

## HIS 195: Special Topics--Classical Asia

Fall Term 2022  
Monday, Wednesday 10-11:20 AM  
Noyce Science 1530

Instructor: Jomo Smith, smithjomo@grinnell.edu

Office: HSSC N3148

Office Hours: On campus daily; feel free to schedule a time.

*Communicating with the professor:* Email communication works best if you simply wish to inform me of something or ask me a question. I will do my best to respond to your inquires within 48 hours. Naturally, you can always grab me after class or visit me during office hours Please note that answers to many questions are often in the syllabus or in previous emails from the professor.

The purpose of this course is to give you a background in the philosophical and moral underpinnings of East Asian civilization and then proceed to the periods of dynastic change and social transformation. China serves as the font of East Asian Civilization but this course will expand beyond China's present borders to also include Japan and Korea. Relying heavily on the archaeological and textual evidence for the ancient period, this course will establish why traditions like Confucianism rose to such prominence and will discuss some of the competing ideas and issues that were important to learned men at the time. It is my hope that you will see how certain concepts or ideals from the past were replicated, debated, and enforced throughout successive eras in China, Korea, and Japan. The course covers a wide breadth of history, which may seem overwhelming at first. However, there will be time during the semester to review where we are in the timeline and briefly compare developments in East Asia with the rest of the world.

You are not required to have any background in East Asia, the relevant languages, people, or history for this course. However, some degree of interest and experience will certainly make the class more rewarding for you. This course will serve as an introduction to anyone considering a concentration in East Asian Studies and will certainly whet the appetite of anyone considering a concentration or major in History. I welcome you to consider what trends moved history along in East Asia and how those differed, or were similar, to areas of the world you are more familiar with. Contrary to popular belief, history is not the study of dates or even of important people. Like Chemistry, to study history is to study change, change through time. It is not important for you to memorize a list of dates in this course. Instead, choose to understand why events happened and the power of human action to affect the course of history.

***Disclaimer:*** *This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the professor reserves the right to modify, supplement and make changes as the course needs arise.*

### Textbooks and readings

Patricia Ebrey and Anne Walthall. *Pre-modern East Asia To 1800: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*. **Third edition**. Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014. (hereafter: Ebrey)

This is the required textbook for the course. The Ebrey volume is also available for rental or purchase at the following websites:

<https://www.cengage.com/c/east-asia-a-cultural-social-and-political-history-3e-ebrey/9781133606475PF/>

[https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=BZ8WAAAAQBAJ&rdid=book-BZ8WAAAAQBAJ&rdot=1&source=gbs\\_atb](https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=BZ8WAAAAQBAJ&rdid=book-BZ8WAAAAQBAJ&rdot=1&source=gbs_atb)

[https://www.amazon.com/Pre-Modern-East-Asia-Cultural-Political-ebook-dp-B00B794S5G/dp/B00B794S5G/ref=mt\\_other?encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=1642195882](https://www.amazon.com/Pre-Modern-East-Asia-Cultural-Political-ebook-dp-B00B794S5G/dp/B00B794S5G/ref=mt_other?encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=1642195882)

Please note that we are using the **third edition** of this book, which is significantly different from the previous two editions.

In addition to the textbook, you will also be assigned various supplemental readings, consisting of primary and secondary sources. These will be available on Blackboard, generally along with reading guides and cues.

Readings are due the week they are listed. You will gain the most benefit from class lectures when you have read the required material **before** class and come prepared with questions. I will do my best to answer all questions in that class or during a future session.

### *How to Read*

- Survey: Reading to survey main ideas; OK to skip entire portions of text
- Understand: Reading to understand the meaning of each sentence
- Engage: Reading while also working on problems, drawing inferences, questioning, and evaluating

While reading to “engage” with the text is the slowest form of reading, it is also the manner that will provide you the deepest level of understanding and expand your mind.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Given a key concept, students should be able to explain how that concept was developed and used by the state or multiple states.
2. Draw connections between actions taken in the distant past and the circumstances in our modern world.
3. Use evidence-based arguments and transfer that skill set to any academic or professional pursuit.
4. Increase awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity toward non-Western cultures and societies

### **Course Expectations**

Your success in this course is dependent on doing the following, regularly.

- *Read all assigned materials:* Conducting yourself as a historian requires, as a basic requirement, that you read carefully and think about what you are reading. This is particularly important for primary source documents which we will read in class and on your own time.

- *Be mentally and physically present while in class:* Attendance in class is required. You will also find that your ability to stay focused while in class will aid in your learning.
- *Participate as much as possible:* Asking questions is a sign that you are thinking and curious about what you are hearing. Engaging your classmates while in group discussion shows that you take responsibility for their learning and your own. You engage your classmates, and the material, by making comments and observations that are substantive, comparative, analytical, or constructively critical (when needs be). Please note that there are two spaces for you to participate: online discussions and physical discussions during class.

