History 276/ASLC 276: PERSPECTIVES ON CHINESE HISTORY
Amherst College, Fall 2015
Tues-Thurs 2:30-3:50

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Office hours: Tues/Thurs
11:30-12:00, 1:00-2:00
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Course Materials

Available for purchase at Amherst Books and on reserve:

History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth, by Paul Cohen.
Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History, by John E. Wills, Jr.

Additional required readings are either included in a Course Packet, parts I and II, available at the History Department office in Chapin 11, on E-reserve or on line as indicated in the syllabus. The films are streamed and can be viewed from computers on the Amherst campus; DVD and cassette versions are also on reserve at Frost Library.

Course Description and Requirements

In this course we will suspend conventional, European-inspired historical prejudices as we survey a variety of approaches to understanding China’s long pre-modern history and its legacies. These approaches are introduced as we consider a variety of historical topics, beginning with different perspectives on the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, continuing with perspectives on Confucianism, empire, law, religion, economic and social organization, the roles of women, economic development, and global interaction, ending with reflections on culture, state, religion, international relations, and the rule of law. With reference to specific cases, students will develop critical reading, analytical, historiographical, discussion and writing skills. During the course we will test our own perspectives on how one thing leads to another and consider how modern views have tended to highlight or obscure the process. Sources include historical narratives and biographies, classical texts, philosophical and religious essays, inscriptions, social and legal instructions, comparative historical analyses, fiction, and film.

The first requirement is to read the assigned material and view videos before class in preparation for lecture and discussion. If you know that you will be unable to attend a class, inform me of the reason in advance. Regular attendance and completion of all writing assignments is required; repeated absence will lower the grade; and plagiarism or other serious violation of the honor code will result in failure of the course. The grade will be based on the following:

1) Weeks 2-8: Three short papers, (3-4 pages) due Sept 28, Oct 14, and Nov 2 (15% each).
2) Weeks 9-11: one short write-up, based on student comments and discussions for one of these weeks, due by Monday of the following week (15%).
3) Weeks 12-13: join classmates to lead one class discussion (15%).
4) One term paper on topic of your choice designed in consultation with the professor, 7-10 pages, due Dec 18 (25%).
WEEK 1

Tues, Sept 8 Introduction: Time and Space

Thurs, Sept 10 First Perspective on Boxers: National and World History


WEEK 2

Tues, Sept 15 Second Perspective on Boxers: What is a Historical Event


Thurs, Sept 17 Perspectives on the Ground


WEEK 3

Tues, Sept 22 Historical Interpretation in Real Time


Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” _North American Review_, 172.531 (Feb 1901): 161-176 [packet].

Thurs, Sept 24 Biography, Historical Perspective and Myth


First paper due by 12 noon, Monday, Sept 28.

WEEK 4

Tues, Sept 29 Confucius: Ideas, Historical Narrative, and Myth

John E. Wills, Jr., _Mountain of Fame_, Yu and Confucius, 3-32


Thurs, Oct 1 Confucianism: Appropriation, Text, and Context

Kiri Paramore, “‘Civil Religion’ and Confucianism: Japan’s Past, China’s Present, and the Current Boom in Scholarship on Confucianism,” _JAS_ 74.2 (2015), 269-82 (E-res).

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The _Original Analects_, by E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, “Preface” excerpt;

_Analecets_, selections: pp 72-75, 101-105, 110-11, specific verses assigned;

_Laozi_ selections: “Introduction” pp 8-10; Chapters I, IV, V, XXV, XXXVIII, LVII (pp 57, 60-61, 82, 99, 118) [all in packet]
WEEK 5

Tues, Oct 6    Confucianism as Ideal and Reality
  
  Mencius 2A.6, 7A.15, 1A.7, 1B.6, 1B.8, 1B10-11 [packet].
  
  Hsün Tzu, “Regulations of a King;” pp. 33-56; “A Discussion of Rites,” pp. 89-112 [pac].

Thurs, Oct 8   Confucianism and the Law
  
  
  Han Fei Tzu, selections [packet].

