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Course proposal History of Early China

I. Catalog Description

HIST 332 History of Early China

3 class hours 0 lab hours 3 semester hours (3c-01-3sh)

Prerequisites: none

China from the dawn of history to the Tang Dynasty. The course will focus on the creation of the intellectual and political systems that have dominated China and East Asia down to the present. Looks in depth at the origins of Chinese philosophy and the imperial system.

II. Course Objectives

Students will-

- -learn the major themes of early Chinese history.
- -learn the major historiographical themes in the study of early China and reach the point where they are able to engage critically with both primary sources and the secondary literature.
- -learn to work with and analyze primary and secondary historical sources
- -understand the complex relationships between the dominant groups in Chinese society and non-dominant groups including ethnic minorities, women, and peasants.

III. Course outline

Total of 41 hours of classroom instruction, 1 hour for mid-term exam, 2 hour final exam

A. Geography and the Neolithic age 3 hours

Who gets to be Chinese? Hunters and gatherers. Neolithic revolution. Pots. The Yellow River. Yangshao culture. Erlitou and Erligang. The majesty of civilization. Mobilization of labor. Social stratification. Xin'gang and regional variations.

- -What are the different meanings that Zhong guo has had?
- -Why did some people make the transition to agriculture? Why did others not, and why?
- Why is the use of archeological evidence problematic? What sort of questions can we and can we not answer with it?

B. Shang dynasty. Learning to write 3 hours

Xia, Shang, and Zhou. Anyang. The king and the ancestors. Oracle bones and bronzes. The king and the universe. A shamanistic state. The Anyang network. Kings and their relatives. Court and proto-bureaucracy.

- -Was Anyang a city? A palace? How was it connected to places outside Anyang?
- -What role did the ancestors play in the Shang system? Be sure to consider both the religious and the political system.
- -What is a dynastic transition?
- -Why are the Houma covenants so important? What sort of sources are used to study this period in general?

C. Zhou and collapse of W. Zhou. Using texts 4 hours

Covenants and dead chickens. The king and history. Mandate of Heaven. Texts and their power. Rise of the centralized state. The new military and the experts.

- -What was new about the emerging states of this period?
- -What was new about the army? Why is the Art of War such an important text?
- -Who were the shi? What did they do? What does it mean to call them a class?

D. Confucius and Mozi 5 hours

Textual traditions and the creation of the classics The *shi* and the *ru*, Confucius and Sunzi. Ritual vs. experts and experts on ritual. Confucius and why he was liked. Mozi and the common people

- -What were the classics? How did they develop and why did they matter?
- -Why was ritual important? Who were the ru?
- -Why is Allen so hung up on water?
- -What is a junzi for Confucius? How do you get to be one and why to they matter so much?
- -Why did the Mo-ists dislike the Confucians so much? What does it mean to call the Mo-ists a school?

E. Mencius vs. Xunzi 2 hours

The Confucian tradition and its unfolding. Mencius and human nature. Xunzi and human nature

- -What is the Confucian school at this point? How do these two fit into it?
- -Why is Xunzi considered a Confucian rather than a Legalist?

F. Zhuangzi and escape Laozi and the legalists 4 hours

Li Sao Shamanism, hermits, and isolated villages. Laozi, the ultimate, and Huang Lao, Zhuangzi, turtles, and cows

- -What was Chu culture? What does it have to do with China?
- -What is Shamanism? What does it have to do with Chinese religion?
- -School of the tillers.
- -All the other classical philosophers were concerned with restoring order. What does Zhuangzi think of this?

G. Qin 2 hours

Legalists and Peasants. Unification and the Emperor. The fall of Qin.

- -What did the Warring states period do to and for peasants?
- -What do the Legalists have to do with Laozi? With Xunxi?
- -Explain the Dao. Give three examples.

H. Han State and the new shi 3 hours

Han state and feudalism. Debates on salt and iron. Shiji and Dong Zhongshu

- -Did Han really reject Qin legalism?
- -Explain the deal between the Han court and the *shi*. Why is this a symbiotic relationship? What does it have to do with Chu Yuan?
- -What is the Han synthesis? Why did I call Sima Qian and Dong Zhongshu the outcome of classical Chinese thought?

I. Han Synthesis 3 hours

Wang Mang and court politics. Barbarians of the North. Dynastic cycle in action Yellow turbans

- -What is the tribute system, and how was it supposed to work?
- -What was wrong with eunuchs (besides the obvious) and women?
- -How was the fall of the Han different from the dynastic transitions we have looked at before? What is a secret society?

J. Three Kingdoms 3 hours

Three kingdoms in Chinese literature, religion, and popular culture. The new states and elites. Neo Daoism. The body and the self. How to fix them both.

- -Were the states of this period barbarian or Chinese?
- -What is Neo Daoism? Why did it appeal to the elite? Why does it matter?

