

ASIA 211 / HART 211/ HIST 206
INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS

Fall 2015
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:50 p.m.
Humanities Building, Room 117

Instructors

Professor Lisa Balabanlilar

Office: Humanities 309; office phone number: 713-348-8085; e-mail address: balabanlilar@rice.edu; office hours: most days by appointment

Professor Susan Huang

Herring 110; office phone number: 713-348-4240; e-mail address: sh6@rice.edu; office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

Professor Richard J. Smith

Office: Humanities 322; office phone number: 713-348-2552; e-mail address: smithrj@rice.edu; office hours: TuTh 8:30-9:15 a.m., 11:00-11:30 a.m., 1:30-2:15 p.m. and 4:00-4:45 p.m. and by appointment.

Course Description: Asia Beyond Borders

Any “Introduction to Asian Civilizations” is just that: an introduction. In a mere fourteen weeks, there can be no attempt at comprehensive coverage—whether geographical, chronological, or topical. This semester we shall focus on three major themes: (1) foundational religious and philosophical traditions in Asia (notably Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism), (2) art and literature; and (3) interactions that have connected—and continue to connect—people in Asia to each other and to the rest of the world. In particular, we will examine how people in different parts of Asia—South, Central and East Asia in particular—have responded to the above-mentioned belief systems and to others, including Islam and Christianity, adopting, altering, and at times rejecting them in pursuit of their own political, social, economic, or religious goals. Such dynamics of inter-regional interaction have occurred on a global scale as well. A significant part of this course, then, will be concerned with the processes—sometimes peaceful and sometimes not—by which ideas, people, products, practices, and skills have circulated within and across local, regional and national boundaries. We will also give attention to cross-cultural comparisons in an effort to show similarities and differences as they are manifested in our lecture topics and in your readings. You should always be attuned to such comparisons and their significance, even when they are not explicitly emphasized.

The course is thus designed to achieve four main goals:

- (1) to provide not only a basic familiarity with some of the major cultural traditions of Asia (with an emphasis on India, Central Asia, China and Japan) but also a sense of the complex relationships existing between these cultures;
- (2) to explore some of the ways in which these traditions have changed in different parts of Asia, including why they evolved in these ways, and why these changes have been significant;
- (3) to examine some particularly important examples of the causes and consequences of pre-modern “empire-building” in Asia; and
- (4) to introduce some analytical tools for use in comparing and contrasting cultures and for evaluating the complexity and historical significance of cultural interactions across space and time.

A particular emphasis in this course will be on visual and material culture—including arts, crafts and other artifacts. We will examine ways of “reading” various objects, from paintings and statues to architectural structures and gardens, and we will consider their relationship to other sources of historical information such as written texts. Students will be encouraged to think carefully and critically not only about the products of so-called “high” (elite) culture but also about items produced by and for “commoners.” Tools and other utensils, for example, tell us much about daily life and social relations, as do domestic structures, graves, walls and irrigation systems. Remember that science, technology, math and medicine are also parts of “culture.”

Course Requirements

- (1) **One take-home midterm exam** (due in class on October 8): c. 6-9 pages typed and double-spaced [35% of the course grade]
- (2) **One take-home final exam** (due in the History Department by noon on the day of our scheduled final exam): c. 9-12 pages, typed and double-spaced [45% of the course grade]
- (3) **Six short “response papers”** (due in class at various points in the semester, as indicated in the syllabus): each paper will be 1-page single-spaced [20% of the course grade]

Details on exams: The first take-home exam (due in class on October 8) will cover the reading and lecture material for the period through October 6, 2015. The second (final) take-home exam (due in the History Department by noon on the day of our scheduled final exam) will cover the reading and lecture material for the period from October 15, 2015 through the end of the semester. Both of these take-home exams will be comprised of three (3) separate essay questions, one question from each of us. Each of the three essays for the first exam must be no less than two pages and no more than three pages in length, typed and double-spaced in 12-point font. For the final exam, each of the three essays must be no less than three pages and no more than four pages in length, typed and double-spaced in 12-point font. Late exams will not be accepted without a documented medical excuse and the approval of all three instructors.

