Course: HIST 342A  
Term: Fall 2016  
Instructor: Dr. Yunwei Song  
E-mail: songyunwei@ruc.edu.cn

Course Description

The traditional model of Chinese history demarks the past into dynasties and their cycles of emperors. But across dynastic timelines, various long-term forces and patterns repeatedly crop up in Chinese society, which over many thousands of years has been shaped by social groups and cultural encounters, some unique and others recurrent. This course will help you better understand both changes and continuities in Chinese history, up to the country that you see today, by looking at China's multi-layered and dynamic past. We will follow dynastic periods to cover the political, economic, cultural, and social patterns of pre-modern China. We will also try to compare Chinese history and European history so that we can understand different civilizations better. This course begins with the origins of Chinese civilization and ends with the Opium War.

Course Objectives

Lectures, readings, excursions, assignments, discussions, and presentations are designed to help you develop the skills to:
- think historically, read critically, and write and speak persuasively;
- situate major historical events in China's early history in their proper geographical, chronological, and thematic contexts;
- connect and integrate historical understandings, and grasp their ethical and moral dimensions;
- appreciate the greatness and complexity of Chinese cultural and religious traditions;
- seek better understanding of the origins of the present development of China;
- evaluate and critically assess the validity of historical evidence and interpretations;
- use primary and secondary sources to construct sophisticated, persuasive, and logical interpretations of historical problems and events.

Course Requirements and Form of Assessment

Classes’ attendance and participation in all discussions (30%).
The midterm reports (30%, one report due in Week Seven – 4-5 pages) You will choose topics from required readings. You should write the report according to what you choose. The paper should be justified double spaced. The font size should be 12-point, and all citations should be footnoted.

Final project - research paper and presentation (40% - Due in Week thirteen. The topic will be chosen in consultation with the instructor. The paper should be 10-12 pages, justified double spaced. The font size should be 12-point, and all citations should be footnoted. The reference books or essays should be no less than five. You may be failed if you make citations just from the internet. The paper should be an argument, a comparison or analyzing an issue, not just telling the process of a historical event. Such as I want the topic like “What are the obstacles to Capitalism in Pre-modern China?” not like “the history of Christianity in China”.

We will basically have two hours of lecture each week, and then 45 minutes either for discussion or movies. When we have a seminar, you will be divided into several groups, and then you will present your group’s conclusion. All topics that will be discussed in the classes are listed in this syllabus.

You will be assigned about 100 pages of readings per week. Reading assignments are carefully chosen to match lectures, discussions, films, and field trips. Students are expected to have completed the assigned weekly readings before attending class, as lectures will require the background knowledge of the readings, and discussions will be based, in part, on the readings.

Please email me your paper and also bring the hard copy of your paper to me. If you can’t bring the hard copy of your paper to me before deadline, I will not evaluate it unless you got my permission for extension. Makeup exams will be given only in cases of documentable emergencies. In case of such an emergency, please notify me by email or phone as soon as possible.

Grading Scale: <59.4 F; 59.5-66.4 D; 66.5-69.4 D+; 69.5-73.4 C-; 73.5-76.4 C; 76.5-79.4 C+; 79.5-83.4 B-; 83.5-86.4 B; 86.5-89.4 B+; 89.5-93.4 A-; 93.5 and up A.

Attendance Policy

Only valid medical or family emergencies qualify as an absence, and documentation of the same must be presented to the professor no later than the next class meeting.

An excused absence requires a written medical excuse or written approval from the school’s administration office. All other absences are considered to be unexcused. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (see below). Arriving more than 10 minutes late for any three classes will cumulatively count as one unexcused absence, while arriving 30 minutes late for any class will count as an unexcused absence.
Penalties for unexcused absences:
1 absence, class participation grade drops one full letter grade (example: A- to B-).
2 absences, class participation grade drops two full letter grades.
3 absences, class participation grade drops three full letter grades.
4 or more absences, class participation grade is a failing grade.

Any absence, whether excused or not, will require catch-up reading.