K. Buddhism 3 hours

Basic Buddhism. Sinification of Buddhism. The institutions of Buddhism

- -What is Buddhism? Is it a religion?
- -How did Buddhism get to China, and how did this process change it? What did the Chinese want from Buddhism?
- -What is Chan? Is it Daoism or Buddhism?
- -How did Buddhism function as a religion? How similar was it to Taoism in this respect?
- -Why did Han Yun and Hui Yuan see Buddhism differently? Were there any similarities between them?

L. Tang (and Sui) Unification 3 hours

Imperial rule. Chang an and the culture of the court. Exams and the new elite. Printing and the lower classes. Popular religion.

- -How were the Tang emperors different from emperors before them?
- -What is cultural capital? How did emperors and others get it?
- -What was the exam system supposed to accomplish? How well did it work?
- -Why do we know more about the lives of the lower classes after the Tang? How were they different from the elite?

M. The light of Asia 3 hours

- 1 Commerce and wealth.
- 2 China moves South
- 3. The East Asian world
- -What role did commerce play in the transformation of Tang and Song China?
- -How did Chinese civilization spread to the South? What did the Tang state have to do with this?
- -Why did Vietnamese Koreans and Japanese borrow so much from China? Why did they call themselves Zhongguo ren?

IV. Evaluation Methods

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Quizzes and other assignments 10%

Students will take in-class quizzes and will also get points for short class presentations and reaction papers.

Paper 45%

Each student will write a paper analyzing a section of a classical text.

Paper Presentation 5%

Mid-term 20%

Short answer and essay

Final Exam 20%

Short answer and essay

Attendance policy: Students are expected to attend class, but are also assumed to be adults. Thus attendance will not be taken, and there will be no punishment for not attending class beyond the lower grades on exams that inevitably result from not attending class. Students with an excused absence can request make-up exams or turn in assignments late. Other late assignments will be graded down one mark a day (A+ becomes an A, etc.)

- V. Required textbooks, supplemental books and readings
- -Burton Watson, trans. Chuang tzu: Basic Writings Columbia, 1964
- -Sarah Allen. The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue SUNY 1997.
- -David Hawkes. The Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets Penguin, 1995.

VI. Special resource requirements

none

VII. Bibliography

Journals

Acta Asiatica ISSN 0567-7254 Asia Major ISSN 0004-4482 Early China ISSN 0362-5028

Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies ISSN 0073-0548

Journal of the American Oriental Society ISSN 0003-0279

Journal of Asian Studies ISSN 0021-9118

Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient ISSN 0022-4995

Monumenta Serica ISSN 0254-9948

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Reference works

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- -Elvin, Mark, and Caroline Blunden, Cultural Atlas of China. Oxford: Equinox Books, 1983.
- -Loewe Michael, ed. Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide. Berkeley: University of California Institute of East Asian Studies, 1994.
- -Tan Qixiang, ed. Zhongguo lishi ditu ji (The Historical Atlas of China) 8 vols Shanghai: Ditu chubanshe, 1982.
- -Wilkinson, Endymion, Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- -Zurndorfer, Harriet. China Bibliography: A Research Guide to Reference Works about China Past and Present. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press Press, 1999.

General works

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- -Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. The Cambridge Illustrated History of China. Cambridge, 1996.
- -Holcome, Charles. *The Genesis of East Asia 221 B.C.-A.D. 907*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2001.
- -Kuhn, Dieter. Status and Ritus: Das China der Aristokraten von den Anfangen bis zum 10. Jahrhundert nach Christus. Heidelberg: Forum, 1991.
- -Loewe, Michael, and Shaughnessy, Edward, eds. Cambridge History of Ancient China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- -Needham, Joseph. Science and Civilization in China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959-
- I. Introductory Orientations. Joseph Needham, with the research assistance of Wang Ling (1954)
 II. History of Scientific Thought. Joseph Needham, with the research assistance of Wang Ling (1956)
- IV. Physics and Physical Technology
- 1. Physics. Joseph Needham, with the research assistance of Wang Ling, and the special cooperation of Kenneth Girdwood Robinson (1962)
- 2. Mechanical Engineering. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Wang Ling(1965)
- 3. Civil Engineering and Nautics. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Wang Ling and Lu Gwei-djen(1971)

- V. Chemistry and Chemical Technology
- 1. Paper and Printing. Tsien Tsuen-Hsuin (1985)
- 2. Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Magisteries of Gold and Immortality. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Lu Gwei-djen(1974)
- 3. Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Historical Survey, from Cinnabar Elixirs to Synthetic Insulin. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Ho Ping-Yu [Ho Peng-Yoke] and Lu Gweidjen(1976)
- 4. Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Apparatus and Theory . Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Lu Gwei-djen, and a contribution by Nathan Sivin (1980)
- 5. Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Physiological Alchemy. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Lu Gwei-djen(1983)
- 6. Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges. Joseph Needham, Robin D.S. Yates, with the collaboration of Krzysztof Gawlikowski, Edward McEwen and Wang Ling (1994)
- 7. Military Technology: The Gunpowder Epic. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Ho Ping-Yu [Ho

