

Tang Dynasty China (618 – 907 CE)

Time: Wednesday, 3:00 – 6 PM
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Classroom: HSS 3086
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Office Hours: Thursday, 12 – 2 PM
or by appointment

INTRODUCTION

Undergraduate seminars are intended to prepare you for graduate school or professional life by giving you the experience of a graduate seminar without the expectation that you are already working at the graduate level. Students lead discussions and produce an original research paper at the end of the quarter.

The subject of our course, the Tang dynasty, has long been considered a golden age of Chinese culture, prestige, and power. Scholars in both China and the West have studied the Tang dynasty for a long time, but the field of Tang Studies has gained new critical life from recent archaeological discoveries and advances in textual analysis, combined with new scholarly interests in gender, social class, and religion.

In the seminar we will read a range of works: primary and secondary sources, fiction and history, old and new, including writings from many disciplines. We will look at texts and works of art. We will take an interdisciplinary approach, examining this one long dynasty from as many angles as we can bring to bear. Along with government institutions and elites, we will look at previously ignored groups such as women, ordinary people, and ethnic minorities. We will study material culture as well as classical texts. We will focus on crises and change, continuity and divergence, development and causation. We will question stereotypes such as the Tang as a monolith, and try to bring the more complex cultural reality to light.

Required Texts (available at University Bookstore and Geisel Library reserves)

Mark Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire*
Charles Benn, *China's Golden Age*
Edward Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*
Norman Rothschild, *Wu Zhao*
Marc Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*
Susan Whitfield, *Life Along the Silk Route*
Van Gulik, *Poets and Murder*

Recommended:

Denis Twitchett, ed. *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 3. Sui and T'ang China, 589 – 906, Part I*
Wallace Johnson, *The T'ang Code, Volumes I & II*
Victor Xiong, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval China*
T'ang Studies

Requirements and Assessment Tools

A basic understanding of Chinese history is assumed. If you are unfamiliar with Chinese history, you might read a general text like Jacques Gernet's *A History of Chinese Civilization*; Ebrey, Walthall, and Palais, *Pre-Modern Asia to 1800: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*; or Harold M. Tanner's *China: A History*, Volume I.

Participation will count for 35% of your grade. Students, in small groups, will be responsible for presenting the books and leading discussions on each week's readings. In addition, each student will present two relevant books that are not required reading for the whole class. I will help you locate these. Try to present books related to your research project.

A 2-3 page reading response is due each week from each student. In the reading responses, do not summarize. Instead, write questions or topics for discussion, your own reactions to the readings, your evaluation of the author's argument and evidence, and your overall assessment of the book. This assignment is worth 30% of your grade.

A project or paper, due on the date of our scheduled final exam, December 19, will be worth 35% of your grade. You will present your papers to each other at lunch or dinner at Prof Cahill's house on December 19. You will clear your paper or project with me by the fourth week. You may submit an informal proposal; I will return it to you by the next class. Your proposal must contain, at a minimum, your name, your topic, and three academic sources you will use in your research. You may submit as much additional material in this proposal as you wish. You may do the class project with another classmate or classmates.

There is no final examination. Students are expected to come to class with the assigned reading finished, to participate in discussions, and to complete all the assignments. You must complete all assignments to pass the course. There are no unexcused absences. No assignments will be accepted by email. Do not plagiarize. If you do, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course and I will be required to report you to the academic ethics office.

Course Schedule: Topics and Assignments

Week One

I. Introductions

October 8 Introduction to the course, participants, readings, and assignments
Important concepts and definitions

Week Two

II. The Tang Empire

October 15 Read Lewis. Reading responses due.

Week Three

III. Daily Life

October 22 Read Benn. Reading responses due.

Week Four

III. People on the Silk Road

October 29 Read Whitfield. Reading responses due
Proposals for final paper or project due.

Week Five

IV. Imports from the Exotic Occident

November 5 Read Schafer. Reading responses due.

Week Six

V. Tang People: Han Chinese and Others

November 12 Read Abramson. Reading responses due.

Week Seven

VI. Gender and Power

November 19 Read Rothschild. Reading responses due.
Books to be assigned on Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and other systems of thought for next week.

Week Eight

VI. Religions and Systems of Thought

*November 26 Reading responses due.
This is the day before Thanksgiving; we will change the date to either Saturday November 22 or Monday November 24
Books assigned for next week on poets and poetry.

Week Nine**VII. Poetry**

December 3

Reading responses due.
Students present sources on their research topics.
Students exchange drafts of papers.