Details on “response papers”: Over the course of the semester you will be assigned a

total of six (6) one-page papers—two from each of us. These papers must be typed with a standard 12-point font and single-spaced. The due-dates are indicated in your syllabus. You can find these assignments in your OwlSpace folder titled “One-page response papers” (under “Resources”). Each paper will be due at the *beginning* of class and must be delivered in person at that time—no exceptions without a documented medical excuse. These “response papers” will not be “graded,” but if they demonstrate a genuine engagement with the material and if they also reveal careful and critical thought, they will be given a positive mark (a check: ✓). If all six assignments are turned in on time and if they all meet the above-mentioned criteria, you will receive an “A” for 20% of the course. If a paper is missing, late, not turned in by you personally or otherwise unsatisfactory, you will receive a “B” for the 20%. Anything less and you will receive an “F” for the 20%.

NOTE: Your response paper assignments will focus primarily on written texts but at least two will focus on visual materials.

Plagiarism on ANY assignment will be grounds for a failing grade in the course and report to Rice University Honor's Council. For specific definitions and examples of plagiarism, see:

<http://ori.hhs.gov/avoiding-plagiarism-self-plagiarism-and-other-questionable-writing-practices-guide-ethical-writing>

Summary of grading:

	Due dates	Grade percentage
First take-home exam	10/8 (due in class)	35%
Second take-home exam	due in the History Department office no later than 4:00 p.m. on December 11	45%
6 one-page “response papers”	see syllabus for individual due dates	20%

Class attendance and participation may also be taken into account in the final grade, especially in borderline cases.

Required Texts (available in the campus bookstore)

(1) Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Anne Walthall and James Palais, *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* (second edition; paperback)—hereafter cited as Ebrey et al.

Note: Students should read this entire book, not simply the sections designated as “required reading” for certain lectures. Why? Because this text will be an invaluable resource for anyone who chooses to focus on either East Asian cross-cultural comparisons or transnational circulations of people, ideas, products, etc.

in East Asia for the final paper. It is also a wonderful source of images from China, Japan and Korea.

(2) Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art*, Phaidon press, Ltd., 1997—hereafter cited as Dehejia

(3) All other required and recommended readings will be posted on our Owlspace under the category “Resources” and/or placed on Reserve in the Fondren Library.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU DO THE READING THAT WE HAVE LISTED FOR EACH CLASS SESSION BEFORE THE ACTUAL SESSION. We have not assigned much reading for most of our sessions, so we assume that you will have a solid command of the material at all times.

Additional Note

We **STRONGLY** suggest that you bring to class **EVERY DAY** a copy of the document titled “Asia: A Comparative Chronology.” It is available on our Owlspace under “Resources,” “General Materials (Chronologies, Outlines, Etc.)” This outline will enable you to locate the period we are discussing without the need for us to bombard you with dates.

Statement on Disabilities

Students with a documented disability and in need of academic or other adjustments should speak with one of us during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact the office of Disabled Student Services (phone: 737-5841; e-mail: adarice@rice.edu) in the Allen Center.

CLASS SESSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Tuesday, August 25: Perspectives on Asia [Balabanlilar, Huang and Smith]

Themes: Organization of the course; ways of representing and understanding “Asia”

Required reading: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Articles and Excerpts”: (1) “Engaging Asia” and (2) “East Asian languages”

II. ORIGINS

Thursday, August 27: The Origins of East Asian Civilizations, c. 600 to 221 B.C.E. [Smith]

Themes: The invention and spread of writing; the emergence of “philosophy”

Required reading: Ebrey, et al., “Connections,” 2-7 and “Philosophers and Warring States,” 20-34. On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Primary Documents”: (1) “Early Confucianism,” (2) Early Daoism” and (3) “Mohism and Legalism” and (4) “Nature of Man debate” (key figures for this session: Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, Laozi, Mozi, Han Feizi)

Tuesday, September 1: The Origins of Empire in East Asia, 221 B.C.E. to 907 C.E. [Smith]

Themes: The Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.E.), the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.), the Six Dynasties Period (220-589) and the Sui (589-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties; the Tang cultural model in East Asia

Required reading: Ebrey, et al., (1) “Founding of the Bureaucratic Empire: Qin-Han China (256 B.C.E.-200 C.E.),” 35-54; (2) “The Cosmopolitan Empires of Sui and Tang China (581-960),” 74-91. On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Primary Documents,” “First emperor's inscriptions (219-218 BCE)”

RESPONSE PAPER DUE TODAY (Topic to be posted)

Thursday, September 3: The Origins of South Asian Civilization [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Character of Vedic thought and the early texts; development of a proto-Hinduism

Required reading: Dehejia, *Indian Art*, Chapter 1, “Experiencing Art” (pp. 11-22); Chapter 2, “Brick, Seals and Stones” (pp. 25-32).

