 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

Spring 2025 HIST 3358 (24937)

Asian History

Wednesday 9:30 – 10:45 am
Classroom Hall 204

Professor Zhaojin Zeng
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Office: CAB 313B
Office hours: MW 10:45 am -12:15 pm

Course Description and Goals

The course offers an introduction to the history of Asia from ancient times to the twenty-first century. The geographical focus will be on East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea) as well as on the South and Southeast Asian areas. We will explore Asian societies, politics, and peoples as well as cultural and economic interconnections across regions and shifting power relations between different regimes. Weekly topics include philosophy and religion; population and economy; power and authority; gender, ethnicity, and cultural identity. Through lecture, reading, in-class and online discussions, and group work, students will gain opportunities to understand, analyze, and appreciate cultural unities, ethnic diversities, and social continuities and discontinuities that comprise the historical development of Asian civilization as a whole. Students will also learn to develop analytical skills in reading, writing, and using primary archives, interpretive articles, and documentary videos as well as digital tools to do research. At the end of the course, students will be able to establish a substantial understanding of Asian history and culture and become well equipped to continue exploring higher-level coursework or programs related to East Asian history, Asia studies, and World History. This course has no prerequisite - familiarity with the region or prior experience with Asia is *not* required.

Course Texts and Study Resources

1. Required Textbook:

- Patricia Ebrey and Anne Walthall, *Modern East Asia from 1600: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*, Vol. II, 3rd Edition (Cengage Learning, 2014), ISBN 9781133606499

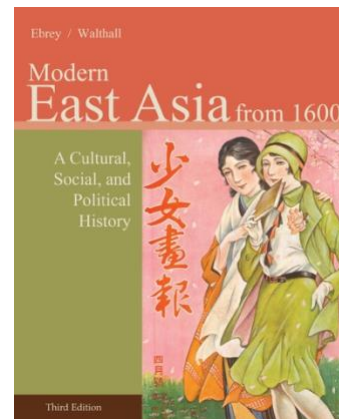
2. Supplemental Materials:

Selected journal articles, newspaper reports, and book chapters (marked *) are available in electronic format on Blackboard.

3. Online Study Guides on Asian History and Asian Studies

TAMUSA library: <https://libguides.tamusa.edu/HIST3358>

Texas A&M Library: <https://tamu.libguides.com/c.php?g=426260>



Course Assignments & Grading

1. Attendance (10%): Students are required to attend all class meetings. Attendance for each class meeting is taken on a credit/non-credit basis in the formats of sign-up sheets, pop quizzes, and exit notes, among others. There is no make-up for missed attendance. Each absence results in a one-point deduction in your final grade. Exceptions can only be made with a doctor's note or other legitimate documentation for extreme conditions/causes.

2. Class Participation (20%): Students are required to fully engage in the class by asking and responding to questions, actively participating in discussions, carrying out group work, and performing other required class activities. The grade is based on the instructor's subjective, but very fair, evaluation of student involvement in class activities during the entire period of the course.

3. Primary Source Analysis (40%)

3.1 Three-Minute Pre-Recorded Video Presentation (20%): Students deliver a three-minute pre-recorded presentation to introduce a historical object from the broader historical context of modern Asia. The object could be a historical site, a scenic place, a book, an electronic product, an important figure, an animal, or other concrete historical objects. You may employ appropriate digital technologies to animate your presentation.

3.2 Primary Source Short Essay (20%): An essay of up to 3 pages, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, standard margins, analyzing a piece of historical primary sources, which could be

historical photographs, paintings, archives, documents, and video or audio recordings. It is recommended that your analysis is related to the primary source in your pre-recorded presentation.

4. Final Essay “I challenge my professor on XXX!” (30%): An essay of 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, standard margins. This assignment allows students to engage critically with the course content by challenging a specific point from the lectures. Through this essay, students will hone their analytical skills, demonstrate mastery of historical evidence, and articulate their arguments persuasively.

- Refer to [the online document](#) for detailed instructions.

