

Foundations of East Asian Cultures (CEAS 207Z)

Winter Session, January 2024

Class Meetings: Weekdays (Mondays to Fridays) from January 9th-22nd

Time: 10:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-3:00pm

Synchronous meetings online via Zoom.

Reading period: Tuesday, 1/23

Final essay due: Wednesday, 1/24

Instructor: Dr. Allison Bernard

Email: abernard@wesleyan.edu

Office hours: After each class session and by appointment.

Course Objectives :

This course introduces some of the cultural foundations of East Asia and how they have continued to resonate through history. We will be examining translated primary texts in history, literature, philosophy, and religion, mainly from China, Japan, and Korea. We will also be working with other media such as film and art. The course attempts to equip students with a basic fluency in interpreting ancient and modern materials from East Asia and identifying its cultural contexts and influences. This course does not aim to be exhaustive, but rather seeks to challenge blanket invocations of tradition and to enlarge narrow conceptions of Asian cultures. An additional goal of this course is to give context to developments in present-day East Asia that are part of our daily lives, such as the place of East Asia in the news cycle and in global popular culture.

As an organizing framework for readings and discussions, the course centers around concepts of “self” and “society.” We begin with a broad introduction to East Asian history and philosophy, asking how the shape of East Asian history is informed by shared ideas and diverse experiences. We then probe the many roles a person might assume within the broader social and historical contexts they inhabit, from diverse gender roles in the family to political and commercial actors. We also reflect on how East Asian writers from various periods conceived of their places in the world, inquiring into the role historians, warriors, poets, artisans, performers, and others played in analyzing the communities in which they lived. Throughout the semester, we integrate examinations of East Asia in the present-day, investigating how recent events in East Asia are linked to longer-term historical trends.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance, preparation of readings, in-class participation, and discussion (15%)
2. Mini reflections/discussion posts (5) to the online class forum (15%)
3. Preparatory writing assignment (2 pages) (5%)
4. (Mini) Research paper (4-5 pages) (15%)



5. Creative Project (15%)
6. First Group Oral Presentation (5%)
7. Second Group Oral Presentation (10%)
8. Final Essay (in lieu of exam) (20%)

Course Plan, Readings, and Assignments

Preparatory Period (Or, what to do over winter break)

- Read and get acquainted with the course syllabus.
- Review the assignment pages/assignment sheets for all major course assignments (this includes the mini research paper, the two group presentations, and the creative project). Start thinking about how you might approach them.
- Complete the reading and examine the online resources listed for Tuesday, January 9th.
- Jot down some brief answers (a few sentences) to the questions listed with the materials assigned for January 9th and submit these the day before class by 12pm (noon) for feedback. There are five questions, all of which begin with “consider.” Be ready to share your answers and impressions in class. This will count as your first “mini reflection,” or discussion post. Submit your brief responses on Moodle in the discussion forum titled: “Preparatory Work: Discussion Forum – due by Monday, 1/8 by 12pm noon.”
- Please introduce yourself! In addition to sharing your name and pronouns, please answer the following questions: Why are you interested in taking this course? What do you expect to get out of the class? Please email your self-introduction to the instructor by email (abernard@wesleyan.edu) before 12pm (noon) on Monday, January 8th.
- Writing assignment (to hand in on the first day of class): Select one of the primary sources assigned for January 9th (these include: Sima Xiangyu’s poem, “The Shang-lin Park;” the Korean foundation myths; or the selections from *The Pillow Book*) and write a brief 2-page response to that primary source. In your response, you should indicate: What are some of the main themes, motifs, and/or social issues addressed by your text? What do you find interesting about this source? What do you find confusing about it? After looking over the course syllabus, how do you anticipate this source might relate to other materials we will read this winter term?

Note: This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs and interests of the class and at the discretion of the professor.

I. Mapping East Asia: Geographies, Politics, Philosophies

Tuesday, 1/9: A Big View of East Asian Histories

What is East Asia? What are the borders of East Asia? Which countries make up East Asia and why? What constitutes “Chinese,” “Korean” or “Japanese” cultures?

Introductory Reading: Please begin by reading the introduction in Charles Holcombe’s *A History of East Asia*: “Introduction: What is East Asia?” p. 1–11.

Consider: What are some of the first things that come to mind when you think of East Asia?