**Academic Honesty**

Please refer to the following web link for policies on academic honesty:
[http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS_Academic_Integrity_Statement_December_07.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS_Academic_Integrity_Statement_December_07.pdf)

**Required Textbooks**


**Required Readings:**


Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000-1940, University of California Press, Aug 8, 1986, pp. 211-245.
David A. Bello, “To Go Where No Han Could Go for Long: Malaria and the Qing Construction of Ethnic Administrative Space in Frontier Yunnan”, Modern China, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Jul., 2005), pp. 283-317

Alternative Books


**Class Schedule**

**Week One: Origins of Chinese Civilization**

**Questions:**
1. Did all civilizations originate in river valleys? Did all river valleys develop civilization? Why did the four oldest civilizations originate in river valleys - the Nile, the Tigris/Euphrates, the Indus, and the Huang He/Yellow River?
2. What are the differences between the Greek myths and Chinese myths? Why?

**Common Readings:** (More readings will be introduced during the lectures)
- Ebrey, textbook, pp. 10-37.
- Ebrey, *Sourcebook*, pp. 3-5.

**Selected Readings:** (To be chosen according to your own interests.)

**Lecture Topics:**
1. Introduction to China: Geography, Population, Language and Nationalities (Maps distributed and worked on in groups)
2. Creation Myths
3. Archeological Findings of Neolithic Cultures
4. Historical and Cultural Continuity
5. The Shang Dynasty  
6. Shang Contributions to Chinese Civilization  
7. The End of the Shang Empire  

Week Two: Warriors and Philosophers  

Questions:  
2. What was the Axial Age?  
3. Is the Confucianism a religion? Why and why not?  
4. How do you evaluate Confucius thoughts, and his impact on China?  

Common Readings:  
Ebrey, pp. 38-59  
Ebrey, Sourcebook, pp. 6-45  

Selective Readings:  

Lecture Topics:  
1. Western Zhou (1027-771 B.C.)  
2. The Spring and Autumn Periods and Warring States Periods  
3. The Age of Philosophers: A Hundred Schools of Thought - Confucius and Confucianism, Mencius, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism  
4. The Axial Age  

Week Three: The Great Unification: The Qin Dynasty  

Questions:  
1. Why did states in Athens practice democracy, whereas China was an imperial dictatorship?
2. How do you evaluate Shi Huangdi?

**Common Reading:**

Ebrey, pp. 60-86

Ebrey *Sourcebook*, pp. 51-85.

**Selective Readings:**

3. Film: *Assassin* directed by Chen Kaige
5. Derk Bodde, *China’s First Unifier: a Study of the Ch’inn Dynasty As Seen In the Life of Li SSU(280?-208 B.C.),* Hong Kong University Press, 1967.

**Lecture Topics:**

1. Qin Unification of China
2. Shi Huangdi's Policies
3. Decline of Qin Dynasty
4. Film: *The Immortal Emperor: Shihuangdi*

**Week Four:** The Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms Period

**Questions:**

1. What were some of the differences between the Han Empire and Roman Empire? Why was the breakup of the Han Empire followed by a reconstitution of a unitary empire by the Sui, the Tang, and then - after another interregnum - the Song? This is a major feature of the uniqueness of Chinese history.

2. How do you evaluate Han Wudi?

**Common Readings:**

Ebrey *Sourcebook*, pp.87-96.

**Selective Readings:**

1. Film: *Red Cliff*

**Lecture Topics:**

1. The Rise of the Han Dynasty
2. The Rule of Han Dynasty
3. Science, Technology and Culture in the Han Dynasty
4. Comparing the Han Empire and Roman Empire
5. The Collapse of the Han Dynasty
6. The Three Kingdoms Period
7. The Jin Dynasty, the Northern and Southern Dynasties

**Week Five: Buddhist Conquest of China**

**Questions:**
1. Compare Buddhism and Christianity. What are the differences in religious doctrines? Give some reasons behind differences in the corporate roles and powers of the trans-state religion of Roman Catholicism in Western and Central Europe, and the Eastern Orthodox state religions in Byzantium, Russia, Bulgaria, and Serbia, versus the non-state roles of Daoism and Buddhism in China.
2. Why did people in medieval Europe kill each other just over differences in type of Christianity, whereas, in China, this kind of religious conflict never occurred?

