

**Mr. Lawrence Zhang**  
Fall 2009

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**Office Hours: W 9:30 – 11:00 am, 3:00-5:00 pm**

## **Asian Studies 276/History 276c - The Origins of Imperial China, Prehistory to 900 C.E.**

The history of China is long and storied, but what we now know as China was not always the entity we imagine it to be today. This course covers the earliest portion of China's history, from its origins as tribal civilization to its role as East Asia's center in the Tang dynasty. Through it we see the flowering of philosophical thought in the Warring States period, the unification of the Qin and the implementation of the imperial system, the introduction of Buddhism, and the rise of the nomadic tribes as part of China's elite. While much of this may seem like a history of some distant place, both in time and space, the period under consideration was crucial in the formation of fundamental institutions that carried on their life for more than a thousand years until the founding of the Republic of China in 1911.

### **Evaluation:**

10% attendance & participation  
10% map quiz  
15% paper one  
15% paper two  
10% poetry assignment  
20% midterm  
20% final

All assignments must be completed in order for the student to receive a final grade.

### **Texts:**

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.  
De Bary, William Theodore, *Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol.1*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

### **Academic Honor Code:**

All works done for the course will be governed by the Bowdoin Academic Honor Code. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the details of the Code, and if there is any question about any aspects of the Code, please ask.

### **Late assignments:**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class. For each day of lateness, one third of a letter grade will be deducted from the assignment's grade, including weekends.

**Laptops & electronic devices:**

Laptops are only allowed during the portions of the course when the instructor is lecturing. It is awkward to have a table full of laptops in front of each student during discussions, role plays, or other activities, so please refrain from using a laptop during those portions of the course. Also, cell phones and other devices that will make noises during the class need to be shut off (no vibrating backpacks, please).

**Class schedule:**

R: denotes item is on reserve

3<sup>rd</sup> Sept: Introduction – what is China?

8<sup>th</sup> Sept: China: Creation myths and legends, and the Great Man theory of Chinese history  
Ebrey: 10-22

R: David Keightley, "Early Civilization in China: Reflections on How It Became Chinese," *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, Edited by Paul Ropp, pp. 15-54.

10<sup>th</sup> Sept: Shang dynasty and the bronzes

Ebrey: 22-30

De Bary: 4-23

15<sup>th</sup> Sept: Fall of the Shang, rise of the Zhou, and the move East

Ebrey: 30-37

17<sup>th</sup> Sept: First hint of moral philosophy – Confucianism

Ebrey: 38-49

De Bary: Confucius (chapter 3) read 2:4, 2:5, 2:12, 2:14, 2:15, 2:21, 3:3, 3:4, 3:12, 3:19, 4:1, 4:2, 4:13-16, 5:7, 6:16, 6:28, 7:15, 9:5, 9:10, 11:25,13:3

22<sup>nd</sup> Sept: The Hundred Schools of Thought: Mohists and Daoists

Ebrey: 49-59

De Bary: Mozi (chapter 4) – sections 9, 16, 39, Laozi & Zhuangzi (chapter 5)  
*Daodejing* 1, 3, 4, 9, 28, 29, 48, 57, *Zhuangzi* chapters 3, 7

24<sup>th</sup> Sept: The Hundred Schools of Thought: Legalists, Mencius, and others

De Bary: Mencius (chapter 6) 1A:7, 2A:6, 3A:4, 3B:9, 6A:2, 6A:8, Xunzi (also chapter 6) chapters 1, 23, Legalists (chapter 7) p. 193-198

29<sup>th</sup> Sept: Debate on how to govern the world and order things (First essay due)

1<sup>st</sup> Oct: Unification of the Qin and the centralized state experiment

Ebrey: 60-63

6<sup>th</sup> Oct: Watching the movie “Hero”

**Paper 1 due**

8<sup>th</sup> Oct: Discussion of Hero themes, fall of the Qin, and the conversion to Han rule  
Ebrey: 63-85

15<sup>th</sup> Oct: The hybrid Han, and the early contacts with Xiongnu, salt and iron, statism  
R: Huan Kuan, “The Basic Argument,” “Hold Fast the Plough,” “Circulation of Goods,” “Territorial Expansion,” “The Poor and the Rich,” “Vilifying the Learned,” *Discourses on Salt and Iron*, Translated by Esson Gale, pp. 1-24, 99-119

20<sup>th</sup> Oct: The Grand Historian and the role of history  
De Bary: 368-374

22<sup>nd</sup> Oct: Role play of the salt & iron debate

27<sup>th</sup> Oct: Midterm

29<sup>th</sup> Oct: Disintegration of Central Rule and latter day memories of history  
R: Cohen, Paul,  
Ebrey: 86-95  
De Bary: 363-6

3<sup>rd</sup> Nov: Period of disunity  
Ebrey: 95-107

5<sup>th</sup> Nov: Buddhism and other religions  
De Bary: 400-6, 426-9

10<sup>th</sup> Nov: Sui dynasty and the reunification of China

12<sup>th</sup> Nov: Fall of Sui and the cosmopolitan Tang  
Ebrey: 108-127

17<sup>th</sup> Nov: Poetry and culture during this period  
Owen, *selections*

19<sup>th</sup> Nov: Wu Zetian, Xuanzong, and An Lushan  
R: Yuan Zhen, “Yingying’s story,” *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*, translated by Stephen Owen, pp. 192-204.

24<sup>th</sup> Nov: Roots of a Confucian revival  
De Bary: 568-73, 583-5

1<sup>st</sup> Dec: The Silk Road

R: Wood, Frances, *The Silk Road: two thousand years in the heart of Asia*,  
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

**Paper 2 due**

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec: Decline and fall of the Tang aristocracy

Ebrey: 127-135

8<sup>th</sup> Dec: Five dynasties and the new age of Song China

Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, Richard L. Davis trans.,  
New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. *Selections*

10<sup>th</sup> Dec: Review