



Topics in Pre-modern Chinese History

ASIA 508

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SCHEDULE

ASSESSMENT

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ABOUT THIS COURSE

The goal of this seminar is to introduce students to some of the major problems in Chinese historiography. Emphasis will be placed on issues that are particularly pertinent to the study of later imperial China.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

For more details on the individual components, see the [Assessment](#) section.

Attendance/Participation	20%
Short Essays	30%
Review Essay	50%

IMPORTANT DATES (PACIFIC TIME)

Jan. 7	First meeting
Jan. 17	Last date to withdraw without the "W" standing
Feb. 18–21	Midterm break
Mar. 7	Last date to withdraw

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: [Dr. Leo K. Shin](#)

Departments: [History](#) and Asian Studies

Contact: leo.shin@ubc.ca

Office Hours: By appointment ([sign-ups](#) / [Zoom link](#))

CLASS INFORMATION

Term: 2024 Winter (3 credits)

Seminar: Tu 15:00–17:30

Location: [BuTo 1226](#)

Course Blog:
blogs.ubc.ca/asia508a/

Canvas:
<https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/157722>

Download [2024W Syllabus](#)

Apr. 8	Last meeting
April. 22	Review essay due

TEXTS

All required readings are available online or from the instructor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

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SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (JAN. 7): ORIENTATION

WEEK 2 (JAN. 14): STATE OF THE FIELD

Survey the last three volumes (three years) or more of a top-tier journal in your field (or choose one from below) and prepare an oral report on the state of your field.

- Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
- Journal of Asian Studies
- Journal of Chinese History
- Ming Studies
- Late Imperial China

WEEK 3 (JAN. 21): THE IDEA OF CHINA

- Ge, Zhaoguang 葛兆光. *He wei Zhongguo: Jiang yu, min zu, wen hua yu li shi* 何為中國：疆域，民族，文化與歷史. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2014.
 - Ge Zhaoguang. [What is China? Territory, Ethnicity, Culture, and History](#). Translated by Michael Hill. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018.
 - Related titles by 葛兆光: 宅兹中国：重建有关“中国”的历史论述 (2011); 歷史中國的內與外：有關「中國」與「周邊」概念的再澄清 (2017o)

WEEK 4 (JAN. 28): IN/AND THE WORLD

- Brook, Timothy. [Great State: China and the World](#). London: Profile, 2019.

WEEK 5 (FEB. 4): WORLD ORDER REVISITED

- Wang, Sixiang. *Boundless Winds of Empire: Rhetoric and Ritual in Early Chosŏn Diplomacy with Ming China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2023.
 - Robinson, David M. *Ming China and Its Allies*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
 - Baldanza, Kathlene. *Ming China and Vietnam: Negotiating Borders in Early Modern Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
 - Fairbank, John King, ed. *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968.

WEEK 6 (FEB. 11): INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

WEEK 7 (FEB. 25): THE GLOBAL TURN

- Gerritsen, Anne. *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
 - Brook, Timothy. *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*. New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2008.

WEEK 8 (MAR. 4): THE MARITIME TURN

- Po, Ronald C. *The Blue Frontier: Maritime Vision and Power in the Qing Empire*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

WEEK 9 (MAR. 11): THE PHILOLOGICAL TURN

- Söderblom Saarela, Mårten. *The Early Modern Travels of Manchu: A Script and Its Study in East Asia and Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

WEEK 10 (MAR. 18): THE SENSORY TURN

- Huang, Xuelei. *Scents of China: A Modern History of Smell*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

WEEK 11 (MAR. 25): IN THE AGE OF ANTHROPOCENE

- Mostern, Ruth. *Yellow River: A Natural and Unnatural History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2021.

WEEK 12 (APR. 1): THE DH/AI TURN

- Readings to be confirmed

WEEK 13 (APR. 8): PRESENTATIONS

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ASSESSMENT

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION (20%)

Students are expected to actively participate and take turn leading class discussion.

SHORT ESSAYS (15 X 2 = 30%)

Two short review essays (about 1,500 words each) on two different weeks (i.e., Weeks 3–11) of readings. Due two weeks after the class meeting in question.

For each essay, you should:

- Place the week's reading(s) in their historiographical contexts.
- Reflect on the sources and methodology used.
- Identify and explain (some of) the strengths and weaknesses of the work(s) in question.

REVIEW ESSAY (50%)

Write a state-of-the-field essay suitable for publication in a top-tier journal in your field (e.g., the [Journal of Chinese History](#)). About 5,000 words). Due on April 22.

For this review essay, you should:

- Identify a suitably-scoped academic field that fits your interests.
- Select four to six publications (mostly books) that in your view best exemplify the accomplishments/directions of this field.
- Compare and contrast the works selected as well as critically place them (perhaps alongside some of the readings for this seminar) in their historiographical contexts.

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COURSE TOOLS

Here are the online platforms and tools we will be using for this course. For more information and support for any of the UBC-supported tools, please visit [Keep Learning](https://keeplearning.ubc.ca) (keeplearning.ubc.ca).

