

Huron Brief Course Outlines

Fall/Winter 2023-2024

Course Title: China: Tradition and Transformation

Course Number and Section

HISTORY

2603E - 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This is an introduction to Chinese history from earliest times to the present. China is usually understood as a coherent place, and Chinese as the people who have lived there for thousands of years. But the place and the people have been subject to shifts, misalignments, and transformations over millennia. One of the chief goals of this course is to destabilize the notion of a fixed stable entity called China and people called Chinese. While the framework of the course is chronological, certain themes through the course will be explored. Of them, one will be the importance of interactions between those who called themselves Chinese and those who did not. Interactions with “foreigners” have consumed much attention in the history of the past two centuries, but they are salient throughout Chinese history. Through them, China has achieved its current self-definition. Another central concern of the course is the historiography of China, that is, how the history of China has been written by historians both inside and outside China, and how the histories that have been written can tell us a great deal about the historian’s own time and place as well as the time and place that he or she is writing about. Other recurrent themes include the question of political legitimacy, that is, how China’s rulers justified their position of authority, and the position of women in Chinese society.

Learning Outcomes:

To evaluate historiographical debates among historians across a range of topics on the Chinese past

To read and analyze primary sources in ways that recognize their value and limitations

To sharpen their analytical skills

To articulate their critical views, both in class discussion and in written work

To demonstrate the value of historical inquiry

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Patricia Ebrey, Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook. 2nd edition. New York: Free Press, 1993.

Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
First research paper	11/13/2023	20%

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
First-term test	11/20/2023	15%
Second research paper	03/11/2024	20%
Second-term exam	03/18/2023	25%
Tutorial participation	Throughout the year	20%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.