Syllabus
Fall 2005 Morse Academic Plan
Course #V55.-0512012
World Cultures-China
Mon-Wed 9:30-10:45
Silver 714
Instructor: Zvi Ben-Dor Benite  8-8614 (office)
Office: KJCC#517  zbd1@nyu.edu
Office hours: Monday 11:30-13:00, and by appointment

Teaching Assistants (“Preceptors”):
Emily Burnham, Lara Rabinovitch, George Tomlinson

I. General Information

This course introduces China, its history, its geography, and its culture, with a particular focus on the ancient and premodern periods. It counts towards the “core requirements” of the Morse Academic Plan. It may also be counted towards the major or minor in history, as the instructor is a member of the history faculty. Please note that discussion sections are a vitally important portion of the class.

II. Course Objectives and Requirements

This course emphasizes large themes rather than the minutiae of dynasty after dynasty, but it tries to proceed chronologically. We will make use of a large number of primary documents and discuss their possible interpretations.

That process of interpretation is continued in writing assignments: students will write two short (3-4 pages) essays. In these essays you will be not be required to develop a “thesis” so much as to analyze the main points of what you read.

There will also be an in-class midterm (multiple choice) and a final take-home examination. Final grades will take attendance, participation, exams, and written assignments into account. Grades will be weighted as follows: First essay 20%, Midterm 20%, Second essay 20%, Final exam 30%, Participation 10%.

On the subject of attendance: please note that lectures do not repeat what is in the readings, so attendance is essential.

There can be no late submissions of assignments and no incompletes will be granted. Late essays will be given a grade of zero. Make up examinations will be made available only in exceptional circumstances. All assignments must be turned in class on the date
specified. Do NOT leave assignments in instructor’s box, stuffed under the office door, etc. **Please keep a copy of your papers, in case of mishap.**

I am particularly stringent on the issue of intellectual honesty and I know how to use “Google”; there is also an array of search engines available to professors who suspect material has been taken from the Internet. The MINIMUM penalty for plagiarizing another's work is an F in the course and a letter to the Dean's Office that will be part of your permanent file. If you do not understand what plagiarism is, please ask me for clarification or consult the student handbook.

III. Texts

The following required text is available at the Bookstore.

Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*.

In addition, I will post all readings and primary source materials for the sections and assignments on the course blackboard website.

IV. Course Meetings

**9/7 Introduction: Chinese Geographies; Languages/Writing**

**9/12 Origins of Chinese Civilization: Neolithic Period and Shang Civilization**
Readings: Ebrey, Cambridge Illustrated History, Chapter One.

**9/14 The Zhou Invasion and Dynastic Change**
Readings: Ebrey, finish Chapter One, begin reading Chap. Two.

*Sections Readings (on Blackboard):*
“Oracle Bone Inscriptions of the Late Shang Dynasty”; “The Classic of Documents”; “Chronicles of Zhou.”

**9/19 Eastern Zhou Political System: The Warring States**
Readings: Ebrey, Finish Chapter Two.

**9/21 Confucius and Confucianism in the Zhou Context**

*Sections Readings (on Blackboard):*
“The Zuo Tradition.”
“Analects”

**9/26-28 The “Hundred Schools” in Context: What is “Chinese Philosophy”?**
Sections Readings (on Blackboard): Confucius, Analects (complete); “Mozi”; “The Way of Laozi and Zhuangzi”; “Mencius."

10/3 The Foundations of Empire: Qin/Han
Readings: Ebrey, Cambridge Illustrated History, Chapter Three;

10/5 Film: The Tomb of Qinshihuangdi

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
“Legalists and Militarists”; “Guidelines for Han Rulers”; “The Chinese Emperor.”

10/10 Columbus day- No Class

10/12 Later Han, “Three Kingdoms”
Readings: Ebrey, Chapter Four.

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
“Sundry Accounts of the Western Capital”; “New Stories and Tales of the Times”; “The Three Kingdoms.”

10/12 FIRST ESSAY IS DUE IN CLASS!

10/17-19 Steppe Peoples and Buddhism in China

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
“Disposing of Error”; “A Monk Does Not Bow Before a King”; “The Fanwang Sutra.”

10/24-26 Tang: The Central Plain Dynasty; the birth of “East Asia.”

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):

10/31 and 11/2 Fall of the Tang and Rise of the Song
Readings: Ebrey, Cambridge Illustrated History, 136-50; (On Blackboard) “Han Yu: Memorial on the Bone of the Buddha.”

Sections Readings (on Blackboard): “House Instruction of Mr. Yan”; “Emperor Wuzong’s Edict on the Suppression of Buddhism.”

11/7-9 Song Dynasty and the “Neo” Confucian “Revival”; Urban Popular Culture

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
“Su Shi on Public Discourse”; “Political Activities of Song Students.”

11/9 MIDTERM IN CLASS!

11/14-16 Women, Children and Education in Song China

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
“Admonitions for Women”; “Daily Schedule of Study in the Cheng Family School.”

11/21 The Yuan Khanate-China and The World

11/21 SECOND ESSAY DUE IN CLASS!!!

11/23 The Rise of Ming
Readings: Ebrey, Cambridge Illustrated History, 190-203.

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
“Marco Polo”

11/28-3 Intellectual and Social History of the Ming: “China’s Examination Hell”;
Popular Literature: “The Three Kingdoms.”
Readings: Ebrey, Cambridge Illustrated History, 203-06;

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
Selections from the Feng Menglong

12/5-7 Science in Traditional China
Ebrey, Cambridge Illustrated History, 206-19;

Sections Readings (on Blackboard):
TBA

12/12-14

The Coming of The West to China and China Marches West

Sections Preparing for Final Exam.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21ST 8:00 AM, FINAL EXAM IN CLASS.