Week Ten**VIII. The Tang in the Western Imagination.**

December 10

Read van Gulik. Reading responses due.
Students return papers to each other with comments.

Final Exam Week**Student Presentations**

September 19

Lunch or dinner at Prof Cahill's house with presentations of students' research. Research papers due.

PAPER OR PROJECT GUIDELINES

You need to find a topic, locate good sources, do your research, and produce your final product in a very short time. These guidelines aim to help you plan and to make the process and requirements clear.

The point of this assignment is to let you investigate in some depth a subject that interests you. You may choose almost any topic that fits within the subject matter of our course. You may do a group project. Some possible types of paper or project include:

1. Research paper with a very narrow focus (example: analysis of a specific person, event, archaeological site or find)
2. Fieldwork, survey, or site report
3. Fake primary sources
4. Interpretive, theoretical, or argument-based essay
5. Art project
6. Fiction or drama
7. Art history paper
8. Engineering or technological project
9. Propose something else

The paper or project will be judged on five points: **topic, research, effort, analysis, and the quality of the final product.** Prof Cahill must approve your topic. You will need to use the library. The director of the East Asian collection, Victoria Chu, has prepared a guide on how to use the library's collections for research relevant to our class. I will post this on our Ted site. At least three academic sources are required.

Six is a good number to aim for. Academic sources include books published by university presses or other reputable presses, articles from academic journals, and online versions of such books and articles. Some online sites are also suitable. Wikipedia is not an academic source, although you may use it to lead you to appropriate sources. Your paper should be approximately 10 pages long (double-spaced). A group paper or project would need to be proportionately longer, and include more sources in its bibliography. You may use any standard format for footnotes and bibliography.

PAPER TOPIC SELECTION FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP PROJECTS AND RESEARCH PAPERS

Decide if you want to do an individual or group project. This depends on your learning style and personality. Groups create community and can share resources: you can get more results for your time and work. But they require careful planning, and some people just work better alone.

Strategies:

To write a good paper, start planning and doing tasks now. Get to work.

First: Pick a general area of interest to you, then a specific topic within that area.

Be realistic: pick something you can finish in ten weeks.

The most important question is: what topic related to this course interests you?

Pick something compelling to you, perhaps related to your major or to a personal interest. You have to live with it and interest others.

In searching for a topic, skim through all the texts assigned for our course; something we study late in the quarter may interest you the most.

Start your research and identify sources. Seeing what is available will help you eliminate impossible topics and narrow your topic. Use the bibliographies at the back of your textbooks, Geisel Library's computerized search engines, Google books, and Jstor. Look at the libguide.

Next: Pick a specific and limited topic. Narrow it down further. Examples would be one poet, statesman, text, work of art, or controversy. No topic is too small. Many are too big.

Make sure your topic is related to Tang China. It may include something contemporary. (Examples include representations of the subject in modern movies, art, or novels, current controversies such as china's borders or relations with minorities.)

Next: As you go, narrow your topic down more. Go for quality rather than quantity and specificity rather than general coverage. No summaries! Give context, but give only the background information necessary for understanding your topic. Keep

quotes at a minimum. Continue looking for resources. Your final paper should convince the reader with a clear argument supported by relevant evidence. Do not tell everything you find, just what is necessary to make your case.

Have your topic and at least one book and two articles identified and located before you turn in your proposal. One book and two articles will provide grounding in the field and tell you what people have said about the subject. When you turn in your topic, that material plus any other resources, questions, and progress you have found or made are what you may hand in.

The proposal does not need to be formal. It should include your name, your general topic, the specific question or issue you want to tackle, and a minimum of three academic sources.

Read, write, and revise.

Ask a question about your topic. Make sure your question is narrow. Once you answer your question, write it down; that is your thesis. You need a thesis to have a good argument. The thesis belongs in the first paragraph of your paper.

Give yourself time. Keep revising and rewriting. Edit for good English usage, word choice, logical argument, and clarity. Do not be wordy or pretentious.

Be critical of your evidence and sources. You do not need to agree with everything that is in print, even works written by reputable scholars. If you are not sure a source is reliable or up to date, ask me.

Have another student or friend read your paper. That will help you see what is unclear or unconvincing. You may also show me and your classmates pieces of unfinished work for feedback. We will be discussing your ongoing research each week. You will be exchanging first drafts during the ninth week of classes and returning them to each other the tenth week.

Your final product should include analysis and your conclusions. Do not present a summary of the sources, but your original critical thinking, backed up with evidence from the sources.