*** Extra Credit Opportunities** (2 additional points towards final grade): In order to incentivize student participation in talks, lectures, or other extracurricular events on campus or in the city of San Antonio, one extra point, for each event you attend, will be given toward your final grade. Two points/events maximum for each student. Prior to attending the events, students need to consult by email and seek written approval from the professor. Upon returning from the extracurricular event, students will submit on Blackboard a 250-word report that briefly summarizes the event and shares your experience and thoughts.

*** Final Grade Scale:**

A = 90 to 102, B = 80 to 89, C = 70 to 79, D = 60 to 69, F = 0 to 59.

*Straight letter grades only, no plus or minus (+/-).

Course Policies

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disability. If you believe you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Counseling and Disability Support Services for the coordination of services. If you have any questions or need additional information, contact DSS at: (210) 784-1335.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Financial Aid & Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which includes class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving Federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have his/her aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of his/her federal aid.

Academic Integrity Policy: Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic Dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy, which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

Student Misconduct: Appropriate conduct is essential to the effective functioning of the University. University policy defines unacceptable conduct, both academic and non-academic misconduct, and penalties for such behavior in The Student Handbook and The Student Code of Conduct. University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on the particular paper or assignment or a failing grade in the course. Also, a referral may be issued to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities where the sanctions can vary up to possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation. All student term papers and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software.

Course Writing Policy: All assignments should be crafted originally and directly by students. In the meantime, all information/materials, created by others and then used in students' work, should be given credit to in the appropriate academic citation styles. Note that writing first in a language other than English and then having it translated into English through digital tools is prohibited.

AI Policy: Per University requirements, this course specifies the following rules regarding the use of generative AI tools, including but not limited to, GhatGPT, MS Bing, Google Bard, etc. 1)

Students should create original work for this course, and the use of AI can only be allowed when it serves as a *supplemental* tool for writing improvement, material/data locating, and other non-essential research processes. 2) AI-generated contents, as well as writings and sources created by others, should always be properly cited and acknowledged in your work; otherwise it is considered as plagiarism and violation of academic integrity. 3) If students do use AI tools in any process of their coursework, students must provide a detailed statement on how AI tools informed their research and writing process and the final product, including how you validated any AI-generated contents; this statement does not contribute to the word count of your assignments and does not automatically justify your use of AI tools. 4) The instructor reserves the right to request further information or reassign the assignment in the case of lack of transparency in the use of AI-generated contents in your work.

Submission Policy. Students need to follow the course instructions to submit all completed assignments, on time, to the correct places, online, in print, or in class, etc. *Submissions late for the first hour will be penalized for 5% deduction in grade and for 20% deduction if late between the 2nd hour and one day. Late assignments will NOT be accepted if submitted beyond 24 hours past the due time.*

Grading. Students wishing a reconsideration of their grades may consult the professor, and requests must be made by email within THREE days of the posting of the grades. In the case of regrading, assignments will be graded afresh. Grades may go up or down. Students should immediately inform the professor of any discrepancies between grades recorded on the course website and the grades they have received on assignments.

Digital Device Policy or “No Screens” Policy. On-screen distractions in class have become a besetting problem, frustrating other students and faculty alike. This course thus simply complies with the History Department’s “no screens” policy: *laptops or cellphones are NOT allowed to use during the class and must be stowed in your bags.* Students will be notified in advance if laptops will be needed during a particular session for a group activity, or to consult readings they may not have printed out.

Communication Policy. In-Class Communication: The physical or virtual classroom in this course also serves as an intellectual space for open and free academic conversations between class participants, which consist of the instructor and registered students. Visitors and audit/outside students can be allowed only if the instructor grants approval in advance. Recording, and spread to outside outlets of, class conversations in any way is strictly prohibited unless there is written permission from the instructor. Email Communication: E-mail me directly any questions or concerns that you might have in relation to your coursework. Please do NOT use the “send message” function on the Blackboard platform. All correspondence between professors and students must occur via University email accounts. You must have a Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at sahelp@tamusa.edu or 210-784-4357

Etiquette. Please arrive on time. Please do not come and go during the class period. If you are unavoidably late, as a courtesy to the class, please enter quietly so as not to interfere with the concentration of other students.