Since this course is not always structured chronologically, the materials for discussion will be drawn from a variety of periods. To orient ourselves for the term, we will begin by going through the contours of East Asian history.

Online Resource: China Timeline

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/china_timeline.htm

Consider: Although the timeline above is sparse, that can conversely highlight larger trends. What are some particular characteristics that you notice?

To get started, consider how Holcombe (in the “China readings” below) describes the Zhou dynasty (1045–256 BCE). What themes emerge even for later, increasingly “Chinese” dynasties?

China Readings:

- Holcombe, “The Age of the Classics,” in *A History of East Asia*, p. 31–35; “First Empire,” p. 45–49; “The Han Empire,” p. 49–56.
- Burton Watson’s translation of Sima Xiangru (Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju), “The Shang-lin Park,” from Vol. I of Cyril Birch’s *Anthology of Chinese Literature* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 142-153.

Online Resource: Korea Timeline

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/korea_timeline.htm

Consider: As with the timeline for China, what characteristics or trends do you notice here?

Korea Readings:

- Holcombe, “The Emergence of the Korean Kingdoms,” 81–88; “The Birth of Korea,” 114–120.
- “Foundations Myths,” in Peter H. Lee’s *Anthology of Korean Literature: From Early Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), p. 3-16.

Online Resource: Japan Timeline

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/japan_timeline.htm

Consider: As with the timelines for China and Korea, what characteristics or trends do you notice here?

Japan Readings:

- Holcombe, “Yamato Japan,” p. 88–92; “Imperial Japan,” p. 120–129.
- Selections from Sei Shōnagon’s *The Pillow Book*, in Haruo Shirane, ed. *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 257-281.

Reading: Finally, please read, Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, “East Asian Languages and Writing Systems,” p. 15–25.

Consider: What are some important features of East Asian languages and writing systems?

After class on Tuesday, 1/9: Mini Reflection due by 5:00pm.

Review the answers you submitted to the questions above before the first day of class. Has anything changed? What new trends, characteristics, or other features have you noticed after class today? What are you excited to learn more about?

Wednesday, 1/10: Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, and Education

Confucianism Readings:

- “Confucius and the Analects,” in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 29-40 (Note: please make sure to consult the glossary entries on p. 471-473.)
- “Mencius” and selections in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 71–92.
- “Xun Zi” and selections in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 94–99 and p. 101–104.
- Holcombe, “Confucianism,” in *A History of East Asia*, p. 36-40.

Readings on Neo-Confucianism (Students, Scholars, and the Examination System):

- Cheng Duanli (d. 1345), “A Schedule for Learning,” in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 195-198.
- Zhu Xi, “Personal Proposals for Schools and Official Recruitment,” “Articles of the White Deer Grotto Academy,” *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 720-721, 737-744.
- Yi Tongmu, *Small Manners for Scholars* (*Sasojol*, 1775), *Sources of Korean Tradition*, p. 60-67.
- Pak Chega (b. 1750), “A Reexamination of the Civil Service Examination System,” *Sources of the Korean Tradition*, p. 20-23.
- “The Recruitment Examination”; Sŏng Hyŏn, “On the Civil Service Examination,” *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 578–580.
- Lu Xun, “Kong Yiji.” Julia Lovell’s translation in *The Real Story of Ab-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 32-36.

Thursday, 1/11: Daoism and Buddhism

Daoism Readings:

- Holcombe, "Daoism," in *A History of East Asia*, p. 40-42.
- Selections from the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 77-111.
- *Zhuangzi*: "Robber Chih" (Watson translation), p. 323-338.
- Li Yu (1610/11-1680), "The Arts of Sleeping, Walking, Sitting, and Standing," in *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (ATCL), p. 602-606.

Buddhism Readings:

- Holcombe, "Buddhism Comes to East Asia," in *A History of East Asia*, p. 72-81.
- "The Introduction of Buddhism" from *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 415-420.
- Excerpts from "The Lotus Sutra," from *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 444-455.
- Linji / Rinzai, "Seeing into One's Own Nature," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 491-494, 504-509.
- Dōgen, "Fukan zazengi" (Instructions for *zazen*), from Carl Bielefeldt's *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 174-187.
- "Silla Buddhism"; "Pōpkong Declares Buddhism the National Faith," in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 501-503.
- "The Life of Sunji" and "Summary of Sunji's Teachings," from "The Establishment of the Meditation School," in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, p. 125-131.

