

**HISTORY 337: HISTORY OF LATE IMPERIAL
CHINA. UW-MADISON, FALL SEMESTER 2024.**



Stele used for target practice in Cultural Revolution

Need for Accommodation

If there is anything that could affect your class participation or performance and may need accommodation, e.g., a religious holiday, disability, mahjong team, etc., please tell me during the first week so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Meeting Times and Locations:

Mondays 1:20 – 3:15 p.m., Education.

Communication:

Professor: Joe Dennis

Office: 5135 Humanities

Office Hours: By appointment.

Mailbox 5006 (fifth floor Humanities mailboxes above the History Department Office).

E-mail: dennis3@wisc.edu. Email is the best way to contact me outside of class.

Course description:

This is an upper division course on early modern Chinese history, arranged by topic (3 credits). Topics addressed include environment; government and politics; economy; intellectual life, family, marriage, and sex; science, technology, and medicine; and military. The class is small enough that we can focus on discussion of assigned readings, but these will be supplemented by Professor Dennis lecturing and analysis of primary sources. **The single most important thing in this class is to keep up on the reading.** Course requirements include coming to class prepared for discussion, participating in discussion, taking short multiple-choice quizzes that are designed to be easy if you did the reading, two writing

summaries/analyses/comparisons, and a final paper of 2500-2800 words, including footnotes, bibliography, title, etc. There are no exams.

No Chinese language skills are necessary for this course, however, if you can read Chinese and wish to use Chinese sources in your assignments you may. If you are studying Chinese as a second language it will be helpful for you to learn the characters that Professor Dennis puts on slides. Note: In this class, Professor Dennis will use traditional complex forms of Chinese characters (*fantizi* 繁體字) on most lecture slides, not simplified characters, because most historical sources use the complex forms. Serious students of Chinese history or literature need to learn the complex forms.

Course designation for requirements:

Breadth - Either Humanities or Social Science

Level - Intermediate

L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Grad 50% - Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing

Required Books:

Dardess, John. *Four Seasons: A Ming Emperor and His Grand Secretaries in Sixteenth-Century China* (FS). Rowman & Littlefield (2016). ISBN: 9781442265592. This book is available in the University Bookstore.

Brook, Timothy. *The Troubled Empire* (TE). Belknap (2013). ISBN:0674072537. This book is available online through the UW Library website.

All other readings have been uploaded to Canvas or are available online.

Class Schedule:

Monday, September 9: Introduction to the class and classmates. Fill out student background sheets. Discuss course plan and what we mean by early modern China. Discussion of periodization. Basic geography and chronology.

Monday, September 16: Environment. READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: Marks, Robert. *China and its Environment*, chapter 5 and 6. In-class work on provinces and major cities of the Ming. **Happy Mid-Autumn Festival! (*Zhongqiu jie* 中秋節, fifteenth day of the eighth month on the lunar calendar 農曆八月十五日, Tuesday, Sept. 17). Discuss Mid-Autumn Festival.**

Monday, September 23: Today's class will be online. Government. Before the start of class read the *Huangling bei* 皇陵碑 (imperial tomb stele for Zhu Yuanzhang's parents) and Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, pages 1-49 on Canvas. Fill out the discussion questions on it and upload your answers under the "Discussion" tab on Canvas. Take the readings quizzes online. **Download the Powerpoint under the "Modules" tab on Canvas and listen to**

the recording for each slide on the Ming founding.

Monday, September 30: READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: *Troubled Empire* pages 50-78. **By 11:59 a.m. today, post a 300-word comparison (plus or minus 25 words)** of *The Troubled Empire* pages 50-78 to Marks' discussion of China's environmental history in chapter 5 from last week. Explain how Brook and Marks' sources, approaches, and conclusions are similar and different. READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: *The Troubled Empire*, pages 79-105.

Tuesday, October 1, 4:00-5:30. Extra Credit Talk Opportunity: Jennifer Lee, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. "Anxiety Aesthetics: Maoist Legacies." In Ingraham 206.

Monday, October 7: The Imperial Court. READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS. Dardess, John. *Four Seasons*, pages 1-80. Lecture on related topics. Hand out Museum Assignment.

Monday, October 7, 4:00-5:30. Extra Credit Talk Opportunity: Cemil Aydin, University of North Carolina. "East Asian Visions of Islam and the Problem of Modernity." In Ingraham 206.

Monday, October 14: Economy. READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: *Troubled Empire*, pages 106-133, 186-212. Lecture on Ming economy.

