

HIEA 137: HISTORY OF WOMEN IN CHINA: Winter, 2009

Time: TuTh 3:30- 4:50

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Place: Center Hall 113

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Office Hours: Th, 5-7 PM

or by appointment

Introduction

This course introduces women in Chinese history and society from the earliest times through the late imperial period, with an emphasis on the middle ages. Family, religion, government, work, material culture, and daily life will serve as organizing themes for investigating this large topic over such a long time. We will stress cultural and historical context, continuity and change, conflict and resolution, comparison and contrast. Since institutions and ideas from earlier times have a deep effect on men's and women's lives in China today, we will use contemporary examples to show changing interpretations of older traditions.

Our framework will be both chronological and thematic. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, combining history and social sciences, written texts and material culture. After mostly ignoring women for centuries, scholars have started to include women in the narrative of history. One of our big challenges is to locate women's history in sources not /necessarily intended to reveal it. Consequently, we use materials from a variety of sources, textual and visual. Textual sources include historical, philosophical, religious, and literary writings; visual materials include archaeological discoveries, art, material culture, and film. Secondary sources provide structure, theories, and general background. Primary sources, including things as well as texts, tell us what the people we are studying thought was true and important.

One of your main tasks this quarter to read primary and secondary sources critically, analyzing arguments in terms of meaning, reliability, evidence, and historical value. You will have the opportunity to sharpen your writing skills, with an emphasis on clear and convincing writing. Class discussions and presentations will give you practice in oral discourse, communication, and collaboration. My goal is for you to become active historical thinkers, problem solvers rather than passive recipients of data. After taking this course, you should recognize the importance of women and gender in Chinese history and culture, and be familiar with images and roles of women specific to China.

Requirements

There are no prerequisites. A basic understanding of Chinese history is assumed. If you are unfamiliar with Chinese history, you might read a general text like Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*; Conrad Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilization*; or Patricia Ebrey (et al.), *Pre-Modern East Asia: To 1800: A Cultural, Social, And Political History*

Students are expected to come to class with the reading for that day finished, to participate in discussions, and to complete all assignments. You must complete all required assignments to pass the course. The first assignment is to bring something connected to women in Chinese history to class; this is worth ten percent (10%) of your grade. There will be one in-class midterm including short identifications and two essay questions, worth thirty percent (30%) of your grade. There will be a project or paper due during the last week of classes, worth thirty percent (30%) of your grade. You will need to clear your paper or project with me by the beginning of the sixth week. You may do the project with another classmate or classmates. There will be a take-home final exam, consisting of essay questions, worth thirty percent (30%).

Required Texts (listed in order of use)

Books are available at Groundworks Books: 858-452-9625

They should also be available on reserve at Geisel Library

Robin Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.
ISBN: 0-87220-651-3

Bret Hinsch, *Women in Early Imperial China*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002. ISBN: 0-7425-1872-8

N. Harry Rothschild, *Wu Zhao: China's Only Woman Emperor*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-321-39426-2

Cahill, Suzanne, *Divine Traces of the Daoist Sisterhood*. Magdalena, New Mexico: Three Pines, 2006. ISBN: 1-931483-04-3

Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1993. ISBN: 0-520-08158-7

Susan Mann, *Talented Women of the Zhang Family*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2007.
ISBN: 978-0-520-25090-1

Feng Jikai, *Three Inch Golden Lotus*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1994
ISBN: 0-8248-1606-4

TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (Books are referred to by the author's surname. Assignments are due on the day they are listed.)

Week One

January 6 **I. INTRODUCTION**
Aims, Issues, Definitions, Requirements
Video “Small Happiness”
Assignment: Buy your books; the first reading assignment is due Thursday.

January 8 **II. WOMEN IN ANCIENT CHINA**
A. Neolithic and Shang
Reading: Wang, Introduction, Part One (Selections I – 5)

Week Two

January 13 **III. WOMEN IN THE ZHOU DYNASTY**
Reading: Wang, Part Two

IV. WOMEN IN THE QIN AND HAN DYNASTIES

January 15 **A. Context, Kinship, Work, and Law**
Readings: Hinsch, Introduction, Chapters 1-4;
Wang, Part Three, Selections 20-23

Week Three

January 20 **B. Government, Learning, Ritual, and Cosmology**
Readings: Hinsch, Chapters 5-8;
Wang, Part Three, Selections 24-27

January 22 **V. WOMEN IN THE SIX DYNASTIES (WEI, JIN, NAN-BEI CHAO)**
Reading: Wang, Part Four,

VI. WOMEN IN THE TANG DYNASTY

Week Four

January 27 **A. Tang Context: Buddhism, Confucianism, Fiction, and Poetry**
Reading: Wang, Part Five, Selections 34 – 40, 42, 43, 47, 48, 50, and 51

B. China's Only Woman Emperor

January 29 **1. Wu Zetian: Situation and Early Steps**
Reading: Rothschild, Chapters I – VII (pages 1 – 102)

Week Five

February 3 **2. Wu Zetian: Rule and Aftermath**
Reading: Rothschild, Chapters VIII – Conclusion (pages 103 – 214)

February 5 **MIDTERM**

Week Six C. Women and Daoism in the Tang

February 10 **1. Goddesses, Matriarchs and Grotto Transcendents**
Reading: Cahill, Parts 1, 2, and 3
PAPER OR PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

February 12 **2. Female Saints**
Reading: Cahill, Part 4

Week Seven VII. WOMEN IN THE SONG DYNASTY

February 17 **A. Song Context: Neo-Confucianism, Moral Instruction, and Poetry**
Readings: Wang, Part Five, Selections 41, 46, 49, 52-54
Ebrey, Chapters 1 - 6

February 19 **B. Women and the Family in Song China**
Reading: Ebrey, Chapters 7 - 15

Week Eight VIII. WOMEN IN LATE IMPERIAL CHINA

February 24 **A. Context and Historiography**

Reading: Mann, Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2

February 26 **B. Talented Women**

Reading: Mann, Chapters 3 & 4, Epilogue

Week Nine IX. GENDER IN MODERN CHINESE FICTION: A TWENTIETH CENTURY NOVELIST IMAGINES LIFE WITH BOUND FEET

March 3 **A. Bound Feet: Historical and Cultural Context**

Reading: Feng, pages 1 - 125

March 5 **B. Bound Feet in Life and Fiction**

Reading: Feng, pages 125 - 229

Week Ten X. GENDER IN CHINESE MOVIES

March 10 **A. Movie: "Raise the Red Lantern"**

March 12 **B. Conclusions**

Student Presentations

FINAL PAPERS AND PROJECTS DUE

Final Exam handed out

March 17 **FINAL EXAM DUE** in Prof Cahill's Office, HSS 3040, by 6 PM

DYNASTIC CHART

B.C.E.

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	
Liu Song	420-479
Southern Qi	470-502
Southern Liang	502-557
Southern Chen	557-589
NORTHERN	
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-

These dates are based on William H. Nienhauser. *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986