History 3403 Early Modern China: 14th-18th Centuries
with Professor Ying Zhang

(Hybrid format) Online & Wed. 12:45-2:05pm @ Mendenhall Lab 131
Office hours: Th 9:30-11:30am and by appointment @ Dulles Hall 363
Contact: zhang.1889@osu.edu

Do we need to know everything about this Chinese dish to understand its depth and beauty? Do we need to know everything about the American artist Mark Rothko’s life to feel the power of this painting? Can we appreciate these two pieces together even though they were produced centuries apart in two countries?

*Red: Ming Dynasty/Mark Rothko* (photographed by Ying Zhang at the exhibit, Freer & Sackler Galleries, D.C.)

“Sometimes for me I stand in the exhibit and feel like I am almost weeping with the beauty of red... It’s all about all of the different tonalities of red, it is what really brilliantly thought about layering of color tones can do to open your emotions, making you feel happy, sad, everything.”

—Jan Stuart, curator (For more info on the exhibit, see "Truly Seeing Red")

I think about similar questions when I imagine you in this class. How much do you need to know about early modern China to understand its complexity? How much do you learn about China in order to feel confident and comfortable talking about its past and present? And finally, even if you do not have much background knowledge, could you be moved by a Chinese subject and see something universal in it? I hope we will answer these questions together.

You will be introduced to rich information about China from the 14th to the 18th century, but ultimately, please use this space and experience in a way that will be beneficial to you. Explore your potential; push the boundaries; produce a fun and bold project. Or, just simply aim to learn something about yourself and your relationship with knowledge.
Content overview
In early modern China (ca. 1400-1800), like in our own time, people were overwhelmed by drastic changes in government, culture, religion, society, and international relations. In fact, many of these changes were similar or connected to the fascinating developments in other parts of the world. The Chinese empire went through two dynastic cycles, during which the ruling house changed between Chinese and non-Chinese ones. In this class, we will think about how the dynamics of crisis, transformation, and globalization challenged traditional institutions, ideas, and practices, and how people coped with them. We will think about “China” both as an elusive concept and as a powerful reality in history.

Our pedagogy is based on the understanding that—
We learn better by “doing” rather than by “receiving” information passively.
We learn better when we see the possibility of applying our knowledge immediately in life.
We learn better when we feel we can trust—trust each other, trust ourselves, and trust the learning process.
We learn better when we feel encouraged to be curious, different, and creative.

Our course activities are designed based on this pedagogy and for the HYBRID format.
1) Online lectures provide useful background information. It is recommended that you watch them before doing the reading assignments.
2) Exercises with reading assignments (historical scholarship and historical material) help you cultivate analytical skills.
3) In-class lectures and discussion are opportunities for us to work closely in person.
4) After-class reflection gives us some time and space to think about what we have explored.
5) Written and multi-media assignments help you improve your ability to articulate and present evidence-based ideas.

Assignments and Grading (instructions and grading rubrics will be posted separately)
1) Participation (40%):
   - informal assignments: online discussion and writing (25%)
     - Online discussion takes place in groups. In addition to contributing a post, please also provide comments or questions to any one of your classmate in the same group.
   - in-class discussion (10%)
   - after-class reflection (5%): Choose a method to reflect on what you have learned and what you want me to explain more clearly (option 1: note card; option 2: LEGO)
2) Map journals (15%): Weeks 2, 5, 11. Use ArcGIS and create a map to reflect on the assigned course material.
3) Responses to media reports (20%): Weeks 7, 9. Short papers (3-4 pages, double-spaced) engaging contemporary debates with historical knowledge.
4) Term project (25%): Due at the end of semester.
5) Earn extra credit by attending these two talks (1% of final grade; 0.5% for each event): Jan. 17 by Yuen Yuen Ang; Feb. 7 by Michael Nylan. Event information will be posted on Carmen.
Grading scale (no curve):
A: 100~92; A-: ~90; B+: ~87
B: ~83; B-: ~80; C+: ~77
C: ~73; C-: ~70; D+: ~67; D: ~60

Grades for late assignments will be reduced by a full letter. However, valid and verifiable reasons deserve extensions. Please notify the professor before the due date if you need extensions.

Reading materials:
1) Mark Elliott, Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World (Pearson, 2009)
2) Articles from e-books and e-journals, available via library
3) Other materials in PDF format on Carmen
4) Websites and digital databases

Other policies and accommodation issues can be found in the last section of this syllabus.

**Weekly Schedules**

(This section only lists the readings and assignments. Please see weekly plans on Carmen for more information on class activities.)

**Week 1 January 8** Introduction to the course
*Please complete this exercise with UNESCO sites material before coming to our first in-person session (see Week 1 Plans on Carmen homepage)*

**Week 2 January 15** Climatic change & political change: the case of early modern China
*Extra credit: Yuen Yuen Ang talk on Jan. 17 (relevant to our Week 3 topic)*


*Map journal 1 (due Jan. 17 11:59pm): Mark 7-10 locations mentioned by the authors and add notes to these locations with info from the article by Cui et al. These locations and notes together should allow your reader to understand the main points of this article.*

**Week 3 January 22** Government and Ruling Elite I
Readings: 1) Kenneth Swope ed., *The Ming World*, chapters 1 & 4

*Informal writing assignment (due Jan. 22 9am): When you read chapter 1, use 1-2 sentences to describe the relationship between each of the Ming emperors and his officials.*
Week 4 January 29 Government and Ruling Elite II
Readings: Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong*, chapters. 1-3 & 7

Online discussion (due Jan. 29 9am): Ideal men in imperial China

Week 5 February 5 Government and Ruling Elite III (Chinese Emperor or Universal Monarch?)
Readings: Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong*, chapters 4-6

Online exercise with museums: The Imperial tours

Map journal 2 (due Feb. 7 11:59pm): Create a map to present your answers to the following questions. Mark at least 6 locations on the map and add notes to them.
How did the Qianlong emperor understand the importance of the “Manchu” tradition? How did he treat the Mongols? What was Qianlong emperor’s attitude toward the Han-Chinese?