Tuesday, September 8: The Early Evolution of South Asian Philosophy; Buddhism and the Brahmanical response [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Evolution of divergent forms of Buddhism: Theravada and Mahayana; political alliances and patronage

Required reading: Dehejia: Chapter 3, “Stories in Stone” (pp. 51-76); Chapter 4, “After Alexander” (pp. 79-100); Chapter 5, “Into the Mountainside,” (pp. 103-

134); On our Owlspage under “Resources,” “Resources,” “South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar)”: “Ashoka Edicts”

RESPONSE PAPER DUE TODAY (topic to be posted)

III. CONDUITS AND CONNECTIONS IN EAST ASIA AND BEYOND

Thursday, September 10: Art and Culture Along the Silk Road: From Central Asia to China and Japan [Huang]

Themes: Central Asia, Silk Road, Tang Dynasty capital at Chang’an; Shōso-in; international trade and commodities

Required reading: On our Owlspage under “Resources,” “East Asian Art and Material Culture (Huang)”: Valerie Hansen, “The Hejia Village Hoard: A Snapshot of China’s Silk Road Trade.” Also, Ebrey et al., 51-59, 63-70, 78-85, 94-97 (esp. “Material Culture: Silk from the Silk Road,” 52; “Connections: Cultural Contact Across Eurasia,” 94-97; Map C3.1, “Map of Asian Trade and Communication Routes in the Sixth-Tenth Centuries,” 95)

Tuesday, September 15: Buddhist Art in China, Japan, and Korea [Huang]

Themes: Mahayana Buddhism; sinicization of Buddhist art

Required reading: Ebrey et al., (1) “The Dunhuang Documents,” 90-91; (2) “Material Culture: Cave 285 at Dunhuang,” 71; (3) “Material Culture: Sokkuram Buddhist Temple,” 111.

RESPONSE PAPER DUE TODAY (topic to be posted)

Thursday, September 17: Varieties of Confucianism, c. 900-1200 C.E. [Smith]

Themes: The Buddhist metaphysical challenge to Confucianism and the Confucian philosophical response (key figures: Zhu Xi, Lu Xiangshan, Wang Yangming)

Required reading: Ebrey, et al., “The Revival of Confucianism and the Learning of the Way,” 139-144; On our Owlspage under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Primary Documents”: (1) “Neo-Confucianism”

RESPONSE PAPER DUE TODAY (topic to be posted)

Tuesday, September 22: The Religious Face of Confucianism: From 1200 Onward [Smith]

Themes: Institutional manifestations of Confucianism in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam: similarities and differences

Required reading: Ebrey et al., (1) [on the Chinese examination system]: 77, 81-82, 90, 108-09, 133-136, 201, 229-32; (2) [on the Korean examination system]: 168, 174-75, 243-44, 366.

IV. CONTENDING EMPIRES IN SOUTH, CENTRAL AND EAST ASIA

Thursday, September 24: Imperial India: Mauryan (322-185 BCE), Gupta (320-550 CE), Chola Empires (at peak, 1010-1200) [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Urbanization of South Asia, spread of Buddhism and Hinduism/ religion and rulership/ The states of southern India and the rise of devotional Hinduism (ex: the Kingdom of Vijayanagar, 1336-1646)

Required reading: Dehejia, Chapter 6, “Seeing the Divine” (pp. 137-152); Chapter 7, “Sacred and Profane’: the Nagara Temple” (pp.155-182). See also Owlspace [look under “Resources,” “South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar)”]: excerpts from the Bhagavadgita; also in same file, read William Dalrymple, “The Great and Beautiful Lost Kingdoms,” The New York, May 21 2015.

Tuesday, September 29: Islam in India and the five dynasties of the Delhi Sultans (1206-1526 CE) [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Islamic expansion, invasion and conquest/ South Asian religious identity: pragmatism and conversion

Required reading: Dehejia, Chapter 11, “Linear Abstractions” (pp. 249-272).

