

ASIAN Course Descriptions – Winter 2008

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ASIAN 200 / HISTORY 203 – Introduction to Japanese Civilization

Instructor: Maki Fukuoka (mfukuoka@umich.edu)

This course is designed as an introduction to aspects of the history and culture of Japan. We will examine translations of primary documents, selected critical essays and visual materials (including film) both to engage with representations of moments of Japan's history, but also to raise a series of questions regarding the methods of cultural analysis per se. Thus, the aim of this course is two-fold: 1) to analyze selected aspects of the cultural history of "Japan," and 2) to critically reflect on the act of analysis itself.

ASIAN 205 / HISTORY 205 – Modern East Asia

Instructor: Par Kristoffer Cassel (cassel@umich.edu)

This course is an introduction to modern China, Korea, and Japan from 1800 to the present. It covers the following topics: (1) China's progressive decline and rejuvenation, the impact of imperialism, the rise and development of the PRC; (2) the struggles of Korea, its colonization by Japan; liberation and division into the two Koreas, and the rising economic status of the South; and (3) the end of feudalism in Japan, the building of a modern state and economy, Japanese imperialism, postwar recovery, and the rise to super-power status. Taking a broad comparative perspective on EA, the course explores the inter-relations between political economy, society, and culture in each country within an emerging modern world system. This is a continuation of HISTORY 204; however that course is not a prerequisite and no previous background on the subject is required. Two lectures and one discussion section each week. There will be a midterm and final exam.

ASIAN 220 / RELIGION 220 – Introduction to Asian Religions

Instructor: James Robson (robsonj@umich.edu)

This course is an introduction to the study of Asian religions. We will consider representative material drawn from some of the major Asian religious traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, etc.) that have existed throughout Asia (India, China, Korea, Japan) from ancient times to the present day. While we will be reading representative primary texts from those religious traditions, the course is not intended to be a comprehensive or systematic survey; rather than aiming at breadth, the course is designed to focus on major conceptual themes, such as ritual, death, image veneration, meditation, ancestor worship, religious violence, the role of religion in modernity, and so on. The overarching emphasis throughout the course will be to give you the tools to think critically about the wide variety of religious practices that exist in Asia and to consider the hermeneutic difficulties attendant upon the study of religion in general and Asian religious traditions in particular.

ASIAN 221 / GTBOOKS 221 – Great Books of China

Instructor: Shuen-fu Lin (lsf@umich.edu)

An introduction to some of the books that have exerted a commanding influence on the lives, thought, culture, and literary experience of the Chinese people through the ages, and that have the power to delight or enlighten Western readers today.

ASIAN 223 / RELIGION 223 – Bhagavad-Gita

Instructor: Madhav Deshpande (mmdesh@umich.edu)

This class introduces Hinduism to students through an intensive study of this single most important scriptural text, the Bhagavad-Gita. We spend half the time going over the text-in-translation, chapter by chapter. The other half of the class time is devoted to critical issues relating to the text, i.e., history of the text, its transmission, its location within the history of Hinduism, its connections with political/cultural history, its ancient and modern interpretations.

ASIAN 249 / HISTORY 248 – Introduction to Korean Civilization

Instructors: Youngju Ryu (yiryu@umich.edu)

This course is a survey of Korean history and culture from early times to the present. Through texts that range from foundation myths detailing miraculous births of ancient kings to the

latest examples of cultural production in the age of digital media, we will explore Korea's development as a political and cultural entity. In addition to highlighting major events in Korea's dynastic and national pasts, particular attention will be paid to everyday practices that shaped the lives of elites and commoners, and the rich tradition of storytelling that helped Koreans make sense of the world and of their places within it. As we develop familiarity with a wide range of sources spanning political, philosophical, economic, religious and artistic realms, we will visit competing interpretations of Korean history, and think through the different ways that various disciplines have constructed Korean civilization as an object of study.