**Common Reading:**
- Ebrey, pp. 86-107
- Ebrey, *Sourcebook*, pp. 97-111

**Selective Readings:**


**Lecture topics:**
1. Introduction to Buddhism
2. The Blending of Chinese and Foreign Cultures
3. Chinese Buddhism and Traditional Culture
4. The Three Teachings Return to the One

**Week Six: The Tang Empire, the Height of Ancient Chinese Civilization**

**Questions:**
1. Compare the differences between Western feudalism and Chinese feudalism, including in the land and tax systems, and differences in the concept of feudalism in China versus the West.
2. Compare women's social status in feudal society in China and in Europe.

**Common Readings:**

**Selective Readings:**
Lecture Topics:
1. The Rise and Fall of the Short-lived Sui Dynasty
2. The Glory of the Tang Empire
3. The First Emperor: Tang Taizong (Li Shimin)
4. Administration and Legal Code of the Tang Dynasty
5. The Civil Service Examination System
6. Tang Poetry
7. Women in the Tang Dynasty

Week Seven: Tang Cosmopolitanism and the Silk Road
The mid-term paper due.

Questions:
1. What are the reasons for the peace and prosperity of the Tang Dynasty? Why didn't this kind prosperity last long?
2. How should we evaluate the Silk Road?

Selective Readings:
6. Luce Boulois, Silk road: monks, warriors & merchants on the Silk Road, Odyssey, 2004

Lecture Topics:
1. Changan: The Capital of the Tang Empire
2. One Family in Four Seas
3. The Silk Road
4. The Decline of Tang Dynasty

Week Eight: The Song Dynasty

Questions:
1. What were the reasons leading the economic miracle of the Song Dynasty?
2. Why didn't the advanced technology, science, and engineering of the Song Dynasty survive in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties?

**Common Readings:**
Ebrey, pp. 136-163
Ebrey, *Sourcebook*, pp. 137-191

**Selective Readings:**

**Lecture Topics:**
1. Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms
2. The Economic Miracle of the Song Dynasty
3. Technology, Science, and Engineering of the Song Dynasty
4. The Examination and Elite Families
5. Women in the Song Dynasty
6. movie: what the ancients knew: The Chinese

**Week Nine: Field Trip:** Short cultural trip

**Week Ten: Alien Rule: The Liao, Jin, Xia and the Yuan Dynasty**

**Questions:**
1. How should we evaluate the Mongols conqueror? What were the advantages and what were the disadvantages to Chinese?
2. What did China look like in Marco Polo’s eyes?

**Common Reading:**
Ebrey, *Sourcebook*, pp. 192-201
Ebrey, pp. 164-189

**Selective Readings:**

**Lecture Topics:**

1. The Rule of Liao, Jin and Xia
2. Nomadism and the origin of the Mongols
3. The Mongol's Conquests
4. The Mongol Impact on China and the World
5. Movie: *Genghis Khan*

**Week Eleven: The Ming Dynasty**

**Questions:**

1. Compare Zhenghe's voyages and Columbus' voyages. What were the differences of their motivations and effects?
2. What were the reasons for the collapse of the Ming dynasty?

**Common Readings:**

- Ebrey. pp. 190-219
- Ebrey, Sourcebook, pp.203-266

**Selective Readings:**


**Lecture Topics:**

1. The Ming and the Reestablishment of Chinese World Order
2. The Development of Economy
3. Society and Culture
4. Zhenghe and His voyage
5. The Decline of Ming Dynasty

**Week Twelve: The Manchu Qing Dynasty and the Collapse of Imperial China**

**Questions:**

1. Why did the Japan go over to capitalism in the early modern period, while China didn’t?
2. What were the reasons that the Qing dynasty couldn’t resist the invasion of the West?

**Common Readings:**

Ebrey, pp. 220-261
Ebrey, *Sourcebook*, pp. 267-329

**Selective Readings:**


**Lecture Topics:**

1. The Manchu Conquest and the Qing Empire
2. Penetration of Western Colonial Forces
3. The Opium Wars
4. The Internal Adversaries: Taiping rebellion and Boxer movement
5, Movie: The Opium War

Week Thirteen: Final Paper Due. You need bring your final paper to class and present it to your classmates and instructor.