Thursday, 1/11: Mini Reflection due by 5:00pm.

Which of the philosophical traditions have you found most compelling? Why? Where do you think this philosophy might appear or resonate in contemporary East Asian life or cultural practice? Use this mini reflection as an opportunity to think more deeply about your research paper due on Sunday.

Friday, 1/12: East Asian (and Global) Trade Networks

Trade Networks Readings:

- Valerie Hansen, "Introduction," in *The Silk Road: A New History*, p. 3-24.
- "The Debate on Salt and Iron," in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 60-63.

Group 1:

- "Buying Peace with the Celestial Beverage: The Tea and Horse Trade," from Victor Mair and Erling Hoh's *The True History of Tea* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009), p. 71-85.

Group 2:

- "Sen Rikyū The Tea Master: The Perfection of the Japanese Tea Ceremony," from Victor Mair and Erling Hoh's *The True History of Tea* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009), p. 95-109.

Readings on Merchant Culture:

- Bai Juyi poem, “Salt Merchant’s Wife (in hatred of profiteers),” in Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, p. 501-502.
- “Commercial Activities,” in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 213-220
- “The House Codes of Tokugawa Merchant Families,” *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 236-241.
- “Kaiho Seiryō and the Laws of Economics,” p. 267-271.
- Ihara Saikaku, “Japan’s Eternal Storehouse,” in *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, p. 131-150.

Friday, 1/12: In Class Group Presentations

As a group, please come prepared to “teach” your assigned reading to the rest of the class. In addition to summarizing the main points/arguments of your chapter, please indicate how and where the reading intersects with themes, sources, or discussions we have had so far in this class. Your presentation should last about 10 minutes.

Sunday, 1/14: (Mini) Research Paper Due by 5:00pm

Take one of the philosophical traditions we have studied—Confucianism, Daoism, or Buddhism—and investigate its connection to some area of East Asian life or cultural practice. Your paper should *not* aim to be comprehensive for the culture as a whole. Instead, treat it as a case study for considering the influence (or lack of influence) of that philosophical tradition in a modern context. Some possible areas of study might be found in family structures (marriage, care for elderly, childbearing), so-called new religions, dietary trends, popular culture such as films, tourist sites, and so on. Consulting the professor about possible topics is highly recommended. Your paper should have a thesis supported by research.

II. Family and Gender Roles

Monday, 1/15: Gender Roles/Men and Women

Readings on Wives and Daughters:

- Ban Zhao (48?-116? CE), *Admonitions for Women*, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 819–824.
- Song Ruozhao (late 8th century), *Analects for Women*, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 827–831.
- Empress Xu, *Instructions for the Inner Quarters* (early 15th century), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 831–836.
- Zhu Xi, “Funerary Inscription for Madam You, Lady of Jia’nan (1132), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 837–840.
- “A Post-midnight Shadow Play from Shaanxi: *All Three Fear Their Wives*,” in *The Columbia Anthology of Chinese Folk and Popular Literature*, p. 288–294.

- Selections from *A Courtesan's Day: Hour by Hour* in the "Famous Japanese Prints Series," Number 2. Hotei Publishing, Amsterdam (Posted on Moodle).
- Alfred H. Marks, "The Geisha," in *A Courtesan's Day: Hour by Hour*, p. 53-66.
- He-Yin Zhen, "Radical Critiques of Traditional Society" ("What Women Should Know about Communism," and "Women's Revenge"), *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 721-724.
- Lu Xun, "What Happens after Nora Leaves Home?," p. 256-262.

Readings on Patriarchs, Gentlemen, and Filial Sons:

- Selections from *The Classic of Filial Piety*, in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2nd edition, revised and expanded (New York: Free Press, 1993), p. 64-68.
- Selections from *The Twenty-Four Exemplars of Filial Piety* (Yuan dynasty), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p. 138-141.
- "House Instructions of Mr. Yan" and selections, *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 291-296.
- "Preface to the Family Rituals," and following selections, *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 376-386.
- "Social Rituals," in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 42-45.
- "Family Instructions," in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 238-244.

Tuesday, 1/16: Families and Ancestors

Tuesday, 1/16: Mini Reflection due before the start of class, no later than 9:30am.