Sell the reader on the project: why should we care?

WRITING TIPS: COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

For help in writing, make an appointment ASAP at Oasis [oasis@ucsd.edu; (858) 534-3760] or the Writing Center in Mandeville Center, room 127 [(858) 534-4911].

I will correct grammatical and other mistakes on your response papers, without grading much for style. However, if you make mistakes on the writing tips listed

here, I will take off points. You can always come to me for help in improving your writing.

1. Never use single quotes ('like this') except for a quotation within a quotation. Example: The teacher said: "Billy says 'uh' too often." Especially do not use them to emphasize a term or suggest that you are using it ironically.

2. Never use contractions, such as "don't," in a paper, except when quoting someone's speech.

Commonly confused: "it's" = "it is" (a contraction you should not use), while "its" means "belonging to it." Examples: "**It's** a boy!"; *Civilization and Its Discontents*

3. Avoid forms of the verb "to be" and passive verbs whenever possible. These are not incorrect, but they bore the reader, and allow you to speak indirectly and avoid taking responsibility for your statements.

4. Avoid useless modifiers, especially "very." Avoid wordiness in general. Both weaken the impact of your writing.

5. Avoid repetition.

6. Put foreign words and book titles in italics.

Examples: *wenren* 文人; *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Shishuo xinyu*.

7. Translate Chinese terms and titles in your text. Example: *wenren* (literatus or literary gentleman); *Shishuoxinyu*, "A New Account of Tales of the World."

Use the translation after the first mention of the Chinese term. After that, stick to either the Chinese term or the translation; do not repeat both each time the term comes up.

8. Give dates the first time (and only the first time) you mention a person or historical period. Be sure to give dates in your reading responses and papers.

9. Do not use direct quotations from your texts and sources unless necessary: your own words are better, and show that you have grasped the author's point. Use footnotes to credit a thought to another writer. An example of a necessary quote is one from a primary source that you are interpreting.

10. The correct usage is: "He is the person who," not "he is the person that...."

11. Put periods and commas inside quotation marks. Example: "She vowed to kill her sister." He said "I will not choke him," and he did not do so.

12. When making lists, put commas after each item in the list, up to the “and” or “or.” Examples: “She bought guns, poisons, and a whip.” “He might stab, shoot, or beat her.”
13. You may use the first person in your text in this class. Example: “I argue that....”
14. The proper usage is “based on,” not “based off of.” (The latter comes from the world of computer gaming, not academic writing.)
15. If you discuss a piece of art or architecture, provide a picture, and give the date.
16. If you choose to include them, provide Chinese characters the first time and only the first time you mention the name or term. Also give the pinyin pronunciation and the translation.
17. You may use any standard system of citation, but be consistent. Use one of our texts as a model if you do not know any system of citation.
18. Do not cite Wikipedia or any other non-academic online source. If you are uncertain about whether a source is permissible, ask.
19. Do not use the term “Confucian,” “tradition,” or “traditional China” unless you define exactly what you mean.
20. Pick one Romanization system and stick to it.
21. Make sure subjects agree with verbs and pronouns with their referents.

CHRONOLOGY

B.C.E.

Late Neolithic Period	ca. 5000 – 2000
Xia?	ca. 2100 – 1600
Shang	ca. 1600 – 1028
Zhou	ca. 1027 – 256
Western Zhou	ca. 1027-771
Eastern Zhou	ca. 770-256
Spring and Autumn	722-468
Warring States	403-221
Qin	221-207
Han	206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.
Former Han	206 B.C.E-8 C.E.

C.E.

Xin	9-25
Latter Han	25-220

Three Kingdoms	220-265
Wei	220-265
Shu	221-263
Wu	222-280
Jin	265-420
Western Jin	265-317
Eastern Jin	317-420
Six Dynasties	420-589
Southern dynasties	
Liu Song	420-479
Southern Qi	470-502
Southern Liang	502-557
Southern Chen	557-589
Northern dynasties	
Northern Wei	386-534
Eastern Wei	534-550
Western Wei	535-577
Northern Qi	550-577
Northern Zhou	557-581
Sui	581-618
Tang	618-907
Zhou	690-705
Five Dynasties	907-960
Liao	916-1125
Song	960-1279
Northern Song	960-1126
Southern Song	1127- 1279
Jin (Jurchen)	1115-1234
Yuan (Mongols)	1260-1368
Ming	1368-1644
Qing	1644-1911
Republic (Taiwan)	1911-
People's Republic	1949-