Thursday, October 1: Art, Technology, and Commerce in Song Times [Huang]

Themes: the *Qingming* handscroll; representations of the city life, merchants, and markets

Required reading: Valerie Hansen, “The Qingming shanghe tu: A Black-and-White Reproduction of the Beijing Qingming Scroll” <<http://www.yale.edu/history/faculty/materials/hansen-qingming-scroll.html>>, click <short introductory essay> (on the left of the web page). Also, Ebrey et al., (1) text, 128-143, 169-176, 226-227; (2) “Material Culture: Tea,” 79; “Material Culture: Huang Sheng’s Clothing,” 143; (3) Map 8.1, “Northern Song, Liao, and Xia, ca. 1050,” 130; Map 8.2, “Southern Song, Jin, and Xia, ca. 1200,” 140.

Tuesday, October 6: Perspectives on the Mongols [Balabanlilar, Huang and Smith]

Themes: Mongol multi-culturalism; Chinese art under the Mongols

Required reading: (1) On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar)”: Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, “The Mongol Way,” *Empires in World History*, Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 107-111. (2) On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian Art and Material Culture (Huang)”: James Watt, “Introduction,” *The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty*, pp. 3-37. (3) On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Articles and Excerpts”: [Review of The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy.pdf](#)

Thursday, October 8: First exam due today/discussion (mandatory attendance; an unexcused absence will result in a full-grade penalty, i.e. A- to B-)

Tuesday, October 13: MIDTERM RECESS (NO CLASS)

Thursday, October 15: Central Asia and India: Interactions and Migrations [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Mongol successors in Central Asia/ The rise of Timur (1336-1405) / Crossing borders / origins of the Mughal empire (1526-1858)

Required reading: Owlspace “Resources,” South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar)”: excerpts from the *Baburnama*

V. ELITE CULTURE IN ASIA: SOME COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, October 20: Imperial developments—Mughal high culture in South Asia [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Religion, politics, and the arts/ fusion and synthesis

Required reading: Owlspace “Resources,” South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar)”: Sufi and Bhakti poetry

RESPONSE PAPER DUE TODAY (topic to be posted)

Thursday, October 22: The Place of “Culture” in the Construction of Empires: Evidence from Late Imperial China [Smith]

Themes: The cultural policies of the Yuan, Ming and esp. Qing dynasties

Required reading: Ebrey et al., China under the Mongols, 194-204; “The Founding of the Ming Dynasty,” 222-239 and “Creation of the Qing Empire,” 262-278

Tuesday, October 27: Landscape Art in China, Korea and Japan [Huang]

Themes: Monumental landscape painting; political symbolism; landscape and body; landscape as paradise

Required reading: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian Art and Material Culture (Huang)”: (1) “Japanese art,” selected from Sherman Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 358-370; (2) “Japanese.onna-e.femine,” selected from Joan Stanley-Baker, *Japanese Art*, 122-137.

RESPONSE PAPER DUE TODAY (Topic to be posted)

Thursday, October 29: Tribute and Other Forms of Gifting [Balabanlilar, Huang and Smith]

Themes: People in all cultures exchange gifts of one sort or another. Why? What happens when gift giving becomes institutionalized?

Required reading: (1) On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian Art and Material Culture (Huang)”: Ralph Kauz, “Gift Exchange between Iran, Central Asia, and China under the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644,” in *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Court* (exhibition catalogue); (2) “Mapping China and the Question of a China-Centered Tributary System” URL: http://www.japanfocus.org/-Richard_J_-Smith/3888

Tuesday, November 3: Cultural Expressions of Human Sexuality [Balabanlilar, Huang and Smith]

Themes: The great Confucian philosopher Mencius said “To enjoy sex is the desire of [all] human beings.” But sexuality and its visual representations take many different cultural forms, which vary across both space and time.

Required reading: (1) On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Articles and Excerpts”: (1) “Ebrey shifting views of footbinding” and (2) “Sex in Tokugawa and Meiji Japan,” pp. 1-15 (on the Tokugawa period).

Thursday, Nov. 5: Asian Gardens: Some Comparative Perspectives [Balabanlilar, Huang and Smith]

Themes: Political, social and spiritual spaces

Required reading: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar),” Ebba Koch, “Mughal Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1648),” *Muqarnas*, Vol. 14. (1997), pp. 143-165. Also Ebrey et al., “Material Culture: Gardens of Suzhou,” 235.