WEEK 6

Tues, Oct 13   FALL BREAK (Mon classes meet on Tuesday this week)

Second Paper Due by 12 noon, Wednesday, Oct 14.

Thurs, Oct 15  Empire in Historical Context
  
  
  “The Emperor and the Assassin,” film by Chen Kaige (1999), Streamed on line for this course. One copy on reserve, PN1997 .E4447 VideoDVD)

WEEK 7

Tues, Oct 20   The Historian in Imperial Context: Sima Qian
  
  
  “Biography of Lü Buwei,” in Shiji, tr by Kircher [packet];
  
  “Biography of Jing Ke,” from Shiji, tr by Derk Bodde [packet].

Thurs, Oct 22  Empire in Spatial and Cultural Context: Han and Inner Asia
  
  Records of the Grand Historian, “The Hsiung-nu,” excerpts [packet];
  

WEEK 8

Tues, Oct 27   Han Culture and Post-Han Religiosity
  
  Wills, Wang Mang, Ban Zhao, Zhuge Liang, 72-113.
  
  H. Miyakawa, “Local Cults around Mount Lu,” in Facets of Taoism, excerpts [packet].
  
Thurs, Oct 29  Tang Buddhism: Biography, Gender, and Politics

Third Paper Due by noon, Monday, Nov 2.

WEEK 9

Tues, Nov 3  Song Culture: Education, Religiosiity, and Patriotism
Wills, Su Dongpo, Yue Fei, 149-180.
Daniel Gardner, Chu Hsi: Learning to Be a Sage, pp 35-56, and “Zhu Xi on Spirit Beings,” tr. Gardner, in Religions of China in Practice, Intro, #2, #4, #12, #21, #24, #29, #31-35 [packet].

Thurs, Nov 5  Women in Social and Religious Context

Write-up Option #1 due by noon on Monday.

WEEK 10

Tues, Nov 10  Confucianism, Daoism, and Society in the Later Empires
Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean, excerpts [packet].

Thurs, Nov 12  Chinese Political Economy in Local and Global Context
Albert Feuerwerker, “Chinese Economic History,” in Heritage of China, 224-41 [pac].
Edward Dreyer. Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433, pp 1-9, 180-93, Appendix I-III. I. Ming Shi biography of Zheng He (1739); II. Liujiagang Inscription of 1431 – both inscriptions are basically to Tianhou; III. Changle Inscription of 1431 [packet].

Write-up Option #2 due by noon on Monday.

WEEK 11

Tues, Nov 17  Seventeenth Century Bridges to the Modern World
William Rowe, China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing, 1-62 [E-reserve].
Timothy Brook, Vermeer’s Hat, Chapter 4, “Geography Lessons,” 84-116 [E-reserve].
Thurs, Nov 19  New Perspectives on China and its Periphery at Sea
Wills, Zheng Chenguang, 216-30.
Tonio Andrade, “Koxinga’s Conquest of Taiwan in Global History: Reflections on the Occasion of the 350th Anniversary,” Late Imperial China 33.1 (2010), 122-40 [E-R].

Write-up Option #3 due by noon on Monday.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 12

Tues Dec 1  Late Empire: Ruling to Stabilize

Thurs, Dec 3  The End of Imperial Rule: Stabilizing and Destabilizing
Wills, Hong Xiuquan, the Heavenly King, 259-73.
Jerry Dennerline, “The Land of Streams,” in Qian Mu and the World of Seven Mansions, 69-114 [packet].

WEEK 13

Tues, Dec 8  Confucius, the State, and the Law Revisited
Wills, Liang Qichao, 274-300.
Liang Qichao, “Notes from a Journey to the New Continent” (1903), in Land Without Ghosts [packet].

Thurs, Dec 10  Women, Family, and Society in Post-revolutionary Dress
WEEK 14

Tues, Dec 15   Recent Perspectives on Religiosity, Secularity and the Rule of Law

Final Paper Due by 12 noon, Friday, Dec 18.