## Assignments and Grading

Attendance and Participation: **15%**

Presentation/Discussant: **15%**

Discussion Posts: **30%**

Midterm Exam (October 26): **20%**

Final Exam (Finals Week): **20%**

You are being graded on a standard spread, where an A is a 94-100%.

1. In any given class, there are usually a few students who regularly participate and ask questions in class. This level of participation is often indicative of the student's level of engagement with the course material. For students like these, who might be a hair away from a higher grade, it is my prerogative to bump them up. Thus, active classroom participation will only help your overall grade. Commenting and asking questions is also a great way to check your comprehension of the course material.

Attendance and active participation account for **15%** of your grade. Your participation will be graded based on a self-evaluation completed a few times throughout the semester. I will compare your evaluation with my own observations and assign you a grade accordingly. Feel free to discuss your participation in the classroom with me at any time.

2. Reading Presentations/Lead Discussant: Each student will sign up to present on the week's reading. In general, these presentations will occur on Wednesday. The formal presentations do not need to be long, around 10 minutes. You should address all of the relevant readings, taking into account questions that have been raised or provided for you in the course. General questions to consider include:
  - a. The historical context of the source
  - b. What major concept does the source help us explicate
  - c. What goals are the authors or compilers seeking to accomplish

You are welcome to use notes or any other aid that you find helpful. Your presentation should also raise points for further classroom discussion, where you and the professor will help lead and moderate. Each presentation will be graded on a scale of 10.

Thorough (addresses questions and issues raised in the class and the readings)	5 pts
Accurate (mentions points from the readings in the right context)	2 pts
Preparation and delivery (evidence of being well thought out, stage presence)	2 pts
Engaging (eye contact, enthusiasm, leads to good classroom discussion)	1 pt

3. Beginning with Week 2, students are required to regularly post questions and answers about the readings, lectures, films, and other relevant material on Blackboard. The instructor will create a discussion stream for each week. You are required to write a post for 10 of the 12 weeks that a discussion post is assigned.

The questions that you pose should not simply be one sentence, but rather an analytical inquiry that could be easily expanded into an essay. The second half of this weekly assignment requires you to respond to at least one of your classmate's questions. Please do not worry about giving a "wrong" answer. The purpose of this discussion forum is to provide a constructive space for each member of our course to tackle the complex issues that we are covering. More detailed instructions for your posts are forthcoming on Blackboard. Your posts will be due by **Tuesday at 11:59 pm**. The online discussion forum accounts for **30%** of your overall grade.

4. The format for the Midterm and Final Exams will be discussed closer to the exam date. However, a standard exam will be a mixture of short-answer, multiple-choice, and fill-in-the-blanks.

## **Content and Schedule**

### **Week 1 (August 29 and 31)**

*Topics: Beginnings, Archaeology and the birth of civilizations; Introduction to Shang "Oracle Bones"*

*Readings: Ebrey East Asia "Connections: The Prehistory of East Asia" and "Ch. 1: China in the Bronze Age", pp. 2-20*

### **Week 2 (September 5 and 7)**

*Topics: Divination, Ancestors, Mythology, and Material Culture of rulership; The Mandate of Heaven and 100 Schools of Thought Contend*

*Primary Source Readings: "The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of the Late Shang Dynasty," Sources of East Asian Tradition, Volume 1, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary (Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 13-21.*

*"Classical Sources of Chinese Tradition," Sources of East Asian Tradition, pp. 22-28.*

*"Tangun" [Korea], Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 1, edited by Peter H. Lee (Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 4-7*

*"The Power Contest of Sun Goddess Amaterasu and Susano-o," from *Kojiki* [Japan] in Japan: A Documentary History, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp. 3-7*

*Textbook Readings: Ebrey, "Ch. 2: Philosophers and Warring States During the Eastern Zhou Period"*

### **Week 3 (September 12 and 14)**

*Topics: Received texts and ideas of ruling the realm; What did Confucius actually say? Can you become a Taoist/Daoist?*

*Primary Source Readings:*

*"Confucius and the Analects," Sources of Chinese Tradition, pp. 41-63.*

“Metaphysics and Government in the Laozi,” *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, pp. 49-60.

*Secondary Source Reading:* Cho-yun Hsu, “Some Contrasts and Comparisons of Zhou China and Ancient Greece” in *Asia in Western and World History* by Ainslie T. Embree and Carol Gluck, pp. 257-264

#### **Week 4 (September 19 and 21)**

*Topics: Disorder under heaven and Instructions for rightful living; The rise of China’s first empire and first emperor*

*Readings:* “Legalists and Militarists”, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, pp. 190-206

“Li Si: Legalist theories in practice”, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, pp. 206-212.