How well do you think Chua's views (in "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior") align with the perspectives of the earlier sources we have read on gender roles and families? Please give some examples and cite from our readings.

Readings on Husbands and Wives:

- Shen Fu: "Six Records of a Floating Life," Chapter 1, in *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 709-728.
- "The Changing Course of Courtship," in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 470-477.
- "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior," by Amy Chua (*Wall Street Journal*, 2011) (5 pgs.)

Readings on Rites, Ritual, and Non-Humans:

- Arthur P. Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," in ed. Emily Martin, *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 131-182.
- "Ou Ching-chih and the Corpse Eater," attributed to Tsu Ch'ung-chih, in *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 780-781.
- "Ancestral Rites," in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 157-163.
- "The Role of Rites" (Song Hyon), "The Fundamental Role of Rites" and Yi Chi, "On the Establishment of Domestic Shrines," in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 583-584.

- “Popular Values and Beliefs” in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 47-63.

Tuesday, 1/16: Submit a short description of the creative project you plan to undertake to the instructor by 11:59pm. Make sure to review the assignment sheet for the creative project as you think through your approach.

III. Socio-Political Roles

Wednesday, 1/17: The World of the Court

Readings on Court Ladies:

- Lady Hyegyong, “The Memoir of 1805,” in JaHyun Kim Haboush’s *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth Century Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 241–336.
- Selections from Murasaki Shikibu’s Diary, in *Traditional Japanese Literature*, p. 448-452.

Readings on the Emperor:

- “Proclamations of the Hongwu Emperor,” in Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, p. 205-207.
- “The Emperor,” “Jimmu Tenno,” and “Descended from the Kami,” in *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640*, ed. Michael Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981 (originally 1965)), p. 75-77.
- “Legends Concerning Shinto Deities” (Introduction, “Birth of the Sun Goddess,” “The Divine Creation of the Imperial Ancestors,” and “Descent of the Divine Grandson with the Three Imperial Regalia”) in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, p. 19-23 and 27-28.
- “Helping Emperors Rule,” Jien (1100s), in *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 744-745.
- Recent news:
 - “In Japan, Emperor Akihito's final appearance Sunday is the end of an era - literally” (*The Toronto Star*, 12/21/18)
 - “After audience with the sun goddess, Japan's emperor Akihito prepares to abdicate” (*The Guardian*, 04/30/19)
 - “When Japan's Emperor Akihito steps down, will his pacifist legacy persist despite resurgent nationalism?” (*South China Morning Post*, 04/03/19)

Thursday, 1/18: Warriors, Samurai, and Missionaries

Readings on Warriors and Samurai:

- Holcombe, “Warrior Japan,” in *A History of East Asia*, 154-164.
- The Way of the Warrior” (and the following selections); “Ieyasu and the Founding of the Tokugawa Shogunate” / “Code for the Warrior Households”; “The Way of the Warrior II”

(and the following selections) – in *Sources of East Asian Tradition* I and II, p. 754-765; 121-124; 272-279. *Note: These readings are all in one PDF on Moodle.

- Leon Kapp, Yoshindo Yoshihara, and Hiroko Kapp, *The Art of the Japanese Sword: The Craft of Swordmaking and its Appreciation* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2012): “Introduction,” selections from “Examining a Japanese Sword,” and selections from “A Brief History of the Japanese Sword.” (32 pgs. with numerous images)

Readings on Missionaries:

- (Japan) “Anti-Christian Pronouncements,” p. 180-181; “Statement on the Expulsion of the Bateren,” *Sources of EA Tradition*, p. 182-184.
- (Korea) “Criticism of Catholicism”; Yi Ik, “Matteo Ricci’s Catechism”; Sin Hudam, “European Values and European Education,” *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 427–431.
- (Korea) “Persecution of Catholicism”; King Chǒngjo, ‘How to Combat the Spread of Catholicism’; Hwang Sayǒng, “An Appeal for Aid”; Chǒng Hasan, “A Confucian Defense of Catholicism,” p. 431–435.

Film: Selections from Martin Scorsese’s *Silence* (161 minutes)

Thursday, 1/18: Mini Reflection due by 11:59pm.

Consider the sources we have looked at this week as both works of literature and history. How might a “historical” reading differ from a “literary” reading? How might a literary reading and a historical reading offer different, yet complementary, ways of interpreting any of the texts we have examined this week? (Reviewing “The Memoir of 1805” by Lady Hyegyeong is a good place to start if you are stuck!) In anticipation of our readings for Friday, 1/20, what are some disciplinary differences between literature and history? Where do the goals of literature and history align?

