.

Recommended Readings: Wei-ming Tu, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*; Wing-tsit Chan (tr.), *Reflecting on things at hand: The Neo—Confucian anthology*, "Introduction" & chs. 4-5; John P. Langlois (ed.), *China under Mongol rule*, chs. by David Farquhar, Yan-shuan Lao, and Morris Rossabi.

Discussion: What problems are dealt with by Chu Hsi that were not emphasized by Confucians of the Classical period? of the Han period? In what ways Neo-Confucianism can be viewed as an answer to Buddhism? What would be the strength of Neo-Confucianism? To what extent did "barbarian rule" of China differ from Chinese rule? In what ways did "barbarian" rule affect Chinese society? What was the major impact of "barbarian" invasions on Chinese civilization: institutions introduced by conquest dynasties; contributions of "barbarians" to Chinese culture and daily life?

Week of November 9

10--Restitution of the Han rule: the Ming (1368-1644), I

12--Restitution of the Han rule: the Ming (1368-1644), II

Readings: CCT, ch. 8; CCS, docs. 47-58

Recommended Readings: Charles Hucker, *The traditional Chinese state in Ming times*; Edward Farmer, *Early Ming government*, chs. 2 & 6; Wang Yang-ming, *Instruction for practical living and other Neo-Confucian writings*, "Introduction"; Wm T. de Bary (ed.), *Self and society in Ming thought*, "Introduction"; Kuang-chuan Hsiao, *Rural China: Imperial control in the nineteenth century*, chs. 3 & 5.

Discussion: How would you characterize the censorate as a Confucian institution and as a Legalist institution? To what extent can the Wang Yang-ming school be viewed as a political liberalizing force in Ming China; as a restatement of Confucian orthodoxy; as a synthesis of the critiques of the imperial system of other thinkers?

Week of November 16

17--Manchu rule: Political and Economic Change

19-Manchu rule: Society and Culture

Readings: CTT, ch. 9; CCS, docs. 59-67.

Recommended Readings: Mary Wright, *The last stand of Chinese conservatism*, chs. 5 & 7; Jonathan Spence, *The death of woman Wang*; Cao Xueqin (Ts'ao Hsuen-ch'in), *The story of the stone*; Wu Ching-tzu, *The scholars*.

Discussion: How would you characterize K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung as Confucian monarchs and foreign rulers? What were the reasons for the success of the Manchus in ruling China? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional society in China? What could the examination system measure: Confucian virtue? knowledge of the Confucian Classics? literary skills? bureaucratic ability? What did the imperial state need? Any interesting points in the recommended readings? How would you characterize the status of woman in society? Substantiate your argument by referring to examples quoted from Spence, Wu or Cao?

Week of November 23

24--Decline of the Imperial System

26—*Thanksgiving Break, No Class*

Readings and discussion topics same as last week.

Week of November 30

DECEMBER

01--The Opium War & Imperialist Encroachment

03--Reforms in Late Ch'ing

Readings: CTT, ch. 10. CCS. doc. 68

Recommended readings: Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the gate, Parts 1 & 2*; Albert

Feuerwerker, *China's early industrialization*, ch. 1; Benjamin Schwartz, *In search of wealth and power*, chs. 4-5; Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and intellectual tradition in China*, chs. 6 & 8

Discussion: What were the major problems that the Europeans faced in dealing with the Chinese government before and after 1840? What broad cultural conflicts can be seen in the particular disputes between the British and Chinese that eventually led to the Opium War?

Second paper due on December 3

Week of December 7

08-- Rebellions & Revolution: Whither Modern China?

10-- Traditional China in Review

Readings: CTT, chs. 11-13; CCS, docs.70, 71, 73-76.

Recommended Readings: Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and its enemies in the late imperial China*, chs. 3-4; Albert Feuerwerker, *Rebellion in nineteenth century China*.

Discussion: How the Chinese respond to the impact from the West and Japan? Discuss Japan's function in China's modernization cause. What are the characteristics in the rebellions in the late Ching? How would you evaluate the Revolution of 1911, a success or failure? Assess the legacy of traditional Chinese culture: What would be the strengths & weaknesses of traditional China? How would you evaluate the merit and demerit of the major philosophies (Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, etc) in China's changes throughout its history?

End