

HIST 445

Late Imperial China

Winter 2022
W/F 10:05-11:25 AM
Location: Arts Building 230
McGill University

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. David Porter

Office: Ferrier 330

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM – available in person OR by Zoom

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OVERVIEW

This course explores the history of China from the founding of Ming dynasty through the height of the Qing, from about 1368 to 1800. We will take a thematic approach, looking at the governance, economy, society, culture, and environment of “late imperial” China with the goal of understanding both how China worked prior to falling under the influence of European and American imperialism, and the dynamics of historical change in China during this period. You should be prepared to look for both similarities and differences between late imperial China and other places and times that you have studied. But we will also strive to avoid the trap of treating early modern China as a static, unchanging society. As it aims to cover a period of more than 400 years, this course is far from comprehensive, but you should come away with a strong grasp of a key period in China’s history and a good sense of how historians go about doing research on it.

READINGS

All readings will be available on MyCourses, either as links to an article or e-book (in most cases) or as a pdf.

COURSE STRUCTURE

We will meet two days per week. The majority of class time will be in seminar format (discussion-based), with short lectures at the start of some sessions to provide necessary background and context. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings for each class session in advance, in order to be well-prepared to talk about those readings during class. Note that, because it is a 400-level seminar, this course is reading intensive: expect readings to average 150 pages/week.

ASSESSMENT

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Attendance and Class Participation (10%)

You will be expected to make thoughtful contributions to class discussions that show clear evidence of having done the required readings. Your contributions should be responsive to your classmates' comments and should always be respectful to everyone else in the room. Quality is more important than quantity – of course, if you don't say anything, you aren't participating – but one or two excellent comments will impress me far more than dominating the conversation with ideas that suggest that you haven't actually done the reading. Attendance is not graded explicitly, but since it is impossible to participate without being present, you will receive no credit for participation if you are absent without a valid excuse.

Discussion Questions (15%)

Beginning in Week 3, you must submit two questions for potential class discussion each week to a discussion page on MyCourses. You will be divided into two groups: half the class will submit questions for Wednesday readings, half for Friday readings. Your questions are due by 9 AM on the day of class.

Questions should not be simple questions of fact with clear answers. Nor should they be requests for explanations by the instructor of difficult concepts or for more information of a topic of interest (you are, of course, welcome to raise such questions in class, in office hours, or by e-mail). Rather, the goal is to come up with questions that you think will produce interesting and productive class discussion. Questions can be focused on one or more specific readings, or on the entire set of readings for that class (questions that connect readings from one class back to readings from a previous class are also welcome).

Legal Case Paper (25%)

You will write a paper based on a case selected from Robert E. Hegel, *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China: Twenty Case Histories*, cases from which will play an important role in our discussions on February 9 and February 11. Details for the assignment will be distributed that week, but the paper will be a **MAXIMUM of 1500 words** and will be due on **February 26th at 5 PM**.

Final Project (total 50% for 2 components)

- 1. Proposed topic and preliminary biography (10%) – due March 12 at 5PM** via MyCourses
- 2. Final Project (40%) – due April 12 at 8PM** via MyCourses (MAXIMUM 4000 WORDS)

You will do a final project, **due on April 12**. Your project will consist of a prospectus for a research paper on a topic of your choice related to the history of China (or other territory under

Ming/Qing rule) between the late 14th century and the early 19th century. Your prospectus should consist of three elements.

1. A historiographical survey of relevant scholarship (you only need to deal with work in English, but you are welcome to talk about scholarship in other languages that you read as well) on your topic (approximately 2500 words).
2. A description of a set of primary sources that would be sufficient to enable someone to produce a journal article-length piece of scholarship on your topic (approximately 750 words). These sources can be in any language and do not have to be sources that you are currently capable of accessing or reading. That is, you are welcome to (indeed, encouraged) to describe sources that are only available in an archive in China, Taiwan, Mongolia, etc. even if you are unable to read Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, etc.
3. An analysis of a single primary source available in English (either originally or in translation) or in another language that you can read (approximately 500 words). You should not merely summarize the source, but use it to make an argument that would be relevant to include in your project.

To ensure that you are on track to complete this project, **you are required to submit a proposed topic and preliminary bibliography by March 12**. This proposal should consist of at least a one paragraph description of your topic, a bibliography of the scholarship you will discuss in part 1 of your project (minimum FIVE books or articles), the identity of the sources you will discuss in part 2 of your project (no need to describe them at this point), and the identity of the source you will analyze in part 3 of your project.

COURSE POLICIES

Absences and Late Work

You are expected to attend all class meetings and to submit all work on time. Missed class will result both in failing to learn the material covered (which can affect your success in other assignments) and in a failure to participate in discussion, directly lowering your participation grade. I recognize that there will be situations that make it impossible (or unwise) for you to attend class or to submit a paper on time, including illnesses (if you're sick, please rest and recover; don't come to class). I treat my students as responsible adults; if you are genuinely unable to come to class or submit a paper on time for a legitimate reason, I simply ask that you inform me **IN ADVANCE** (no extensions are offered if they are requested after an assignment's due date) and let me know the reason. Please tell me the length of extension that you believe you require; no indefinite extensions will be granted (though note that the actual length of extension you receive will depend on the nature of your excuse and is at my discretion). I reserve the right to request documentation of your excuse.