PRIVACY AND ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

Please be mindful that many of the online tools we will be using will capture data about your learning activities (user names, locations, duration of login, etc.). Please check with the instructor if you have any concerns.

COURSE BLOG

Our [Course Blog](https://blogs.ubc.ca/asia508a/) (blogs.ubc.ca/asia508a/) is where the **most pertinent information** for this course (schedule, requirements, instructions for assignments, etc.) can be found. When in doubt, check the information there.

CANVAS

We will be making (limited) use of the course [Canvas site](https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/157722) (canvas.ubc.ca/courses/157722). For support, please visit: keeplearning.ubc.ca/technologies/#canvas.

ZOOM (BACKUP)

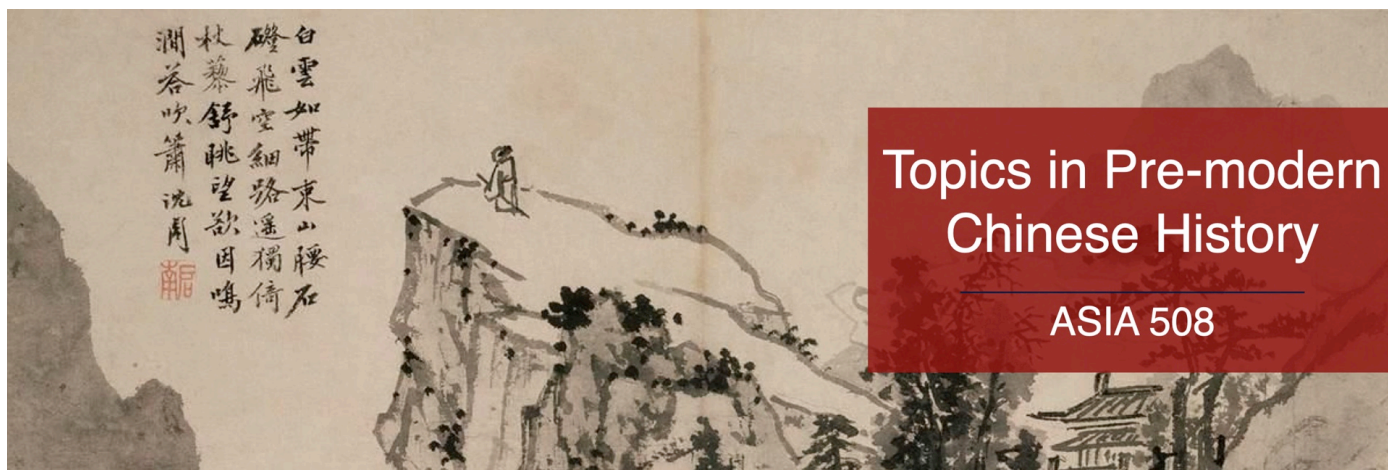
Class sessions are in-person only. But just in case we need to go online, here's the Zoom link:

Topic: [2024W-ASIA 508] Class Session (Backup)

<https://ubc.zoom.us/j/69796814492?pwd=bJpdganZAhouBBdMV233uX96rwUKNd.1>

Meeting ID: 697 9681 4492

Passcode: 071534



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UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the [UBC Senate website](#).

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

If you are ill, it is important that you stay home. The marking scheme for this course has built-in flexibility so you can prioritize your health and still succeed.

If you are unable to attend class or complete a required activity due to illness or another reasonable cause, you should let the instructor know as soon as possible. If appropriate and necessary, an alternative arrangement will be made.

As the instructor, if I am ill, I will not show up in the classroom, and I will communicate plans for class as soon as possible through Canvas and/or email. If we must shift to online mode (see [Zoom info](#)), our original classroom will be available for you to attend the session.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodation is designed to enable students with disabilities or ongoing medical conditions to overcome challenges that may affect their academic performance. Students who require academic accommodation must register with the [Centre for Accessibility](#) (previously known as Access & Diversity). The Centre will make a determination about accommodation in accordance with [Policy LR7: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Academic accommodation is not determined by the instructors, and instructors should not ask students about the nature of their disabilities (or ongoing medical conditions) or request copies of their disability documentation. However, an instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility if the accommodation prescribed is interfering with the essential learning outcomes of a course.

RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

Our interactions in this class must adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Respectful Environment Statement](#).

When we gather to learn, we come together with a diversity of human attributes and perspectives, and we share the responsibility to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment that respects differences of all sorts. Please treat each other with kindness and alert the instructor of any concerns.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or examination and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the [Student Conduct and Discipline](#) section of the UBC Calendar.

USE OF GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

As technology continues to evolve, we will have a conversation at the start of the term about how best to balance the utility of the latest AI tools and the learning objectives of the course.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Out of consideration for others, during class, please use your electronic devices only for class-related activities. We will take breaks. So, water is allowed in the classroom, but not food.

LEARNING RESOURCES

- Health, Well Being, and Safety
<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/health-wellbeing-safety>
- Centre for Accessibility
<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>
- Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication
<https://writing.library.ubc.ca/>
- Chapman Learning Commons
<https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/>

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