508 course descriptions FALL 2007

**508:340 Late Imperial China 900-1800**
Professor Xun Liu

This is an upper division survey course of Chinese history from the 10th to the 1800. In surveying the history of the six dynasties which span between 900 and 1800, we will trace the major historical changes and continuities in politics, cultural life, and inter-ethnic relations of late imperial China, focusing specifically on the life and status of Confucian literati, women, and religious practitioners of the period.

As the non-Han steppe nations such as the Khitans, the Jurchens, the Mongols, and the Manchu dominated this period of Chinese history and culture, their roles in the formation of the culture and society of what we now call imperial China will be emphasized. We will look at how these steppe nations interacted with the sedentary farming communities in China and how their interaction in turn came to shape their rule and the cultural, political, and intellectual life in China during this period. As we do so, we challenge the “Han-centric” notion of Chinese history by examining “China” as a historical construct whose meanings shifted during this period.

This course is organized around weekly lectures, reading assignments, and classroom discussions.

The reading list includes the following:
5) Additional Reading materials (available for $3)

**508:360 History of Brazil**
Professor Gail Triner

The History of Brazil explores the major themes of Brazilian history since independence. Brazil currently accounts for about half of Latin America, in population, geographic area and economic size. The country has experienced extremes in its history; and today it straddles the First and Third Worlds. This course develops insight on how Brazil reached its current condition. It covers social, political, economic and cultural developments. The major themes that we will focus on include: the nature and effect of slavery on Brazil, the tensions between continuity/change and between individual/society in Brazilian history.
508:364 Environmental History of Latin America
Professor Gail Triner

The mutual re-shaping of physical environment and human society in Latin America as a result of their continual interaction is the focus of this course. With an ambitious chronological framework, the course spans the relationship of pre-Colombian societies with their environments, and continues through contemporary considerations of globalization and “sustainable development.”

European contact with the Americas was the most dramatic man-made environmental event in human history. This course explores the role of environment in many inter-cultural clashes. It examines the perceptions that early European arrivals developed of the indigenous populations as falling within a continuum between the “animal” and “human” worlds, rather than clearly in either category. The impact of a new – European – population on the natural environment is also a subject of the course. Additional topics include the role of physical setting in defining racial categorization and national identity. We will consider the concepts at issue with each of these topics and explore specific historic experience in various settings throughout Latin America.

The course is organized chronologically, in three sections: the pre-colonial and colonial eras, the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century. At the conclusion of each section, there will be an essay examination, and a final exam will conclude the course.

508:369 Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Latin America
Professor Temma Kaplan
Fall 2007, TTh. 1:10 to 2:30 p.m.

This course will examine sexuality, memory, dance, and photography in the context of revolutionary social change in Argentina, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Puerto Rico in the late 19\textsuperscript{th}, 20\textsuperscript{th}, and early 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries. By studying gay and straight cultures, religious and cultural, pursuits, and black, mixed-race, and white people, the course will consider how authoritarian and democratic governments use gender and race to consolidate their control over diverse communities. With such concerns, the reading and lectures will delve deeply into questions of the meanings of sexual choice, social change, and culture - all from a gendered perspective.

508:391 Modern China Thru Films and Fiction
Professor Xun Liu

This upper-class course examines selected topics and issues of modern Chinese history, especially the 20\textsuperscript{th} century of modern China by closely analyzing a combination of cinematic, historical and literary material. Through reading assignments, film screenings, lectures, and in-class discussion, we trace several major developments in modern China, notably nationalism and social revolution, reform and modernization, women and gender, in the context of the evolving tension and continuity between
tradition and modernity. We will pay particular attention to the evolving relationship between the state and the intellectuals, the social and economic change of the rural society, and the life and status of women in China’s long and continuous transformation from a traditional society to a modern society. We will examine how China’s processes of modernization have been shaped by both traditional and western systems of values and ideas.

This course emphasizes on reading, writing, and discussion. It is organized around in-class lectures, reading, viewing and writing assignments, and in-class discussion. Since we will be spending a lot of time discussing reading assignments in connection with the movies we watch, it is essential that you complete all your reading assignments before joining the class.

Books: (The reserved materials are at Alexander Library)
1) Shen Fu, Six Records of a Floating Life
2) Maurice Meisner, Mao’s China and After
3) Yang Jiang, Six Chapters of My Life from Downunder
4) China Pop
5) Additional Reading materials Packet ($3)
6) Tom Gunning: Making Sense of Films (PDF file delivered to your eden email account)
7) Dai Sijie: Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress
8) John King Fairbank: The Great Chinese Revolution