ASIAN 253 Section 001 – Undergraduate Seminar in South and Southeast Asian Culture

Topic: Religion and Violence in a Secular World

Instructor: Arvind Mandair (amandair@umich.edu)

Recent events have brought the debate about the relationship between religion and violence into the foreground of public debate. Do religions justify and cause violence or are they more appropriately seen as forces for peace and tolerance? In the context of secular modernity, religion has been represented by some as a primary cause of social division, conflict and war, whilst others have argued that this is a distortion of the 'true' significance of religion, which when properly followed promotes peace, harmony, goodwill and social cohesion. Coinciding with the global re-surfacing of religious violence is the work of the media that can be seen both as a key agent in transforming the public's reception of the relationship between religion and violence, and in many ways affecting the course of national and international politics itself. This course explores theoretical and practical aspects religion and violence in the context of our contemporary secular world. The course asks why, in an era of intense globalization, there has been a proliferation of ethnic cleansing and extreme forms of political violence against civil societies. Specific themes for discussion may include but are not limited to: 9/11 and the War on Terrorism; suicide bombings and anti-Americanism; Islam Multiculturalism and secular democracy in France and Britain; Hindu/Muslim violence and the question of secularism in India; Sikhs and the Indian State.

ASIAN 253 section 002 – Undergraduate Seminar in South and Southeast Asian Culture

Topic: The Goddess in South Asia: Feminine Power and Cosmic Energy

Instructor: Srilata Raman (sriraman@umich.edu)

"Thereupon Ambikā became terribly angry with those foes, and in her anger her countenance then became dark as ink. Out from the surface of her forehead, fierce with frown, issued suddenly Kālī of terrible countenance. "
Dēvīmāhātmya, Chapter 7

The prevalence of Goddess worship in South Asia has not only been parodied in Indiana Jones movies and in crime novels centering around obscure and fearsome Indian cults but, on a more serious vein, it has been the source of inspiration for Western feminist religious scholarship trying to retrieve its own Goddess traditions. It has also been the focus of psychoanalytical theories regarding Indian mothers, their male off-spring, masculinity and sexuality. In this course we are going to examine what exactly the South Asian religious tradition says about the Goddess. We are going to pose questions about the antiquity of the tradition, and its endless capacity for re-invention and renewal in contemporary religious practice and how it thrives in South Asian culture, with living women saints and goddesses. We are going to ask if the Goddess is a feminist. We might also want to ponder the paradox of South Asian Goddess veneration co-existing with the scriptural and very real social subordination of women. Through exploring these various questions we are going to follow the story of the Goddess in the South Asian religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

ASIAN 261 – Modern China and its "Others"

Instructors: Miranda Brown (mdbrown@umich.edu) and Liang Luo (liangluo@umich.edu)

This course will provide a general orientation to modern Chinese history, society, and culture from 1368 to the present, with a special focus on developments in the twentieth century. We will investigate three sets of major problems: (1) What does modernity mean in the Chinese context? (2) China is often seen as an ethnically- and culturally-homogenous society, but what is China and (Han) Chinese? To what extent has the considerable linguistic, cultural, and regional diversity been understood in terms of ethnic or racial groups? (3) How did China transition from a multi-ethnic empire to a modern nation state? To what extent have racial, ethnic, and xenophobic discourses played a role in the birth of China as a modern nation state and shaped notions of Chinese identity?

ASIAN 265 / HISTART 265 / PHIL 265 / RCHUMS 265 – Arts and Letters of China
Instructor: Shuen-fu Lin (lsf@umich.edu)

This interdisciplinary and multimedia course is taught jointly by faculty specialists in Chinese philosophy, religion, cultural history, history of art, drama, literature, and visual culture. It is not a survey course. Instead, the main task will be the sustained and critical study of a number of significant and representative works in order to present some major themes of the distinct and complex civilizations of China. In spite of inner tensions, this is a cultural tradition that can be seen as a highly integrated system composed of mutually reinforcing parts, making such an interdisciplinary and multimedia approach particularly effective. Toward the end of the term we will observe the system's collapse as it struggles to adapt to the modern world, and consider how our themes continue, persist, or change. Background lectures on language and early culture will be followed by topics and readings that include: Confucianism (Confucius and Mencius), Daoism (Laozi and Zhuangzi) the art of argumentation; themes in Chinese religiosity, Chan (Zen) Buddhism; lyricism and visual experience in poetry and painting; music; traditional storyteller tales; poetic-musical theater; modern fiction and culture; and Chinese film.

