HIST/ASIA 274  GREAT TRADITION IN CHINA BEFORE 1840

Department of History
Prof. Y. H. Tam
p.m.-2:50p.m., T & Th,  OM 10

Fall, 2014

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.

The course will feature themes in Chinese history, including the birth of the Great Philosophers, the story of the Great Wall, the making and sustaining of the imperial system, the Silk Road and international trade and cultural exchange, the emergence of Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, Genghis Kahn and his Eurasian Empire, the maritime global expeditions before Christopher Columbus, the splendid literary, artistic and scientific achievements, the Opium War and its impact on modern China.

There is no prerequisite for the course. Beginners as well as advanced students are welcome. Lecture/discussion format. Alternate years. (4 credits)

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Map Exercise 5%
Attendance & Discussion Participation 20%
1 Class Debate on assigned topic 20%
2 Oral Presentations (10-15 minutes each) on assigned topics 20%
1 Paper (10-12 pages) on title of own choice 35%

[No mid-term and final exams]

REQUIRED READINGS

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


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

LATE PAPER, LATE PRESENTATION

Except for medical reasons or family emergencies about which the Dean of Students has been properly notified, late paper or late oral presentation will receive a reduction of 20% in grading.

OFFICE HOURS
**Tuesday & Thursday:** 4:30 pm.-6:00 pm. And by appointment.
Office: Room 303, Old Main

**CONTACT INFO**
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 7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. on weekdays.

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**HIST/ASIA 274  GREAT TRADITION IN CHINA  BEFORE 1840  Fall, 2014**

Department of History  Macalester College
Prof. Y. H. Tam  1:20 p.m.-2:50 p.m., T & Th, OM 10

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**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**SEPTEMBER, 2014**

**Week of September 1**
02--Orientation Meeting, course introduction, self-introduction
04—Land, peoples and geographical setting in China


*Discussion:* What are the significant features of the geographical setting in China? Why are they significant?

*Map Exercise handed out, due September 11*

**Week of September 7**
11--Beginning of Chinese civilization, II: Comparison with early Western civilizations

*Discussion:* What do the legends imply in terms of cultural development? What are the outstanding features in the Xia and Shang dynasties in China? How does China civilization compare with Western civilizations in the early eras?

*Readings:* CTT, ch 2; Hucker, *China’s Imperial Past* (hereafter *CIP*), Introduction and chapters 1-2.

Map Exercise due September 11; Presentation topics & schedule to be decided

Week of September 14
16--Age of the Philosophers in the Zhou (1122?-256 B.C.): Confucianism, I
18--Age of the Philosophers in the Zhou (1122?-256 B.C.): Confucianism, II

Discussion: What are the characteristics in the feudalism in Zhou 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 Xun Zi?

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

Recommended readings: Wei-ming Tu, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*

Presentations begin this week

Week of September 21
23-- Age of the Philosophers: Daoism
25-- Age of the Philosophers: Legalism & Other Schools

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

Readings: CTT, ch 3; CIP, chapter 4; CCS, 7-10, 18.

Recommended Readings: Frederick W. Mote, *The intellectual foundation of China*

Week of September 28
30--Formation of the imperial system: Qin (Ch’in) Dynasty (221-207 B.C.)

OCTOBER-----------------------------------------------

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

Discussion: What strengths in the Legalist philosophy can be seen in the way the Qin dynasty rose? What weaknesses in the Legalist philosophy can be seen in the way the Qin 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? Daoist 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 5**
07-- Disintegration & reunification: Six dynasties & the Sui (589-618)
09-- 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.

**Week of October 12**
14-- Growth of the imperial system: T’ang dynasty (618-907)
16-- Blossoming of T’ang culture

**Discussion:** What are the outstanding elements in cosmopolitanism and isolationism as exemplified in Tang China? How would you characterize the leadership and institutions of the early Tang in the light of Confucian ideals (militia; equal-field system; examination system; character and behavior of Emperor Tai-zhong, 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 Tang? Your most favorite works?

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


**Week of October 19**
21-- Political & socioeconomic changes in the Sung (960-1279)
23-- Fall Break, no class

**Discussion:** How did the changes in government and international relations impact on Song China? What were the causes and effects of the rising merchant class in the Song? What would be the positive & negative impact of the examination system on Chinese society? What is the significance of the “Naito Hypothesis”?

**Readings:** CTT, ch. 6; CCS, docs. 33-40 & 41, 42 & 44.


**Week of October 26**
28-- Neo-Confucianism & Cultural Development
30--The Mongol Empire

Discussion: What problems are dealt with by Zhu Xi (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 and weakness 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?

Readings: CTT, ch. 7.

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.

NOVEMBER

Week of November 2
04-- The Ming (1368-1644), I: Restitution of the Han rule
06--The Ming (1368-1644), II: Changes in society, culture and international relations

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?

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


Week of November 9
11--Manchu rule: Political and Economic Changes
13--Manchu rule: Changes in Society and Culture

Discussion: How would you characterize Emperors Kangxi (K’ang-hsi) and Qianlong (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 you argument by referring to examples quoted from Spence, Wu or Cao (see Recommended Readings)?

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.
Week of November 16
18--Decline of the Imperial System
20--The Opium War & Imperialist Encroachment

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?

Readings: CTT, chs. 9 & 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

Week of November 23
25-- Reforms in Late Qing (Ch’ing)
27-- No Class; Thanksgiving

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

Term paper due on November 27

Week of November 30

DECEMBER

02—Rebellions in Late Qing
04—Revolution in Late Qing

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?

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.

Week of December 7
09--Traditional China in review
11--No Class; end of semester
No reading assignments.
Free discussion

*End*