Peng-Yoke], Lu Gwei-djen and Wang Ling (1987)

- 9. Textile Technology: Spinning and Reeling. Dieter Kuhn (1986)
- 13. Mining. Peter Golas (1999, IN PRESS)
- VI. Biology and Biological Technology
- 1. Botany. Joseph Needham, with the collaboration of Lu Gwei-djen, and a special contribution by Huang Hsing-Tsung(1986)
- 2. Agriculture. Francesca Bray (1988)
- 3. Agroindustries and Forestry. Christopher.A. Daniels and Nicholas .K. Menzies (1996)
- 5. Fermentations and Food Science. H.T. Huang(2000, IN PRESS)
- 6. *Medicine*. Joseph Needham and Lu Gwei-djen, edited by Nathan Sivin (1999, IN PRESS) VII. *The Social Background*
- 1. Language and Logic. Christof Harbsmeier (1998)
- -Ropp, Paul S. Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization. University of California Press, 1990.

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- -_____. Art, Myth and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- -_____. The Archaeology of Ancient China. 4th ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- -Keightley, David. *The Ancestral Landscape: Time, Space and Community in Late Shang China (ca. 1200-1045 B.C.)* Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies University of California, Berkeley, 2000.
- -_____. "Akatsuka Kiyoshi and the Culture of Early China: A Study in Historical Method." Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 1982 42:267-320.
- -Liu Li "Settlement Patterns, Chiefdom Variability, and the Development of Early States in North China." *Journal of Anthropological Archeology* (1996) 15:237-88.
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Zhou

- -Cook, Constance, and John S. Major. *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Ancient China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.
- -De Woskin, Kenneth. *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- -Hsu, Cho-yun. Ancient China in Transition. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965.
- -_____, and Katheryn M. Linduff. Western Chou Civilization. New Haven: Yale University

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- -Wang Aihe. Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.
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Classical Philosophy

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- -Shaughnessy, Edward. Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.
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- There are also various source books and collections of translations. Among the most important are
- -Chan, Wing-tsit. A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- -deBarry, Chan, and Watson, comp. Sources of Chinese Tradition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960.
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Qin and Han

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Age of Disunity

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Tang

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Art

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Religion

- -Birrell, Anne. Chinese Mythology: An Introduction. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993
- -Bokenkamp, Stephen. Early Daoist Scriptures. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- -Cahill, Suzanne. *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
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Gender

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Course Analysis Questionnaire

Section A: Details of the Course

A1 This course is intended as an elective for History majors. It will be one of several courses which will fulfill the departmental Non-Western requirement. It is also intended for students in other majors who are interested in China, and will carry university Non-Western and Liberal Studies credit.

- A2 This course requires no changes in existing courses.
- A3 This course was offered as a Special Topics 481 class in Fall 2001.
- A4 This will not be a dual-level course
- A5 This course will not be offered for variable credit

A6 Similar courses are offered at many institutions. Examples include University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Northern Illinois University and Stanford University.

A7 This course is not connected to any outside agency

Section B: Interdisciplinary Implications

- B1 This course will be taught by one instructor
- B2 This course is not related to courses in any other department
- B3 Seats will be made available to Continuing Education students

Section C: Implementation

- C1 Faculty resources are adequate. The course will be taught by the same faculty member who is currently teaching it as a 481 (Special Topics). 481 will be taught less frequently because of this.
- C2 Although increased library holdings would be very helpful, no new resources are needed. No equipment, supplies or travel are required, and space is adequate.
 - C3 No grant funds are involved
 - C4 The course will be offered about every other year
 - C5 One section
 - C6 30 students
 - C7 No professional society recommends any limits.

Section D: Miscellaneous

Liberal studies IV

- **A.** This course will be taught in a single section by a single instructor.
- B. Minority groups are central to the course, since this is the period in which China was formed as a unitary civilization out of a collection of regional cultures. We will look at the creation of a "Chinese" culture and what that could mean, as well as the relationship between China and outside cultures. Minority groups such as the Toba become tremendously important in the later part of the class, and will we look at the evolution of Chinese society under their rule and the cosmopolitan society of the Tang. Women are essential to understanding the Chinese family, the central institution in Chinese society. We will also look the roles of women in Chinese politics and the influence of women on the Buddhist Sangha, one of the few institutions which allowed women to hold positions of power.
- C. Students will read Zhuangzi, Chuci, and selections from a number of other works.
- **D.** It is assumed that this course will draw Asian Studies minors with little familiarity with historical method, as well as other non-majors. Almost all students will have had HIST 195 or the equivalent. The course will introduce students to the distinction between primary and secondary sources and train them in the use of both. Each student will work with historical monographs and learn how to critique author's use of historical evidence through their book reviews. In-class discussions of short primary sources will introduce students to their use.