Chinese Renaissance, 1000-1400

The oldest enduring civilization in the world, China’s glorious, long history has often been interpreted as a sign of its fundamental stagnation. The German philosopher Hegel, for example, once described China as “the empire of duration.” But the very fact that the Chinese empire continued to prosper for such a long period shows that its history underwent a series of significant transformations to adjust to the change of time. One of the most important of all is what scholars call the Tang-Song transition, which has been thought to be the beginning of its “early modern” era. The period witnesses the end of medieval aristocracy, the restructuring of imperial power vis-à-vis bureaucracy and society, and the growth of vernacular culture. Woodblock printing, sailor’s compass, and gunpowder were invented in China during this period. The commercialization of the economy and the urbanization of society that took place in this period were unprecedented not only in China but also in the rest of the world. Moreover, against the prevalent Buddhist and Daoist philosophies, a new, radical reinterpretation of the Confucian classics appeared and eventually established itself as a new state orthodoxy that lasted for 700 years until the early 20th century. In this class, we explore social, cultural, and intellectual changes of this important period in Chinese history.

This course is designed as a 300-level history course. Through the course, students are expected to read about 120 to 150 pages a week and to develop a skill of thinking through primary sources and of evaluating the quality of scholarly works.

Instructor: Sukhee Lee; sukhlee@rci.rutgers.edu There is no phone in my office. Email is the only way of contacting me outside the class. Use your Rutgers email account when you write to me. And please do not forget to start your subject line with “(Chinese Renaissance)” so that I can recognize that it is from one of you.
Office: Van Dyck 002E (College Avenue Campus);
Office Hours: Thursday 10:00-12:00; or by appointment

Books to be purchased
Frederick Mote, Imperial China 900-1800 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Used paper back edition is available at online bookstores such as Amazon from around $11.00.
These books have been also ordered at Rutgers University bookstore. All other readings will be uploaded at Sakai course site as pdf file.

Grading
Class attendance and participation (attendance 5% and participation 10%) 15%
FIVE response papers based on primary source analysis 10%
THREE Quizzes 15%
TWO Papers

One Book review (should be double-spaced, typed, and 5-6 page long) 20%
One paper reconstructing a Song dynasty Family (3-4 page, double-spaced) 10%
Final exam 30%

On academic integrity
Plagiarized paper or cheating in exams will result in, at least, “F” for the assignment. In addition, the cases will be reported to the university administration for sanctions. As for the Rutgers policies on academic integrity, see http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml

Other Class Policies
*Lecture and section attendance is your most basic responsibility. I will take attendance at every lecture and section. Unexcused absences, when they exceed twice, will affect your final grade. (e.g. 3 times, -10% from your “class attendance and participation”; 4 times, -20%; …) If you are absent from more than one third of the entire classes and sections, you will automatically get “F.”
*Please turn off your cell phones as a courtesy to others.
*Late paper will be penalized by subtracting FIVE points for every day past the due date for the first FIVE days. No paper will be accepted after FIVE days past the due. Famous lines such as “I am pretty sure that I emailed that to you the other day” or “I certainly uploaded it at Sakai in time, but somehow can’t find it there now” will do no good unless you show me “hard evidence” of such claims (e.g. a print of your original sent mail showing the time of its sending).

Weekly Schedule

Week 1  Issues and Perspective
September 7  Introduction: Problematizing Middle Period Chinese History
Reading

September 8  A Sea Change from Tang to Song in a Nutshell
Reading
1. Peter Bol, Neo-Confucianism in History (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), Chapter 1 “The New World of the Eleventh Century: 750 and 1050 Compared.”

Week 2  Basic Narrative of Song-Yuan History
September 12  Political History of Northern Song
Reading
1. Mote, Imperial China, 92-118

September 14  Political History of Southern Song
Reading
1. Mote, Imperial China, 289-322

Week 3  Conquest Dynasties
September 19  Khitan Liao and Jurchen Jin
Reading

**September 21**  The World Empire of the Mongols

**Reading**
1. Mote, 444-73.

**Week 4**  “Medieval Economic Revolution” in China: Commerce and Urbanization

**September 26**  Commerce and Urbanization

**Reading**
1. Mote, 351-54, 359-64, and 367-68.

**September 28**  Reform and Its Critics I: Wang Anshi and His Vision

**Reading**
1. Mote, 135-43.

**Primary texts:** Wang Anshi, “Memorial of a Myriad Words” (translated by H.R. Williamson); de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 617-18.

**Week 5**  Reform and Its Critics II

**October 3**  Anti-Reform and Polemical Politics

**Reading**

**Primary texts:** de Bary, 621-626.

**October 5**  Discussion Section I on Wang Anshi and Sima Guang

**Week 6**  Examinations and Orthodoxy

**October 10**  Civil Service Examination: How It Worked

**Reading**

**Primary texts:** de Bary, 737-42.

**October 12**  The Impact of the Examinations: State Orthodoxy and Literati Culture

**Reading**
1. Mote, 131-35.

**Primary texts:** Wu Jingzi (=Wu Ching-tzu), *The Scholars*, translated by Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, 33-90.

**Week 7**  Law and Order: Ideal and Practices
October 17 | Discussion Section II on the Examinations
October 19 | Legal Structure of the Empire
Reading

Week 8 | “Law and Order” continues
October 24 | Litigation, Administrator’s Manuals, and Forensic Medicine
Primary texts: Selections from The Enlightened Judgments: Ch’ing-ming chi The Song Dynasty Collection (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1999)

October 26 | Discussion Section III on “Law and Order.”

Week 9 | The Family and Women
October 31 | Transformation of the Chinese Family
Reading
1. Mote, 368-70.

November 2 | Women in the Family and Society
Reading
2. Beverly Bossler, “A Daughter is a Daughter All Her Life: Affinal Relations and Women’s Networks in Song and Late Imperial China,” Late Imperial China 21.1 (June, 2000): 77-106.

Week 10 | Intellectual Movement of Neo-Confucianism
November 7 | Discussion Section IV on the Family and Women
November 8 | Neo-Confucianism in Political and Intellectual Context
Reading
1. Mote, 144-49.
Primary texts: de Bary, 689-97.

Week 11 | Social Agenda of Neo-Confucianism
November 14 | Zhu Xi and a New Sense of Ordering the World
Reading

**Primary texts:** de Bary, 697-714, 742-54.

November 16  **Discussion Section V on Neo-Confucianism**

**Week 12**  Technology and Medicine

November 21  Things that Kill and Things that Heal

Reading

November 23  Thanksgiving holiday  **NO CLASS**

**Week 13**  Art and Literature

November 28  Prose, Poetry, and Painting

Reading

**Primary texts:** Su Shi, “Rhapsody on Red Cliff,” translated by Ronald Egan (*Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, 222-223); “On Analogies for the Sun” (Egan, 54-55); “Letter to Zhang Lei,” (Egan, 63-64); “Eight Poems on the East Slope,” translated by Alice Cheang

November 30  **Discussion Section VI on Su Shi et al.**

**Week 14**

December 5  New Forms of Local Religion

Reading
1. Mote, 156-64 and 497-502.

December 7  The Yuan-Ming Transition

Reading
1. Mote, 517-66.

**Primary texts:** de Bary, 780-86 and 788-93.

**Week 15**  Review

December 12  Wrap-up