The format of the course consists of three hours of lectures and one hour of discussion. The lectures will be given by: Baxter (language); Brown (early culture and Confucianism and the art of argumentation); Lam (music); Lin (Daoism, poetry, and garden); Luo (modern culture and literature); Nornes (film); Powers (painting); Robson (religion); Rolston (theater and traditional fiction)

Students should register for both the lecture section and one of the discussion sections. No prerequisites. Requirements: occasional brief responses to readings, three short papers, and a final exam.

ASIAN 280 section 001 / HISTORY 208 section 003– Topics in Asian Studies
Topic: How to Make the Wheel Turn: Buddhism and Power
Instructor: Christoph Emmrich (emmrch@umich.edu)

The Buddha is said to have been able to stop mad elephants from running him over, have entire armies out to kill him be washed away by floods, or teleport himself across rivers and into heavens and hells. Indian Buddhist saints, Nepalese tantric priests and Burmese wizards supposedly had and still have the power to fly through the air, go through walls, or read minds. A mantra recited or written on a scrap of paper, icons and amulets representing the Buddha, or, most of all, the Buddha's conserved tooth have the power to protect you from danger and vanquish your enemies. Kings, generals, politicians and businessmen in South and Southeast Asia have sought to own these powerful objects and to be endorsed by powerful monks to run countries, wipe out competition or wage devastating wars. In the same way rebels, social reformers and pro-democracy activists have successfully stood up to repression and changed the balance of power by themselves plugging into the power the Buddha, his doctrine and his people have to offer. The ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka is both favored and opposed by monks. And the Thai king, who was once a monk, is the one to decide when the military or the civilians should run the country. If Buddhism, as it is often believed is all about peace, meditation, retreating and nirvana, how Buddhist is it to have all these kinds of powers, or how Buddhist is it to have power at all? Or could it be that the path to power is to refuse to have any? What power can the knowledge about Buddhism confer not only on Buddhist monks and rulers, but on Western scholars and students? This is a course in which you will learn about Buddhism from a different perspective by studying how power works.

ASIAN 302 – Rewriting Identities in Modern Japan**Instructor: Ken Ito (kenkito@umich.edu)**

This course on modern Japanese fiction examines how novels and short stories written after 1868 engage the issue of national, cultural, and social identities. The inquiry in the course simultaneously moves in two directions. We examine how fiction written in an age of national print-capitalism participates in the work of building a common understanding of a nation and its people, but we also explore how the same fiction can spotlight divisions of gender, sexual orientation, class, generation and region.

ASIAN 380 – Topics in Asian Studies**Topic: The Commodification of the Sacred East: Yoga and Ayurveda from pre-Modernity to post-Modernity****Instructor: Srilata Rama (sriraman@umich.edu)**

Tired after a hard semester or seminar and you want a relaxing weekend? Today the remedy is to visit a spa where you can undergo a destressing regimen of Āyurvedic massage, food which is prepared, one is told, on Āyurvedic principles and, as part of the wellness programme, an exercise plan which includes meditation and Yoga. Such packages proliferate on the web and are offered by institutions and individuals neither of which have necessarily anything to do with any Indian religion or India. Thus, we have both the phenomenon of the “secularization” of these, once originally, religiously suffused Indic practices as well as their proliferation in the global market. How are we to understand this development? Commonsense seems to indicate that vigorous physical exercise was what Yoga was always about and massages and wellness means Āyurveda. This course will show that such commonsense, which is based upon the assumption of an unbroken continuity of tradition between Yoga and Āyurveda in antiquity and now is highly deceptive. What was meant then and what is meant now is bridged only by a process of radical transformation. In this course we will chart this transformation.

