

HIS 271

IMPERIAL COLLISIONS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

SPRING 2024

Instructor Xiao Chen (he/him) History Dept. | chenxiao@grinnell.edu
Time & Room M, W 8:30-9:50 AM HSSC S2377
Office Hour N3148 Tuesday 15:00-16:00 or By Email Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Being one of the fastest-growing regions in the world, East Asia in the past half century has undergone unprecedented changes—both in scale and speed—from its distant past. While making large strides in embracing modernization, China, Japan and Korea also possess strong attachments to their long and rich histories. In order to understand contemporary East Asia and its peoples, we must delve into its past. In this survey course, we will explore the past four centuries of East Asian histories. We will particularly give attention to key historical moments that impacted all three East Asian countries, including the Imjin War in the late sixteenth century, Western imperialism in the nineteenth century, the rise of nationalism in the early twentieth century, and World War II. We will not only read a variety of texts such as letters, novels, memoirs and scholarly articles but also watch films and plays. The knowledge you gain in this class will help you compare, contrast, and draw connections between the past and present in China, Japan, and Korea.

This course has two broad objectives: 1) to equip you with analytical and rhetorical skills needed to succeed in and outside the university, and 2) to provide you with a basic knowledge of the people, events, movements, and beliefs in early modern and modern East Asian history and show how these have shaped the present-day region.

By the end of the semester you should be able to answer the following questions:

- East Asia in the world: How did the societies of East Asia interact with one another and the world before the rise of Western imperialism? How did these societies respond

to European and American imperialism? What are the continuing legacies of “modernization”?

- Daily life in East Asia: How did people’s daily lives and work change through the early modern and modern periods? How did the status of women and gender relations change in East Asian societies?
- Historical consciousness: What does it mean to think historically? How can history change when looked at from new and differing perspectives? How can you evaluate different historical interpretations of the same event?
- Historical work: How do you evaluate historical evidence? How do you use evidence to write thesis-driven arguments? How do you cite sources in historical writing?

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation and Attendance 20 %

Active participation in discussion is essential to the success in this course. For our class discussions, please do the readings, take notes (yes! This is so important), and prepare at the beginning of class with at least TWO questions provoked by the readings and/or the topics being discussed. I do not expect you to master the readings before our discussions. This class is very collaborative. Listen carefully and speak to each other.

What constitutes proof of active participation? In general, I’ll be looking for evidence that you’ve done the reading, that you’re thinking about the themes and issues covered by the class, and that you’re making a good-faith effort to improve the classroom experience for everyone enrolled in the course.

Starting from week 2, please submit your two questions on Blackboard by 11 PM on either Sunday or Tuesday. Every week, make sure that you post your two questions at least once.

Attendance is important. Please attend if at all possible. You have 2 “grace” absences without penalty. Any absence (beyond that) without a legitimate reason will cost a deduction of 2% of the final total grade. If you need to miss class for a religious holiday or an athletic event, please let me know in advance.

Summary/Response essays 10%

Write 5 short summary essays (2% each). Each about 1 page long (double space, 12-pt font). They are meant to help you digest the readings and synthesize them with the lectures and class discussions. You could choose any reading(s) to respond.

Please note that the essays are due in class on the day we discuss the reading.

Analysis essays 40%

Write 3 short analysis essays (1st essay: 10%; 2nd and 3rd essays: 15% each). Each about 4 pages long (double space, 12-pt font). These essays center around the three long readings (*Stranger in the Shogun's City*, *Lost Names*, and *Spider Eaters*) we will read together this semester. Detailed prompts will be distributed later. These essays are about the three long readings we will read together this semester.

Final Project 30%

A 10 to 12-page essay – see a provisional prompt by the end – and a presentation of your project.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Books (E-books available at Lib or can be ordered by yourselves):

Stanley, Amy. *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World*. Scribner, 2020.

Kim, Richard E. *Lost names: Scenes from a Korean boyhood*. Univ of California Press, 2014.

Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.