Friday, 1/19: Historians and Poets, Old and New

Readings on Historians:

- “The Great Han Historians,” and Sima Qian, *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 205–210.
- “The Writing of History,” Sima Guang and Zhu Xi, *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 329–335.
- “The Foundation Myth” and “Korea in the Chinese Dynastic Histories,” *Sources of Korean Tradition*, p. 3-13
- Kim Pusik, “Presenting the Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms [*Samguk sagi*],” *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, p. 561–562.
- Kim Pusik, selections from the *Samguk sagi*, in “Consolidation of the State,” p. 508–512.
- “Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories,” and “The Earliest Japanese Chronicles,” *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, p. 3-16.
- Ch. 4, “Chinese Thought & Institutions in Early Japan,” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, p. 63-84.

- Prologue and Interlude to Kong Shangren's *The Peach Blossom Fan* (3 pgs.)

Readings on Poets:

- Preface to the *Shijing*, "The Great Preface," in *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (ed. Mair), p. 121-123.
- Du Fu poems on the An Lushan rebellion in Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, p. 420-425.
- Yi Kyu-bo, "On Poetry" (1 page)
- Yi Kyu-bo (selections) and introduction to Korean poetry in literary Chinese, from *Early Korean Literature*, p. 75-78, 80-82.
- Matsuo Basho, in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, p. 350-360.
- Selected "Salaryman Senryu" poems of modern Japan (handout, 3 pages)
- Poetry surrounding the Hong Kong protests by Shen Haobo (2019) (handout, 4 pgs.)

Friday, 1/19: Creative Project Due by 11:59pm.

Demonstrate your understanding of a subject through an original piece of art, a personal essay, a fictional short story, or an engagement with some practice such as calligraphy. Field work, interviews, and visits to museums exhibitions are other possibilities. I will not be grading you on the artistic merits of the piece itself, but more on the understanding it shows of the questions that you are exploring. Ideally, your project would illuminate aspects of the topic that would otherwise not be able to be expressed through a standard academic paper.

In addition to the project itself, you are required to submit a reflection on what you were trying to do, what challenges you encountered, and what discoveries you made through this process. This later self-evaluation would be the most significant part of this assignment, rather than the artistic merits of your own piece, which I will not judge beyond the extent to which I can determine dedication and insight into the class materials.

IV. Contextualizing Global East Asia

Monday, 1/22: Storytelling and the Performing Arts

Readings on Performing Arts:

- "The Art of the Singer: *P'ansori*" in Lee, *Anthology of Korean Literature*, p. 252-253.
- Please watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Kt7YdXsWzg>
- Selections from Zeami, "Transmitting the Flower Through Effects and Attitudes," *Zeami: Performance Notes*, p. 24-47 (up to "Divine Purport").
- Li Yu, "A Tower for the Summer Heat," in *Silent Operas (Wusheng xi)*, translated and edited by Patrick Hanan, p. 3-39.

Selections from the following film:
Chunhyang (directed by Im Kwon Taek, 2000)

Monday, 1/22: In Class Group Presentations

For our final regular class meeting, you and your group will work together to explore present-day trends, events, or developments in East Asia by investigating their historical roots. You will present your findings in a short group presentation. The topics and opportunities are endless and might include anything from the history of the Chinese stock market to the origins of K-pop. We will work together as a class to propose and select several topics to explore. From there, students with similar interests will work together to complete some brief research into one of the selected topics, which they will present as a group to the rest of the class. Grading will be based on: 1) the ability to connect a modern phenomenon with its earlier history; 2) the clarity and logic of the research and presentation; 3) equitable division of the workload among all group members.

Tuesday, January 23rd: Reading Day

Please take this time to review the course materials and prepare your responses for the final essays.

We have two options for holding meetings on this day:

- A group review session (timing TBD).
- Individual meetings/consultations with the instructor.

During the second week of the winter session (1/15-1/18), we will decide together as a class how to handle any meetings on this day.

This will also serve as the back-up day for rescheduling any class meetings that might need to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances (weather, internet trouble, etc.).

Wednesday, January 24th: Final Essays Due

Final Essays are due by 11:59pm.