



Late Imperial China, 900-1800 [508-340]
Spring, 2022 Professor Xun LIU

Course description:

In this survey course of late imperial Chinese history, we explore the social, cultural, and political histories of six Chinese dynasties which span between 900 and 1800. We focus on major historical changes and continuities in areas of state formation, gender and ethnic relations, social and cultural customs of late imperial China. Since many non-Han steppe nations such as the Khitans, Jürchens, Mongols, and Manchu dominated this period, we will examine how these steppe nations interacted with the sedentary farming communities in China and how their interactions shaped the state formation, cultural and social customs, gender hierarchy, and religious and intellectual traditions in China. In so doing, we will closely examine and question the traditional “Han-centric” interpretations of Chinese history, and examine “China” as a historical construct whose meanings shifted and changed during this period as a result of the intense interaction.

Next, we also pay particular attention to the life of Chinese literati, women, and religious practitioners of this period and examine how they each fared as a group or class under the various dynasties, and explored their respective roles and influences at different times and places during this period of great social and political change and upheaval. Lastly, we will examine the material culture and the technology that supported that everyday life in traditional China by looking at what and how the Chinese produced, traded and consumed daily commodities. Our purpose is to explore the relationship between the conceptual and the material, commerce and cosmology, between ideas and practices in traditional China, and understand how traditional Chinese cosmology and cultural values impacted the way Chinese material goods, technologies, and way of life evolved over time.

As we explore the social, political and cultural development of China’s late imperium, we will ponder the question of how our own modern world came to be the way it is now. By looking closely at various historically contingent events and developments of this period before the modern age, we also challenge the Eurocentric view of modernity as an inevitable and unique experience of the West. Through lectures, classroom discussions, and reading and writing assignment, and occasional film presentations, this course seeks to help you acquire a basic knowledge about the cultures, peoples, and historical processes that have shaped the history of late imperial China.

Textbooks and reading materials:

- 1) Frederick Mote, *Late Imperial China, 900-1800*.
- 2) Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung*.
- 3) Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture of the 17th century China*.
- 4) Additional Reading materials (Delivered to your Scarlet email account and in Modules of Canvas)

<u>Grading:</u>	Attendance	10 %
	Discussion/Participation	15%
	5 Written Responses	25 % (5 points each)
	3 Tests	30 % (10% each)
	Final	20 %