COURSE POLICIES

Accessibility Resources

I will make every effort to work with students to implement accommodations that are presented to me through the College process (as outlined in the Student Handbook and the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services). Students with disabilities will also need to have a conversation about their disability with the Coordinator for

Disability Resources. To learn more about this process, and the rights and responsibilities of students in this area, please consult:
<https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/accessibility-disability/students>

Academic integrity

Please familiarize yourself with these policies (<https://www.grinnell.edu/doc/2023-2024-academic-honesty-booklet>) to avoid misunderstandings. Do not hesitate to ask me if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity.

Extension

Everyone is allowed 1 extensions of 24 hours on 1 writing assignments without penalty. 2 or more late submissions (regardless of reasons) will incur grade deduction.

Statement on Gender Inclusivity

I will make my best efforts to refer to you in the pronoun of your choice and I expect class mates to respect each other's pronoun preference.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This syllabus represents my current plan. I will communicate changes, if any, clearly.

Week 1 (Jan 22 - Jan 24): "From Events to History": The Macartney Mission in the Historiography of Sino-Western Relations

- Jan 22 (Mon): Intro.
- Jan 24 (Wed): Readings: [Emperor Qianlong (or "Chien Lung")'s edicts on the Macartney Mission and H. Harrison, "The Qianlong Emperor's Letter to George III and the Early Twentieth-Century Origins of Ideas about Traditional China's Foreign Relations", *The American Historical Review*, Volume 122, Issue 3, June 2017: 680-701]

Week 2 (Jan 29 - Jan 31): Stability and Growth in 18th Century East Asia

- Jan 29 (Mon): Readings: [Kuhn, Philip, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Sacre of 1768*, 30-73]
- Jan 31 (Wed): Readings: [Sudev Sheth and Lawrence L. C. Zhang, "Making Meritocracy: Lessons from China and India, from Antiquity to the Present" in *Making Meritocracy: Lessons from China and India, from Antiquity to the Present* (please locate the e book via library)]

Week 3 (Feb 5 - Feb 7): Internal Challenges in early 19th century East Asia

- Feb 5 (Mon): Readings: [Stanley, Amy. *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World*. Scribner, 2020]
- Feb 7 (Wed): Readings: [Finishing *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World*.]

Week 4 (Feb 12 - Feb 14): European Powers and East Asia in the Nineteenth Century

- Feb 12 (Mon): Readings: [Larsen, Kirk W. "Comforting Fictions: The Tribute System, the Westphalian Order, and Sino-Korean Relations." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013): 233–57.]
First Essay Due on Feb 12
- Feb 14 (Wed): Readings: [1. Excerpts from An Outline of a Theory of Civilization by Fukuzawa Yukichi; 2. "Skin Color Melancholy in Modern Japan: Male Elites' Racial Experiences Abroad, 1880s–1950s" by Ayu Majima; 3. "How did East Asians Become Yellow?" by Michael Keevak]

Week 5 (Feb 19 - Feb 21): East Asia in Western Eyes

- Feb 19 (Mon): Readings: [Brook, Timothy, Jérôme Bourgon, and Gregory Blue. *Death by a thousand cuts*. Harvard University Press, 2008: 1-35]
- Feb 21 (Wed): Readings: ["Bondage in Time: Foot-binding and Fashion Theory" by Dorothy Ko]

Week 6 (Feb 26 - Feb 28): Revolutions and Nationalism

- Feb 26 (Mon): Readings: [1. Excerpts from Tsou, Jung. The revolutionary army. A Chinese nationalist tract of 1903; 2. Schmid, Andre. "Rediscovering Manchuria: Sin Ch'aeho and the Politics of Territorial History in Korea." *The Journal of Asian studies* 56, no. 1 (1997): 26–46.]
- Feb 28 (Wed): Readings: [*Colonial Modernity in Korea*, 1-18]

Week 7 (Mar 4 - Mar 6): Colonial Modernity

- Mar 4 (Mon): Readings: [Kim, Richard E. *Lost names: Scenes from a Korean boyhood*. Univ of California Press, 2014]
- Mar 6 (Wed): Readings: [Finishing *Lost names: Scenes from a Korean boyhood*.]