Student Support and Resources

Student Academic Success Center: The Student Academic Success Center takes a developmental approach to help students complete their academic goals from orientation through graduation. The Center offers academic and skills workshops, one-on-one appointments, and online resources to help retention efforts at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The goal of the Center is to help students discover, self-reflect, and become independent learners. To contact the Center, call 210-784-1307.

The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The center provides writing assistance to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges at Texas A&M-San Antonio. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can make individual or group appointments with a writing tutor. Email writingcenter@tamusa.edu to make an appointment.

TAMUSA Library: Librarians from the Archives & Special Collections offer one on one research assistance by appointment for history students. Topics include brainstorming a topic, search techniques, or even citation help. Feel free to make an appointment with the librarian via the link: <https://tamusa.libcal.com/appointments?u=30503>

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (January 22) Course Introduction

Reading: Robert B. Marks, [“Asia in the Remaking of the Modern World.”](#)

Optional: 1) Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.15. 2) Watch short episode [“Foundations of Eastern Civilizations”](#)

Week 2 (January 29) East Asian Societies and Cultures

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.16.

Optional: 1) Online reading: [“The Epoch of Unification \(1568 - 1615 AD\)”](#); 2) Spence, “China and the Eighteenth-Century World” in *The Search for Modern China*

Week 3 (February 5) ASYNCHRONOUS FULL WEEK East Asian Empires

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.17.

Watch and Discuss: 1) Video: "[How did the Mongols Destroy Baghdad in 1258?](#)"; 2) Spence, "The First Clash with the West" in *The Search for Modern China*

Week 4 (February 12) East Asia Meets Imperialism

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.18.

Optional: Elman, "Naval Warfare and the Refraction of China's Self-Strengthening Reforms."

Week 5 (February 19) China's Self-Strengthening Movement

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.19.

Optional: Christopher W. A. Szpilman and Sven Saaler, "[Pan-Asianism as an Ideal of Asian Identity and Solidarity, 1850–Present.](#)"

Week 6 (February 26) Japan's Meiji Transformation

In-class film viewing: [The Meiji Revolution](#) (1994)

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.20.

Optional: Gordon, "The Samurai Revolution" in *A Modern History of Japan*

Week 7 (March 5) Japan's Rise as a New Imperial Power

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.22.

Friday, March 7, 11:59:59 pm - Primary Source Short Essay Due on Blackboard

Week 8 - March 10 - 14: Spring Break – No Classes

Week 9 (March 19) Korea's Struggle for Independence

In-class Digital Project Workshop: StoryMap JS

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Chs.21&23.

Optional: ['Have you eaten?' Inside Korea's gastronomic love language](#)

Week 10 (March 26) World Wars in Asia

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Chs. 24&25.

Optional: Spence, "World War II" in *the Search for Modern China*

Week 11 (April 2) War and Trauma in East Asia

In-class Film Watching: [Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima](#) (2004)

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.26.

Week 12 (April 9) Economic Change in Post-war Japan and Korea

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Chs.28&29.

Optional: Watch documentary [Inside Japan, Inc](#) (1994)

Week 13 (April 16) Communist China under Mao

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *Modern East Asia*, Ch.27.

Optional: 1) Spence, “Deepening the Revolution” in *The Search for Modern China*; 2)

Watch documentary [Mao’s Great Famine](#) (2015)

Week 14 (April 23) China’s Reform and Opening-up

Reading: Ebrey and Walthall, *East Asia*, Ch.30.

Optional: 1) Documentary [Factory City](#) (2012); 2) Andrew Gordon, “Beyond the post-war era,” in *A Modern History of Japan*.

Week 15 (April 30) Asia in the 21st century

Reading: [“The United States and Asia in 2021: Change, Continuity, Some of Each?”](#)

Optional: [“Destined for War: Can China and the United States Escape Thucydides’s Trap? - The Atlantic”](#)

Final Essay Due: TBD