ASIAN 381 section 001 – Jr. – Sr. Colloquium**Topic: Translating Asia to the American Academy****Instructor: Christi Merrill (merrillc@umich.edu)**

Throughout this course we will ask how we evaluate research on subjects Asian. Specifically, how might we begin addressing such a general question, especially when the only language we have in common is English? David L. Szanton opens a recent volume on *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* by announcing, “To know, analyze, and interpret’ another culture...is inevitably an act of translation. It is primarily and effort to make the assumptions, meaning, structures, and dynamics of another society and culture comprehensible to an outsider.” We will consider a range of theories on these acts of translation so that we might think carefully about our own disciplined attempts to negotiate this imaginary line between “insider” and “outsider” in the study of Asia in English. Students are not expected to master the details of every Asian language and culture considered, but instead to do research on a particular example that helps them think through the larger issues related to the study of Asia in a way that allows them to find common ground with others in the class, in such a way that makes relevant the theoretical issues raised in that week’s assigned reading. Ideally, this exercise should help students articulate more clearly the central questions they wish to write towards in their term papers.

Description needs instructor’s approval

ASIAN 381 section 002 – Jr. – Sr. Colloquium**Topic: Theories and Practices of Visual Culture****Instructor: Maki Fukuoka (mfukuoka@umich.edu)**

Why does visual culture matter to the study of Asia? This course explores key theories of visual culture to engage with concerns and questions that arise in looking at objects from various Asian cultures. Students will gain conceptual tools with which to “look” at and think through particular cultural phenomena and visual representations, and to examine these critically as a part of broader field of visual culture.

ASIAN 415 / HISTORY 415 – Law and Society in Late Imperial and Modern China**Instructor: Par Kristoffer Cassel (cassel@umich.edu)**

The Chinese legal order is one of the great legal traditions that has not only exercised a tremendous influence on other legal systems in East Asia for centuries, but still exerts a considerable influence in China today. In recent years, new research methods and improved access to archival materials have shed new light on many aspects of Chinese legal history and forced scholars to revise many assumptions and ideas. Using selected readings of secondary and primary sources, as well as through audiovisual materials and fiction, this course will explore major topics in Chinese legal history. The course will be divided into three distinct segments: 1) introduction to basic concepts and institutions in the Chinese legal order and how Chinese and foreigners have perceived Chinese law; 2) how the Chinese legal order was implemented during the last imperial dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911); and 3) how Chinese law and institutions were transformed from the mid-19th through the 20th centuries. Students who have taken the course should have acquired a nuanced understanding of the Chinese legal order and its cultural and social context. They should also be familiar with major issues in the historiography of Chinese legal history.

Intended audience: 1) Undergraduates considering a postgraduate degree in history, social science or law; 2) graduate students in history; and 3) law school students with strong interests in China.

Course Requirements: Participation (30%) and three papers (total 70%) submitted at the end of each segment: a short essay; one of 5-7 pages; and one of 10-12 pages. Participation includes reading assigned texts, regular attendance in class, active participation in class discussions and prompt submission of assignments. Topics should be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Most of the readings will be available on Electronic Reserve.

Class Format: Three hours per week in seminar format where students will discuss readings and make presentations.

ASIAN 420 – Korean Literature in Translation**Instructor: Youngju Ryu (yjryu@umich.edu)**

For much of the twentieth century, literature was at the very forefront of progressive intellectual discourses in Korea, and provided the heated battleground for social and political contestations. In this class, we will read major works of modern Korean fiction in English translation and explore the place of the writer in Korean society. Central to this exploration is the theme of modernity; rather than take modernity as given, we will ask what other modalities of human life and systems of understanding it has replaced. Topics of discussion will include tradition and nativism; migration and nostalgia; imperialist, nationalist and communist ideologies; urban space and culture; gender politics; changing conceptions of private life and aesthetics of commitment. To enrich our understanding of fictional texts, we will chart major literary debates in modern Korea and situate them within shifting political climates.

ASIAN 480 section 001 – Topics in Asian Studies**Topic: The Question of Modernity****Instructor: Manishita Dass (mdass@umich.edu)**

This course approaches the question of modernity, which has emerged as a central issue in the humanities, from a comparative perspective. What shape does modernity take in South and East Asia? Is modernity always imitative of the west or can we speak of "alternative modernities"? What role do visual and literary cultures play in the making of modernity in Asia? What challenges might a study of Asian modernity pose to dominant understandings of the modern?