Week 8 (Mar 11 - Mar 13): World War I and East Asia

- Mar 11 (Mon): Readings: [Excerpts from Manela, Erez. *The Wilsonian Moment Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2007.]
- Mar 13 (Wed): Readings: [To be filled]
Second Essay Due on Mar 11

Spring Break (Mar 17 - Mar 31): No Class!!!

Week 9 (Apr 1 - Apr 3): Inter-war East Asia

- Apr 1 (Mon): Readings: [Perry, Elizabeth J. "Reclaiming the Chinese Revolution." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 4 (2008): 1147–64]
- Apr 3 (Wed): Readings: [Young, Louise. "When Fascism Met Empire in Japanese-Occupied Manchuria." *Journal of global history* 12, no. 2 (2017): 274–296.]

Week 10 (Apr 8 - Apr 10): WW2 and the Beginning of Cold War in East Asia

- Apr 8 (Mon): Readings: [Excerpts from two collections of oral history: Cook, Haruko Taya, and Theodore F. Cook. *Japan at war: an oral history*. New Press, 1993; Li, Danke. *Echoes of Chongqing: women in wartime China*. University of Illinois Press, 2010.]
- Apr 10 (Wed): Readings: [Masuda, Hajimu. *Cold War crucible: the Korean conflict and the postwar world*. Harvard University Press, 2015: 1-81.]

Week 11 (Apr 15 - Apr 17): “Mao’s Last Revolution”

- Apr 15 (Mon): Readings: [Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.]
- Apr 17 (Wed): Readings: [Finish reading *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*]
Third Essay Due on Apr 19

Week 12 (Apr 22 - Apr 24): Individual Meetings with the Instructor on Final Projects

- Apr 22 (Mon): Individual Meetings
- Apr 24 (Wed): Individual Meetings

Week 13 (Apr 29 - May 1): Course Reflection and Wrap-up

- Apr 29 (Mon): TBA, likely something on post ww2 Taiwan or HK
- May 1 (Wed): Presentations of Final Project

Week 14 (May 6 - May 8): Presentations of Final Project

- May 6: Presentations of Final Project
- May 8: Presentations of Final Project

*****May 18 Final Paper Due*****

Final Project Prompt (provisional)

Your final project will have two parts: first, a 10 to 12-page response essay (25%, due on May 18); second, a 10-minute presentation (5%) based on that paper. Your paper is a *critical* response to a media report/op-ed/non-fiction writing (with no restrictions on genres of writing), centering on a topic related to major themes of this course. The paper

should include a short introduction/summary of the main idea of the writing you choose to respond (no more than 200 words), identify the issue/problem being discussed/debated, your standpoint on the addressed issue (i.e. your thesis), and how you complicate/engage on the issue from a historical perspective by citing relevant scholarship on this topic. By weaving these scholarly works into your response, you will add layers of depth to your analysis, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the topic within the broader historical landscape. Overall, the purpose of this assignment is that you should apply the knowledge on modern East Asia that you have gained from this class to the better understanding of a particular topic.

This is not a research paper.

In your presentation, please introduce the topic, main arguments of your paper, and some evidence (primary or secondary sources) you plan to cite. You may choose to present with slides.

☺ The Final Paper is due on Blackboard on May 18.

Requirements

- 10 to 12 pages (not including your name, paper title, and foot/endnotes), typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point, 1 inch margin, word-count capable (i.e., not a PDF)
- Citing academic sources: cite at least SIX different scholarly sources in English. You need to cite at least SIX different academic sources (e.g. academic journal articles and scholarly monographs). Sources intended for general audience (like Wikipedia) can be used, but they do not count as academic ones. You may quote some weekly readings (such as book chapters and scholarly journal articles) but you should use sources that go well beyond class readings.
- Criteria of evaluation (25% of overall grade in total): 1) Sophistication and clarity of your arguments (10%); 2) Appropriateness in using evidence to support your thesis/arguments (10%); 3) Accuracy and fluency of writing (5%). Grading rubric is available on Blackboard.
- Include your name, date, and paper title (no separate title page or bibliography is necessary)

- Papers that are overly short will have points deducted
- When citing sources, be sure to do so according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (a short guide is available on blackboard).