“Jing Ke” in John Minford and Joseph SM Lau eds. *An Anthology of Translations: Classical Chinese Literature, Volume I: From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty*, pp. 341-351

*Film:* “The Emperor and the Assassin” 荊軻刺秦王 (This film streams from various websites for about \$3. Please watch it at home.)

#### **Week 5 (September 26 and 28)**

*Topics: From Feudalism to Bureaucracy; Han Dynasty colonies; Women and foreign relations in Han China*

*Textbook Readings:* Ebrey, “Ch. 3: The Founding of the Bureaucratic Empire: Qin-Han China (256 BCE—200 CE)”, pp. 36-60

*Primary Source Readings:* “The life of Tiberius Gracchus,” excerpt from Plutarch’s The Parallel Lives;

"The Debate on Salt and Iron," from *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2nd Ed., Vol. 1;

*Shiji* 124: “The Biographies of the Wandering Knights”, in Sima Qian, *The Shiji*, Burton Watson trans.

#### **Week 6 (October 3 and 5)**

*Topics: Early Korean Kingdoms; Korea and Japan through Chinese Eyes*

*Textbook Reading:* Ebrey, “Ch. 6: Early Korea to 935”, pp. 98-113

*Primary Source Readings:* “[Prime Minister] Ch’ang Chori [admonishes the king],” *Samguk sagi*, *Sources of Korean Civilization*, pp. 43-44

“Ulchi Mundok” of Koguryo fights the Sui, from *Samguk sagi*, *Sources of Korean Civilization*, pp. 36-39

Yu Huan, “Ancient Korea and Yen”, *Sources of Korean Civilization*, pp. 7-9

“Accounts of the Eastern Barbarians,” from the Chinese *San guo zhi*, *Sources of Korean Civilization*, pp. 13-24

“Japan in the Chinese Dynastic histories”, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, volume 1, Wm. Theodore de Bary eds., pp. 3-10

### **Week 7 (October 10 and 12)**

*Topics: What divides us and what unites us: The spread of religion and trade; Dunhuang masterpieces, Religious Daoism*

*Mid-Imperial China: the reconsolidation of empire; China's Golden Age amidst geopolitical powers*

*Readings:* Ebrey, "Connections: Buddhism in India and Its Spread Along the Silk Road", "Ch. 4: Political Division in China and the Spread of Buddhism", pp. 61-74  
"Ch. 5: The Cosmopolitan Empires of Sui and Tang China"

*Primary Sources:* From Silk to Oil: Religions Along the Silk Roads—Monk Xuanzang's Pilgrimage to India  
Excerpt—"Magical Pilgrims on the Silk Roads: The Adventure in the Cart-Slow Kingdom" from *Journey to the West*

## **[Fall Break: October 15-23]**

### **Week 8 (October 24 and 26)**

*Tang China: Ethnicity, religion, Korean incursion, Relationship with Tibet*

*Song Neo Confucianism and the political ascendancy of northern "barbarians"*

Ebrey, "Ch. 8: China Among Equals-Song, Liao, Xia and Jin", pp. 129-147;

\*\* No presentations or discussion posts for this week

\*\* **MIDTERM**

### **Week 9 (Oct 31 and November 2)**

*Topics: The early Japanese state; the role of kami and other gods in Japan*

*Textbook Readings:* Ebrey, "Connections: Cultural Contacts Across Eurasia (600-900)", pp. 93-96 ;  
"Ch. 7: Early State and Society in Japan (to 794)", pp. 114-128

*Primary Source Readings:* Preface to the *Kojiki* (712 CE), "History as a means of solidifying the imperial power" in *Japan: A Documentary History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2015) by David J. Lu, pp. 36-39;  
"Eastern Expedition of Emperor Jimmu," from *Nihon Shoki* (720 CE) in *Japan: A Documentary History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp. 9-11;  
"Prince Shōtoku's 17-Article Constitution" (604 CE) from *Nihon Shoki* in *Japan: A Documentary History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp. 21-26

### **Week 10 (November 7 and 9)**

*Topics: Heian Era Japan*

*Textbook Readings:* “Ch. 9: Heian Japan (794—ca. 1180)”, pp. 148-161

*Primary Source Readings:* Excerpts from “*The Tale of Genji*” by Murasaki Shikibu, Royall Tyler trans. (2006), Introduction, Chs. 1-2, 9

### **Week 11 (November 14 and 16)**

*Topics:* Rise of the global Mongol Empire; History and myth: Memory of the Mongols in East Asia and World History; Repeated Mongol invasions of Kamakura era Japan

*Textbook Reading:* Ebrey, “Connections: The Mongols”, pp. 162-168

*Primary Source Reading:* Excerpts from “*The Secret History of the Mongols*” in Maurice Rossabi, ed. *The Mongols and Global History* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2010) pp. 43-59