Our investigation will be primarily anchored in the visual and popular cultures of India (a major focus), China, and Japan, and draw on cinema and literary studies, cultural theory, history, and anthropology. The course will entail structured discussions and active student participation.

ASIAN 480 section 002 – Topics in Asian Studies

Topic: South Asian Art in Ritual Context

Instructor: Anna Sloan (annasl@umich.edu)

This course examines South Asian art in the context of ritual practice. At its start, readings from the perspectives of anthropology, religion, and performance studies provide a theoretical framework for a series of individual case studies. Topics selected are drawn from Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and secular cultures; they address, in turn, the varied ways that identities are defined and/or mediated by ritual practice. Readings and discussions will also explore the significance of the public sphere, the spectacle, and the state in the production and use of images. By contrast with traditional art historical practice, this course will return repeatedly to explore the relationship between visual experience and other modes of perception, including the physical, temporal, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory.

ASIAN 480 section 003 – Topics in Asian Studies

Topic: The Development of Chinese Fiction

Instructor: David Rolston (drolston@umich.edu)

China had a long and independent tradition of fiction writing that is both interesting in and of itself and represents a valuable example for comparison with other traditions. Chinese notions of what “fiction” was changed over time, and gradually many of the taboos and resistances to the writing and reading of fiction were overcome. This course will chart the development of individual fictional genres and how they were consumed and evaluated over time. We will also consider how similar stuff material was reworked in different genres and even in the same genre, the writing of sequels and parodies, and the late imperial practice of reading fiction in editions with interpretive commentary. As opposed to the more formal and highly respected genres in traditional China such as poetry and essays, fiction was free to reflect a much wider range of concerns, stretching from matters of the highest political and social import to those of the heart and the bedroom. Many fictional representations had wide social currency, not only in their original written form, but also through stage renditions. Class requirements will include participation in in-class exercises, brief weekly assignments, two short papers, and a final exam. A knowledge of Chinese is not required.

ASIAN 480 section 004 / HISTORY 498 section 001– Topics Asian Studies

Topic: Girls, Monks, and Diamond Masters: Buddhist Practice in Nepal

Instructor: Christoph Emmrich (emmrich@umich.edu)

Welcome to a country where bodhisattvas need buffalo blood to fuel their cars. Where Hindu kings pay homage to Buddhist girls to stay in power. Where girls get married to the Thought of Enlightenment to prevent them from becoming widows. Where Diamond Masters offer their own bodies into the sacrificial fire they burn for their clients. – Buddhism gone crazy? Not at all. Dramatic events in the history of Buddhism on both sides of the Himalayan watershed over the last one thousand years caused various waves of refugees, traders and fortune seekers to end up in and around the Kathmandu Valley, mingling with those who were there before them and bringing with them their particular brand of Buddhism: the urban Newars, the formerly horse trading Tamang, the mountaineering Sherpa and the recently exiled Tibetans. These groups have contributed to the development of a intricate, sometimes surprising, always unique fabric of Buddhist communities borrowing, sharing and reinventing a variety of practices while competing with regard to strategies in dealing with the Hindu ruling classes or, more recently, the Maoist rebellion and the development of democratic and global market structures. In this seminar, relying on video footage, narratives, handbooks in translation and ethnographies, we will study the histories, contemporary performances and underlying scripts of events such as life crisis rituals, esoteric worship, monastic routine, meditation, chanting, dancing, healing and possession. We will encounter agents such as the Buddhist tantric priest, the Tibetan monk, the so-called Living Goddess and, last but not least, the Yeti. Drawing on anthropological theories of ritual and the ongoing discussions on the role of practice in

Buddhism, we will try to understand how ritual works and how Buddhist practice is related to locality, doctrine, politics and biography.

