

Course Title	: HISTORY OF EARLY CHINA: FROM PREHISTORY TO THE HAN DYNASTY
Course Code	: HST2003
Recommended Study Year	: Any
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional approach
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	: History Major Programme Elective, Category 1: "China and Hong Kong"
Prerequisite	: None
Co-requisite(s)	: None
Exclusion(s)	: None
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

In ancient China, we have one of the oldest civilizations in all of world history. From the beginning of agriculture to the creation of empires more than two millennia ago, it gave rise to a diverse set of socio-political, economic, and cultural institutions that would come to have great impact on the history of East Asia and the world at large. This course is an introduction to this history of ancient China. Specifically, we will focus on the rise of empires in the long first millennium BCE from the collapse of the Zhou aristocratic order to the rise of the Qin and Han empires. Why did the earlier Bronze Age aristocratic kingdoms of the Zhou collapse, and what motivated the creation of these new imperial regimes? What were the arguments for or against empires? We will study the complex historical process that led to the rise of empires in early China.

Aims

In this course, students will gain a knowledge of the basic history of the ancient period, from the earliest human activities to the first rise of empires in early China, with an emphasis on major political events and intellectual trends. Through both primary textual and visual materials, they will be introduced to the rich and diverse historical experiences in ancient China. They will see the different ways in which this fractious foundation had profoundly shaped the subsequent course of the history of China to the present day.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and narrate the major themes and events in the history of ancient China, from prehistoric times to the end of the Han dynasty in the third century CE
- 2) Summarize the current key historiographical debates in the field, and explain their significance to our broader understanding of Chinese history and world history at large
- 3) Explain how ancient history is reconstructed by way of careful reading of textual sources and archaeological finds.

Indicative Content

- I. Introduction: What is ancient China? Why study ancient China?
- II. Land and people of Ancient China
- III. Pre-historic cultures: Yangshao, Longshan and the Xia dynasty
- IV. Shang dynasty and the discovery of oracle bones
- V. The world of the Shang dynasty and beyond
- VI. Founding of the Western Zhou dynasty and the Mandate of Heaven
- VII. Collapse of the Western Zhou dynasty
- VIII. Spring-and-Autumn Period: politics and warfare in a multi-state World
- IX. Confucius and the *Analects*
- X. The first interlocutor of Confucius: *Mozi* and moral calculus
- XI. Metaphysics and Government in the *Laozi*
- XII. Mencius, Xunzi, and the Confucian debate over human nature
- XIII. Lord Shang, Han Feizi, and the Triumph of Legalism
- XIV. The Qin Conquest
- XV. The Qin Empire
- XVI. The First Emperor of Qin and the end of history
- XVII. The fall of the Qin empire
- XVIII. Founding of the Han empire and its administrative schizophrenia
- XIX. Traumatic legacy of the Qin: Lu Jia and Jia Yi
- XX. Feudal lords of the early Han: Mawangdui Tomb and the Master of Huainan
- XXI. Emperor Wu and Han imperialism
- XXII. Han empire and the Xiongnu confederation
- XXIII. Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian*
- XXIV. Wang Mang and the economic history of the Han empire
- XXV. Women and gender under the Han empire
- XXVI. End of the Han empire

Teaching Method

There will be lectures and group discussion in each class meeting. The lectures will provide the broad historical background, and the group discussion, led by the instructor, will focus on primary materials, both textual and visual, from ancient China.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- I. Class participation: attendance and levels of discussion are measured to assess students' engagement with the materials. (LOs 2, 3)
- II. Response papers: series of short response papers on primary sources (LOs 2, 3)
- III. Midterm exam: to assess students' understanding and mastery of basic historical facts (LO 1)
- IV. Final exam: to assess students' understanding and mastery of basic historical facts and ability to assess different narratives of this historical period (LOs 1, 2, 3)

Assessment

Continuous Assessment: 100%

- I. Class participation: 20%
- II. Response papers: 10%
- III. Midterm test 30%
- IV. Final exam 40%

Required Readings

Li Feng. *Early China: A Social and Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Michael Loewe and Edward Shaughnessy, eds. *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings

Brindley, Erica. *Ancient China and the Yue: Perceptions and Identities on the Southern Frontier, C. 400 BCE-50 CE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Chin, Tamara T. *Savage Exchange: Han Imperialism, Chinese Literary Style, and the Economic Imagination*. Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 94. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Asia Center, 2014.

Cook, Constance A., and Paul Rakita Goldin, eds. *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions*. Early China Special Monograph Series, No. 7. Berkeley, California: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mark, ed. *Readings in Han Chinese Thought*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2006.

Denecke, Wiebke. *The Dynamics of Masters Literature: Early Chinese Thought from*

- Confucius to Han Feizi*. Harvard-Yenching Institute Monographs 74. Cambridge, Mass: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Di Cosmo, Nicola. *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*. 1st pbk. ed. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Dong, Zhongshu, Sarah A. Queen, and John S. Major. *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Durrant, Stephen, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, trans. *Zuo Tradition. Volume 2: [...]*. 1st edition. Classics of Chinese Thought. Seattle London: University of Washington Press, 2016.
- Falkenhausen, Lothar von. *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence*. Ideas, Debates, and Perspectives, v. 2. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006.
- Graham, A. C. *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*. La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1989.
- Hawkes, David, ed. *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets*. Penguin Classics. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England ; New York, N.Y., U.S.A: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Ivanhoe, P. J., and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub, 2005.
- Lewis, Mark Edward. *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*. SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- . *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han*. 1. Harvard Univ. Press paperback ed. History of Imperial China. Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2010.
- Liu, An, and John S. Major, eds. *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Lü, Buwei, John Knoblock, and Jeffrey K. Riegel, eds. *The Annals of Lü Buwei =: [Lü Shi Chun Qiu]: A Complete Translation and Study*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Major, John S., and Constance A. Cook. *Ancient China: A History*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.
- Nylan, Michael, and Michael Loewe, eds. *China's Early Empires: A Re-Appraisal*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 67. Cambridge ; New York:

- Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Nylan, Michael, Griet Vankeerberghen, and Michael Loewe, eds. *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015.
- Puett, Michael J. *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- . *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*. 1. paperback ed. Harvard-Yenching Institute Monographs Series 57. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Schwartz, Benjamin Isadore. *The World of Thought in Ancient China*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1985.
- Shang, Yang, and J. J. L. Duyvendak. *The book of Lord Shang: a classic of the Chinese school of law*, 2011.
- Shang, Yang, and Yuri Pines. *The Book of Lord Shang: Apologetics of State Power in Early China*. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.
- Shelach-Lavi, Gideon. *The Archaeology of Early China: From Prehistory to the Han Dynasty*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Sima, Qian, and Burton Watson. *Records of the Grand Historian. [...] 1: Han Dynasty [...]*. Rev. ed. Records of Civilization 65. Hong Kong: Columbia Univ. Press Book, 1993.
- . *Records of the Grand Historian. Han Dynasty*. Rev. ed. Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies, no. 65. Hong Kong; New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- . *Records of the Grand Historian. Qin Dynasty*. Hong Kong; New York: Research Centre for Translation, Chinese University of Hong Kong; Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Von Glahn, Richard. *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Waley, Arthur, and Joseph Roe Allen, eds. *The Book of Songs*. 1st ed. New York: Grove Press, 1996.
- Wilkinson, Endymion Porter. *Chinese History: A New Manual*. Fourth edition. Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 100. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2015.
- Yao, Alice. *The Ancient Highlands of Southwest China: From the Bronze Age to the Han Empire*. Oxford Studies in the Archaeology of Ancient States. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.