Extra credit: Feb. 7 Michael Nylan talk (related to premodern Chinese ethics and religion)

Week 6 February 12 Religion I: Buddhism

Online exercise with museums: Buddhism

Week 7 February 19 Religion II Catholicism

Essay on media reports on China and Chrisitanity today: draft due Feb. 20; final draft Feb. 24

Week 8 February 26 Religion III Islam
Online discussion (due Feb. 26 9am): How to ask historically informed questions about Xinjiang?

**Week 9 March 4 Transition and Globalization**

**Essay on media reports on the “Belt and Road” (draft due March 23; final draft March 30)**

**Week 10 Spring break (March 9-13)**

**Week 11 March 18 International Relations and Trade**

**Map journal 3 (due March 20 11:59pm): How do Elliott and Purdue discuss the Macartney Mission to China differently? Create a map and mark at least 10 locations (with notes) to present your comparative analysis.**

**Week 12 March 25 China in Western Eyes**

Online exercise with museums

**Week 13 April 1 Gender and Sexuality I**

Online discussion (due April 1 9am): How to talk about women in the past and/or in another cultural context?

**Week 14 April 8 Gender and Sexuality II**
Online discussion (due April 8 9am): Analyze 2 short stories from Rea and Rusk (tranl.), *The Book of Swindles* [choose your stories from Types 16, 17, 18]. Compare these short stories and the elite women's biographies you read in Ko and Idema. How different are they? How to explain such differences?

**Week 15 April 15 Last class meeting: Reflection and work on the final project**

Term paper: How do we use early modern history to talk about “China”? Options: 1) 12-pg. paper; 2) a StoryMap presentation (equivalent to a 10-pg. paper, with maps)

[Class ends April 20 (Monday)] Work with the instructor on the final project revision.

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**Understanding and Accommodating Disabilities**

If you have a mental or physical condition that impacts your ability to succeed in the classroom, please make sure to register with the Student Life Disabilities Services (SLDS) in Baker Hall 009. Once registered, you can receive services that will level the playing field with your peers. Examples include but not limited to: a peer note-taker or a special recording pen, extended time or distraction-free space for exams, flexible attendance and deadlines. The SLDS will provide a letter listing only the services you need; you have every right to keep your health conditions private from me. Bring that letter with you to discuss the ways I can help you in my course. You are more than welcome to set up an appointment with me to discuss this matter privately. There is no need to come during my office hours when my door is open to other people. However, if you have a readily apparent need for accommodations, let us talk and determine the best course of action, to maximize your success and participation in the course.

Self-advocacy is a critical life skill and it is important that you reach out to SLDS and me to ensure your own success. For more information, go to [http://slds.osu.edu/](http://slds.osu.edu/), call 614-292-3307, or e-mail slds@osu.edu.

**PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:** As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24 hour emergency help is also available
through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

**Understanding and Avoiding Academic Misconduct**

The instructors will use available digital technology to identify signs of possible plagiarism. It is the students’ responsibility to complete their own answers in their own writing. The students must provide accurate and adequate citations if they have consulted others’ writings (such as online data, textbook and assigned readings, and any other external material).

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).
Sample Weekly Plans
Week 3 January 22 Government and Ruling Elite I
Online lecture: Confucian ethics and imperial institutions (2 segments)

Ch. 1 Thomas Nimick, “Mapping the Background:” Informal writing assignment (due Jan. 22 9am on Carmen in “Assignment”): Use 1-2 sentences to describe the relationship between each of the Ming emperors and his officials.
Ch. 4 Yang Wei, “The Paradoxical Effect of Autocracy”
Question to consider: Do you think the Ming official selection and evaluation system was a good one or seriously flawed?

2) Historical sources for in-class discussion: In library catalog, find the e-book *The Great Ming Code* (translated by Jiang Yonglin, 2004) ([link to library e-book The Great Ming Code](#)). Look up Chapter 2 “Law on Personnel” and read Articles 51-62. What’s the main goal of each of these regulations?

In-class lecture and discussion: Ming governance between ideal and reality; institutional changes in the Qing (including exams)
Week 8 February 26 Religion III Islam

Online lecture (2 segments): Overview of Islam in imperial China; Muslims and Xinjiang in the Qing dynasty


[Tips on readings:
- It might be helpful to review the relevant pages in Elliott biography of the Qianlong emperor (chapter 6).
- Lipman article: note that he talks about various provinces and regions in Qing China. Hope you have a general sense about these locations on map—Mongolia; Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia (of course you are not required to memorize them). He also talks about the competing teachings within the Muslims community; this is a critical point you want to keep in mind.
- Jia article: the author discusses various Muslim communities/identities and different laws/codes applied in the region. It will be helpful if you jot down those terms while doing the reading; so when these names and titles appear again in the article you know what they refer to.
- Jia challenges Lipman in his article. Try to understand their difference.

Online group discussion (due Feb. 26 9am):

1) Did the Qing government punish based on religion and ethnicity? Offer 2-3 examples from the readings to support your view. (1-2 paragraphs)
2) Was the Qing government’s legal practice motivated by religious bias? Explain your view. (1 paragraph)

Optional participation in an open online discussion (the whole class; post by class meeting):
How to ask historically informed questions about the Muslims in China and Xinjiang? In other words, based on what we have learned about the relationship between the Qing government and the Muslims, what questions would you like to ask when you read reports about the problems in Xinjiang today? (If you are not aware of such reports, you could do a quick search online. They were in the headlines for many months.)