Monday, October 21: Culture. Before class read: Gerritsen, Anne. *City of Blue and White*, chapters 9-10 (pages 175-215, on Canvas), and take the **ONLINE QUIZ** on it in Canvas. **Meet in the Chinese section of the Chazen Museum to look at Ming art, not in our classroom!**

Begin thinking about your final project and by **Sunday night, October 27**, post in Canvas (Assignments) a one-paragraph description of your topic idea. Professor Dennis will read these and make suggestions.

Monday, October 28: Intellectual Life: READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: Bol, Peter. *Neo-Confucianism in History*, page 153-193. **Before class, post in Canvas (Assignments) an approximately 300-word summary of the reading. Museum Assignment due in class. Vote for best drawing.** The second part of this class will be a catchup hour for Professor Dennis to lecture about things that we did not get to in previous classes.

Tuesday, Oct 29, 4:00-5:30. Extra Credit Talk Opportunity: Panel on the Effect of the US Presidential Election on East Asian Politics, with Professor Judd Kinzley (History), David Fields (Center for East Asian Studies), Louise Young (History).

Thursday, October 31: Halloween!

Monday, November 4: Paper Research Day (**NO CLASS**). Instead of class, please go to Memorial Library and find at least one primary source and three secondary sources that are relevant to your paper topic. Write up two paragraphs on their relevance to your paper and upload to Canvas (Assignments, Paper Research Results) by 11:59 p.m.

Tuesday, November 5: Election Day.

Monday, November 11: Family, Marriage, Sex. READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: *Troubled Empire*, 134-160. Hinsch, Bret. *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: the Male Homosexual Tradition in China*. Excerpts from *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 (Plum in the golden vase) (readings on Canvas). Lecture on family.

Monday, November 18: Lecture on sources and methods for Chinese history and digital humanities. No group reading for today; instead read sources for your paper. **Each person will present a two-minute summary of one of their paper sources to present to the class today.**

Monday, November 25: Science, Technology, Medicine.

READ, QUIZ, DISCUSS: Bian, He. *Know Your Remedies: Pharmacy and Culture in Early Modern China*, chapters 1-3 (pp. 23-101).

Monday, December 2: Lecture on Ming Military and Fall of the Ming. **Draft of final paper due.** Bring 3 copies to class for peer review. Also upload your draft to Canvas, Assignments, Final Paper Draft. No group reading today; instead work on your paper. Course evaluations.

Monday, December 9: LAST DAY OF CLASS. Professor Dennis will lecture on food history and bring some foods to try. Final papers are due in class.

NO FINAL EXAM

Grades:

Museum assignment	5%
Neo-Confucianism in History post	8%
CEH/TE comparison	8%
Research Day Post	4%
Class participation	25%
Final paper draft	5%
Final paper	20%
Quizzes	25% (Professor Dennis will drop your lowest score).

Extra credit: You can get one point towards your final grade by attending an on-campus event related to East Asian history, literature, art history, politics, etc., writing up one paragraph about it, and emailing the writeup to Professor Dennis within two days of the event. You can get a maximum of five extra credit points.

Grading scale:

A=93-100, AB=88-92, B=83-87, BC=78-82, C=70-77, D=60-69, F=below 60.

There is no curve. There is no rounding up—you need to get to the bottom number to get that

grade.

“Participation” means you are prepared, alert, and involved in discussions. This means that when you come to class you must have already read the assignment, thought about it, and noted highlights of what was said and what was not said. I will decide the participation grade mainly on my impression of your overall contribution to discussion and class exercises.

I apply imperial Chinese theories of social control to grading. My framework recognizes both the coercive power of the law and the encouraging power of moral example. Poor grades may result from either transgressions or nescience.¹ Transgressions, such as failure to read an assignment, failure to carefully revise papers before turning them in, lazy thinking, etc., are dealt with using Legalist principles, “if the lord above severely punishes and rewards lightly, then it expresses that the ruler loves the people... By punishments eliminate punishments.”

Nescience, however, is students’ natural state at the beginning of each course. It shall be approached with encouragement, assistance, and compassion (unless caused by transgressions). “We can master things we originally did not understand. We not only are capable of destroying the old world, we also can create a new world.” Chairman Mao, 1949.

Technological Distractions:

Being focused in class and having good manners are essential. Please turn off your cell phone at the start of class and do not use your computer for anything that is not course related. It is my policy to reduce violators’ grades by one point from their final average for each violation. Thus, for example, if your final average would have been 93, but I observed you shopping six times during the semester, your grade would drop to an 87, moving you from an “A” to a “B.” If you are awaiting a heart transplant and thus need to have your phone on, let me know before class so I won’t mark you down.

