

HIEA 166: CREATING MING HISTORIES

Monday 2-4:50
Phone: (858) 822-0814
Office hours: WF 1-3 & by appointment

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Scholarly views of historical place-times change as new generations with different experiences ask new questions, find new primary sources, and see new things in primary sources that have been studied before. The Ming period (1368-1644) coincides with “early modern” Europe, and was long seen as its reverse: autocratic, Confucian, sternly hierarchical, inward-looking, peaceful, and economically stagnant. Nowadays, scholars see Ming as an heir to Mongol ruling practices (rather than a pure “Chinese” reaction against them), as the commercialized center of the world economy, as a culture that both challenged and reinforced social hierarchy, as a period of growth in contradictory religious traditions, and as an age in which civil government coexisted with widespread violence and martial values. We will read and discuss primary sources (in translation) along with scholarly work based on those sources, to study how what historians use source materials, as well as Ming history and society. And in your paper, you’ll practice creating history yourself from one or more primary sources.

Readings:

Coursepack available from the bookstore.

John W. Dardess, *Ming China, 1368-1644: A Concise History of a Resilient Empire*

Sarah Schneewind, *A Tale of Two Melons: Emperor and Subject in Ming China*

Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *Perpetual Happiness: The Ming Emperor Yongle*

Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Ming Art, People, and Places*

John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and its Repression in 1620-1627* Gordon

Harvey, *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students*

David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs and the Son of Heaven*

Ann Waltner, *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China*

Requirements:

- Attendance and active, informed class participation, based on reading notes, 30%.
- Weekly e-post (one paragraph) after class discussion, by 10 pm Wednesday, 20%
- Final paper, 15 – 20 pages, and assignments leading up to it, 50%
- Let me know *immediately* about any problems with the readings, attendance, etc.

Discussion: Read the assignment with care, take notes, and bring the reading and your notes to class (I may collect them occasionally). As a general guideline, for primary sources, note the meaning of each few sentences and the questions they raise: read the primary sources intensively. Read secondary sources extensively: include in your notes 1. the main points the author is making 2. how the author uses primary sources and 3. questions, connections to other readings, and points of interest to you.

E-posts: Post on time one paragraph about what you learned from class discussion, what questions were not answered, further thoughts, connections with earlier class material, etc. If someone has posted what you wanted to say, respond to or extend his or her comment. If you post early, check in again at the end to see what others said, and repost if you like.

WebCT: Check WebCT often for the e-posts, details on the paper assignment, announcements, etc.

Final paper: Select (in consultation with me) a primary source or two from the Ming period (1368-1644), in English translation. I will guide you as do an intensive reading of your text, and research in reference and secondary materials to contextualize and explicate the text.

Week One (March 30): An Overview of Ming Society

Read before class: John W. Dardess, *Ming China, 1368-1644: A Concise History of a Resilient Empire*

In class: Zhu Yuanzhang, "In Praise of Auspicious Melons" (handout)

Week Two (April 6): Preparing for Research

Sarah Schneewind, *A Tale of Two Melons: Emperor and Subject in Ming China*

→ Meet in the library for tour and intro to reference works, JSTOR, electronic resources with R. Melton.

Week Three (April 13): The Yongle Reign – Primary Sources

Zhu Yuanzhang, "The August Ming Ancestral Instruction" (coursepack)

Empress Xu, "Instructions for the Inner Quarters" and other writings (coursepack)

→ One paragraph description of final paper primary source due.

Week Four (April 20): The Yongle Reign – Secondary Source

Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *Perpetual Happiness: The Ming Emperor Yongle*

→ Hand in some initial reading notes on your primary source.

Week Five (April 27): Mid-Ming Banditry and Rebellion – Primary Source

Xie Fen, "An Account of a Mirror for the Future," transl. David Robinson (coursepack)

Gordon Harvey, *Writing With Sources*

→ Full close reading notes of primary source due, with research questions.

Week Six (May 4): Mid-Ming Banditry and Rebellion – Secondary Source

David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China*

→ Answers to questions on who, what, where, when due.

Week Seven (May 11): Visual Culture

Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Ming: art, people and places*

→ Oral report on your paper and your research process. Bring a paragraph or two to share.

Week Eight (May 18): Late Ming Factionalism

Beijing Sojourner/Guest, "A True Record of the Mutual Correspondences between Heaven and the Human World," translated by H. Laura Wu, in *Renditions: A Chinese-English Translation Magazine* 70 (2008): 13-28. (coursepack)

"Gu Bingqian and Wei Guangwei," "Wang Zhicai" and "Zhao Nanxing" from *Mingshi* translated by John W. Dardess, on "The Ming History English Translation Project" (coursepack)

→ Draft due, combining close reading with research.

Week Nine (May 25): Blood and History

John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and its Repression in 1620-1627*

Excerpts from the *Great Ming Code* (handout)

Week Ten (June 1): Family as a Social Institution

Ann Waltner: Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China

→ Second draft due.

Final paper due Monday June 8, 11:00. Include all earlier written assignments with my comments.

** The syllabus may change.**