ASIAN 501 / CCS 501 (H) / HISTORY 549 / POLSCI 501 / SOC 527 – Social Scientific Studies of Historical and Contemporary China

Instructor: Mary E Gallagher (metg@umich.edu)

CCS 501 is part of a two-semester Interdisciplinary Seminar in Chinese Studies intended for M.A. and Ph.D. students from all disciplines. Disciplinary departments create barriers between shared problems, methods, and sources. ISCS is designed to recover and highlight the connecting links of Chinese Studies: the multidimensional study of China encompassing all social groups and the entire range of human experience, from literature and the visual arts to politics and economics. There are no formal prerequisites, except permission of the instructors.

CCS 501 will introduce graduate students to current issues in social scientific studies of China, emphasizing different methodological approaches drawn from multiple disciplines. The course will address four common themes — family and social organization, poverty, social stratification and social mobility, and political economy — that intersect the multiple social science disciplines. Each class will discuss one or more disciplinary approaches to a common subject through class discussion of exemplary studies of China. We will discuss the existing state of the field on each subject and emphasize the different research design and data available for such studies.

ASIAN 502 / ANTHRCUL 502 / CCS 502 / HISTART 504 / HISTORY 548 / POLSCI 502 – Humanistic Studies of Historical and Contemporary China

Instructor: David Rolston (drolston@umich.edu)

This course will examine the present state of research in selected areas of scholarly inquiry in Chinese studies – language, literature, history, religion material culture, and art history – as we interrogate such seemingly commonsense notions as "civilization," "culture," "tradition," "modernity," and above all, "Chineseness." Our goals are to develop good reading skills, stimulate critical thinking, and inspire imaginative approaches to humanistic problems.

ASIAN 551 – Classical Japanese Prose

Topic: The Genji Monogatari

Instructor: Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen (gmz@umich.edu)

Training in the reading and interpretation of prose texts from the Heian period (794-1185), which saw the development of a native or vernacular tradition (as distinct from Sino-Japanese or *kanbun*) based on *hiragana* and *waka* poetic language particularly in the works of women court writers. Genres include *monogatari* (narratives), *nikki* (diaries), and the so-called hybrid types, *uta nikki* (poem journals) and *uta monogatari* (poem tales).

Topic for Winter 2008: The Hermeneutics of the *Tale of Genji*. What is the most productive way of reading this first ever classic of women's writing in the world? The seminar will analyze the work from the perspectives of the history of its reception, feminist theory and women's writing, gender studies, and translation studies. We will explore the application of the Freudian oedipal hermeneutic, the Lacanian analysis of desire, Kristeva's semiotic order, and Judith Butler's reflections on gender to this work. Students from other fields who can read the *Tale of Genji* only in English or modern Japanese translation are also welcome to attend the seminar.

ASIAN 580 – Seminar in South Asian Studies

Topic: Sikhism and Modernity

Instructor: Arvind-Pal Mandair (amandair@umich.edu)

This course looks at Sikhism's interaction with modernity, charting the rise of nationalist discourses of Sikh religion, history and politics. A central concern will be to reevaluate the construction of Sikh identity from the late 18th through to the present day. Particular emphasis will be given to a consideration of the Sikh reformist movement of the late 19th and early 20th century and how this influential movement has laid the basis for the modern Sikh imaginary. In addition we shall examine how this modern Sikh imaginary has helped to frame the various

responses by Sikhs to secularism and multiculturalism in South Asia and the Western diaspora?

ASIAN 585 – Seminar in Chinese Studies

Topic: The Orthodox and the Occult in Chinese Medicine

Instructor: Miranda Brown (mdbrown@umich.edu)

This course will provide an introduction to Chinese medical texts. We will read in the original classical Chinese the Biography of Chunyu Yi (Shiji 105), as well as selections from the Yellow Emperor's Classic, Classic of Difficult Issues, and the Classic of the Pulse. In addition, students will be asked to consider the contents of the aforementioned texts in relation to selections from the Annals by Lü Buwei, various divination manuals and accounts of divination, and excavated bureaucratic communications. Some discussion of secondary literature in various European and Asian languages will be included. Students should have had at least one year of Classical Chinese and four years of Modern Chinese to enroll. Requirements: weekly attendance in seminar (to be scheduled for Monday morning), 2-3 presentations of the sources and secondary literature, and one long seminar paper.