Some interesting Asian gardens websites: Chinese gardens: <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/home/3garintr.htm>; Japanese gardens: <http://learn.bowdoin.edu/japanesegardens/>; Mughal gardens: <http://mughalgardens.org/detect/getflash.html>

Tuesday, November 10: Scholars and Literati Art in East Asia [Huang]

Themes: values and aesthetics of the literati (or the elite; the educated); painting and calligraphy; art as self-expression; female artists practicing literati art

Required reading: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian Art and Material Culture (Huang),” Craig Clunas, *Art in China*, 135-153.

Thursday, November 12: Some Literary Traditions in East Asia [Huang and Smith]

Themes: Chinese popular illustrated fiction

Required reading: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History [Smith],” “Articles and Excerpts”: “Chinese vernacular literature” [mainly plays and novels]

Recommended: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History [Smith],” “Articles and Excerpts”: “Chinese elite literature” [mainly poetry]

Tuesday, November 17: Ming-Qing Encyclopedias: The Relationship between Elite and Popular Culture in East Asia [Smith]

Themes: Popular encyclopedias in East Asia were generally described as “topically organized handbooks for daily use.” What were the main topics addressed in these works? Who used these publications and why?

Required reading: On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Articles and Excerpts”: “Ming Dynasty Compendia and Encyclopedias”

VI. EUROPE AND ASIA: INTERACTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Thursday, November 19: Cultural Shock: Jesuit Missionaries and Cultural Transfers [Huang]

Themes: Teachers and technicians: Jesuit missionaries in the Chinese service; Matteo Ricci and his successors; Jesuit painters at the Qing court; Jesuit artistic influences in India

Required reading: Ebrey et al., (1) “Connections: Europe Enters the Scene,” 257-261, 272-73; (2) color plates 19-22. Also on our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Articles and Excerpts”: “Jesuits as experts (Elman)”

Tuesday, November 24: EARLY THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY; NO CLASS

Tuesday, December 1: The Rise of British Power in India [Balabanlilar]

Themes: Merchants and opium traders, the collapse of Mughal power, successor states (Mysore and Tipu Sultan), resistance to western influences, emergent British “accidental” empire

Required reading: Dehejia, Chapter 16, “Jewels in the Crown: Art in the British Raj,” pp. 379-406. Also, Owlspace under “Resources,” “South and Central Asia (Balabanlilar),” Clive’s Letters

Thursday, December 3: Late Qing China, (c. 1800-1912) and Late Tokugawa Japan (c. 1800-1868) [Smith]

Themes: The value and limits of explicit historical comparisons; what are we comparing and why?

Required reading: Ebrey et al., (1) “Maturation and Decay [Japan],” 290-294; (2) “Age of Western Imperialism,” 296-303; (3) “China in Decline (1800-1900),” 304-323; (4) “Japan in Turmoil (1800-1867),” 324-336. On our Owlspace under “Resources,” “East Asian History (Smith),” “Chronologies and Other Outlines”: “China-Japan comparative outline”

(Final exam handed out today; due on December 11 no later than 4:00 in the History Department office)

Goals and Standards:

The University now requires us to include in our course syllabi a statement about “overall course objectives and expected learning outcomes.” So here goes:

Our objective in this class is to encourage students to think carefully and critically about “other” people, places and times, not only as a means of understanding the experiences of “others” on their own terms but also as a way of encouraging reflection about “our own” cultural biases and preconceptions. We also expect that students will gain an appreciation of the need to take into account variables such as ethnicity, class and gender in any sort of historical analysis. Finally, our goal is to heighten awareness of the complex relationship between “theory” and “practice” in the political, social and economic life of every society, past and present.

The University also requires us to offer statements about “grade policies,” “absence policies,” and “expectations regarding course work and the Honor Code.” So how about this? Examination grades will be based on a standard established by the class as a whole (a “best collective answer,” determined by an initial reading of all the exams); papers will be graded according to the prevailing standards of the historical profession regarding evidence and argument (see History Department website on this: <http://history.rice.edu/>). Finally, we expect that all assignments will be completed on time and in accordance with the stipulations of the Honor Code. Any sort of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. We do not take roll, but our experience tells us that students who come to class regularly do much better than those who don't.