Plagiarism:

Question: What’s the policy?

Answer: “The proverb says: Don’t insult a friend’s wife or bully his concubine. You’ve done both you impudent ape! Come here and let me have a whack at you!” - Ox Demon King to Monkey (Sun Wukong) in *Journey to the West*. Think of your assignments as your teacher’s beloved.

Question: What is plagiarism?

Answer: See the college’s policy or ask me before submitting your paper. If you ask me in advance whether you can present material in a certain way, it is harmonious education. If you just present another’s work without attribution, hoping you will not get caught, it will also be educational, however, the lesson learned will be that, indeed, the lot of sentient beings is to suffer.

Question: What will happen to me if I plagiarize?

Answer: *Ling chi*, or “death by slicing,” a Chinese and Mongol punishment for heinous crimes in imperial times. In contrast to simple decapitation, *ling chi* extended the suffering and forced the condemned person to dishonor their parents by defiling their body. In addition, I may give you a

failing grade for the course and the college may expel your remnant parts.

Prior to handing in your first assignment you must read and master the Writing Center's help page on how to avoid plagiarism:

<https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quoting/sources/>

Using Artificial Intelligence Programs in the Class:

Artificial intelligence programs are rapidly becoming important tools that everyone should learn to use. AI can certainly be helpful in the writing process. But you also need to learn how to analyze problems and write sophisticated essays on your own, just as you should be able to navigate on a road trip without using GPS, Google Maps, or other satellite-based systems. Learning how to think about a problem, create an argument, marshal facts in support of your argument, and write persuasively, are critical life skills that you will not develop if you are over-reliant on AI. So in this class, you may only use AI for two things: Generating ideas when you are stuck, and correcting your writing, including grammar, spelling, and style. For example, last summer I was asked to give a lecture, "Overview of Humanities Research Methods" at Beijing University. This is a very broad topic, so I asked ChatGPT what I should include, and it gave me eight suggestions. Most were things I had already thought of, but two were not. So I thought about them and decided one was a good idea, and one was not. ChatGPT is also very useful for helping non-native speakers catch language mistakes. So you can use it for these two things. But AI cannot write your whole paper, and in fact, AI history papers are usually pretty bad because AI is not yet good at dealing with detailed sources that require citation and seamless blending into complex arguments. Because of this, in grading, Professor Dennis and Mr. Du will be putting much more weight on things that AI is not good at. In addition, **on every writing assignment, you must state whether you used AI and describe how you used it. Do this below your name and date. For example:**

"Fred Flintstone

October 21, 2024

AI usage: I used ChatGPT to check for grammar, spelling, and stylistic errors after I drafted my essay."

Lateness:

I operate on a tight schedule. If you hand in an assignment late, you mess with my schedule. Remember the immutable law of Karma! Also, you will be docked 5 points per day late.

Handouts and Assignments:

If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting any handouts or assignments you missed. First check on Canvas. If nothing is there, check with someone from class or ask me. There is a class list on Canvas. The Master said: "Of neighborhoods, benevolence is the most beautiful."

Other Matters:

The University has many commonsense policies that you are expected not to violate. If you fear your potential actions may be improper, ask me. For example, maintaining a dignified and respectful atmosphere is a responsibility that UW takes seriously. Sexual harassment is one form of disrespect that undermines our community, violates university policy, and could subject

one to both civil and criminal liability.

The line between acceptable social interaction and deviance has been drawn and re-drawn throughout history by almost every society. For our purposes, following *The Book of Heavenly Commandments*, commandments five through ten will ensure the appropriate class atmosphere (promulgated in 1852 during The Heavenly Kingdom of the Taipings). Commandment Seven states:

Do not indulge in wickedness or lewdness. In the world there are many men, all brothers; In the world there are many women, all sisters. For the sons and daughters of Heaven, the men have men's quarters and the women have women's quarters; they are not allowed to intermix... The casting of amorous glances, the harboring of lustful imaginings about others, the smoking of opium, and the singing of libidinous songs are all offenses against the Heavenly Commandment.

If you have questions or are having any problems, please contact me. Confucius said: "He was quick and eager to learn, he was not ashamed to seek advice."

¹ You will come across many new terms during this course. Grandma gave you that dictionary for a reason. When the term is not in your dictionary, which occurs often, check a bigger dictionary, such as *Oxford English Dictionary*, or ask me.