*Film:* The Mongol (also streams from other sites for a cost. Please watch this at home.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxGpFY6OJWg&t=1978s>

### **Week 12 (November 21 and 23)**

*Topics:* Koryo Korea and the Mongol Yuan Dynasty; Choson Korea and the resurgence of Confucianism

*Textbook Readings:* Ebrey, “Ch. 10: Goryeo Korea (935-1132)”, pp. 169-182; “Ch. 15: Joseon Korea (1392-1800)”, pp. 247-269

*Primary Source Readings:* “King Taejo/Wang Kon, Ten Injunctions” (943 AD) [Korya sa] in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, pp. 154-156

“King Sejong: Preface to Correct Sounds to Instruct the People”

“Chong Inji: Postscript to Correct Sounds to Instruct the People”

“Ch’oe Malli: Opposition to the Korean Alphabet”

“On Differentiating between Main Wife and Concubine”

“On treating the Main Wife”

“Prohibition Against Remarriage of Women”

All in Wm T. de Bary eds. *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, pp. 574-579 and 584-589

### **Week 13 (November 28 and 30)**

*Topics:* Kamakura Japan and the rise of the Samurai; Warring States Japan and the Invasion of Korea

*Textbook Readings:* Ebrey, “Ch. 11: Kamakura Japan (1180-1333)”, pp. 183-197; “Ch. 13: Japan’s Middle Ages”, pp. 212-226

*Primary Source Readings:* Oda Nobunaga, “The Humiliation of the Shogun”,

“The Assault on Mount Hiei”

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, “The Disarmament of the Populace”

“Restrictions on Change of Status”

“His Highness’s Regulations”

“Letter to the King of Korea”

All in Wm T. de Bary eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Volume 1*, pp. 433-442; 444-447, 458-460, 465-467

Suggested films and documentaries: “Age of Samurai: Battle for Japan” (Netflix)

### **Week 14 (December 5 and 7)**

*Topics: Tokugawa Confucianism and premodern commerce*

*Textbook Readings:* Ebrey, “Ch. 17: Edo Japan, (1603-1800)”, pp. 288-303 “Making Comparisons: Neo-Confucianism”, pp. 304

*Primary Source Readings:* Hayashi Razan, “The sagely ideal versus practical compromise”

“Responses to questions by Ieyasu”

“The Way of Heaven”; “Anecdotes concerning Yamazaki Ansai”

Yamazaki Ansai, “Treatise on the concept of the Middle Kingdom” (Chūgoku ben)

“The transmission of the way to Japan in early antiquity”

All in Wm T. de Bary, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Volume 2*, pp. 49-50, 52-56, 68-69, 75-79, 90-95, 126-129

## ***University Policies and Course Policies***

### **Attendance:**

Your attendance, particularly in a small class, is really important. I will automatically excuse two absences for emergencies or anything else that may come up in your life. Absences beyond two will only be granted with a doctor's note attesting to a dire illness. If you have a condition that requires you to leave class periodically, please notify the instructor and sit near a door.

The college's overall attendance policy can be read [here](#). Students who plan to observe holy days that coincide with class meetings or assignment due dates should consult with me in the first three weeks of classes so that we may reach a mutual understanding of how you can meet the terms of your religious observance and also the requirements for this course. Please also speak with me if you need to miss class due to an athletic event or another co-curricular activity.

### **Honesty/Intellectual Integrity:**

Consult and follow the rules for Academic Honesty in the Grinnell College Student Handbook and the college catalog. You can see the academic catalog policies on academic honesty [here](#). It is the college's expectation that students be aware of and meet the expectations expressed in this policy. If you have any questions about how a particular assignment relates to the College's policy, please consult with me in advance of the assignment's due date. Any suspected case of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Committee of Academic Standing.

### **Learning Needs:**

Creating a fully inclusive classroom is important to me as an instructor; thus I welcome you to approach me directly about any distinctive learning needs that apply to you. Specifically, I encourage students with disabilities to have a conversation with me and disclose how our classroom or course activities might impact the disability and what accommodations would be essential to them. Students with disabilities will also need to have a conversation about their disability with the Coordinator for Disability Resources, Jae Hirschman ([hirschma@grinnell.edu](mailto:hirschma@grinnell.edu)), located on the 1st floor of Steiner Hall. Appropriate documentation is required for this process.

### **Statement on Diversity and Inclusion:**

All students should feel welcome in this course, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, economic background, religious belief, or political perspective. I will work hard to create a classroom environment where everyone feels safe and has the opportunity to have his or her voice heard. This includes referring to you by the pronoun of your choice. Please recognize that any occasional lapses are not intentional.