Unexcused late assignments will be marked down by 5% for each day late, though in no case will a paper that would otherwise receive a passing grade receive a failing grade (which is to say, you won't drop below a D), as long as it is submitted by the end of the semester. Note that I have a grading deadline – in no case will assignments be accepted for credit after April 29. Students

with serious extenuating circumstances may contact me about arranging a grade of K (incomplete), but these will only be granted in very rare situations, and requests must be made as far in advance as possible.

Covid-19-Related Academic Accommodations

Per McGill policy, all students in need of academic considerations on account of Covid-19 are required to fill out the online form, available in the "Personal" tab of their Minerva account, titled "COVID-19 Academic Accommodations Request Form." You should contact me directly as well, but the university insists on maintaining centralized tracking and it is mandatory to use the official form.

Office Hours

I will hold regular office hours on Tuesdays from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM in my office in Ferrier 330 (and will be simultaneously available over Zoom). I will also be available for appointments outside those times if they are incompatible with your schedule. In order to avoid lines outside my office, appointments should be made in advance for all office hour meetings; for meetings during my scheduled office hours, a sign-up link will be made available via MyCourses. I encourage you to come by early in the semester to chat so that I can get to know you a bit better, as well as to visit whenever you have questions about the course material or assignments or simply wish to talk about Chinese history or your academic goals.

Academic Integrity

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).” (See McGill’s [guide to academic honesty](#) for more information.)

« L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#).) »

Language of Submission

“In accord with McGill University’s [Charter of Student Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

« Conformément à [la Charte des droits de l'étudiant](#) de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté. »

STUDENT FEEDBACK

I encourage you to complete a Mercury evaluation for this course upon its conclusion. Your experiences and observations will help me make this class, and all classes I teach, better for future students.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability that requires accommodation, please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>) and inform me of the accommodations you require during the first week of class (or the first week after the disability arises). Anything you tell me will be kept confidential.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction

January 5 – A Brief Overview of Chinese History from the Mongols to the Manchus

January 7 – The Mongols and the Making of Late Imperial China

Reading:

1. Bettine Birge, “Women and Confucianism from Song to Ming: The Institutionalization of Patrilineality,” in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ch. 6, pp. 212-240.
2. William Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart*, selections from Part I, “The Rise of Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy in Yüan China,” pp. 1-2, 18-27, 38-66.
3. John Dardess, “Ming T’ai-Tsu on the Yüan: An Autocrat’s Assessment of the Mongol Dynasty,” *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies* 14 (1978), pp. 6-11.

Week 2 – Emperors

January 12 – Ming Emperors

Reading:

1. Sarah Schneewind, *A Tale of Two Melons: Emperor and Subject in Ming China*, ch. 1, “On a Lacquer Tray,” and ch. 2, “What the Emperor Said,” pp. 1-26.
2. Ray Huang, *1587: A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline*, ch. 1, “The Wanli Emperor,” pp. 1-41.
3. Ming Taizu, “In Praise of Auspicious Melons,” in *A Tale of Two Melons*, pp. 94-96.
4. “Audience on February 5, 1590,” Appendix A in *A Year of No Significance*, pp. 223-229.

January 14 – Qing Emperors

Reading:

1. Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*, ch. 3, “Threats Seen and Unseen,” and ch. 9, “Political Crime and Bureaucratic Monarchy,” pp. 49-72 and 187-222.
2. Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions*, ch. 6, “Rulership and Ritual Action in the Chinese Realm,” pp. 197-230.
3. “Kangxi’s Valedictory Edict,” 6 pp.

Week 3 – Serving the State

January 19 – Officials

Reading:

1. Thomas G. Nimick, “The Placement of Local Magistrates in Ming China,” *Late Imperial China* 20.2 (1999), pp. 35-60.
2. Bradley Reed, *Talons and Teeth: County Clerks and Runners in the Qing Dynasty*, ch. 2, “Clerks,” pp. 31-75.
3. “Lan Dingyuan’s Casebook,” 5 pp.

January 21 – Soldiers

Reading:

1. Michael Szonyi, *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China*, ch. 1, “A Younger Brother Inherits a Windfall: Conscription, Military Service, and Family Strategies,” pp. 25-63.
2. Mark C. Elliott, “Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners,” in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ch. 1, pp. 27-57.
3. Two palace memorials on matters related to the banners, 5 pp.

Week 4 – Education and Exams

January 26 – Learning the Classics

Reading:

1. Benjamin Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China*, ch. 3, “Circulation of Ming-Qing Elites,” ch. 4, “Classical Literacy in Late Imperial China,” and ch. 6, “Limits of Dynastic Power,” pp. 95-146, 213-249
2. “Fan Jin Passes the *juren* Examination,” excerpt from Wu Jingzi, *The Scholars*, 9 pp.

January 28 – Learning Manchu

Reading:

1. Devin Fitzgerald, “Manchu Language Pedagogical Practices: The Connections between Manuscripts and Printed Books,” *Saksaha* 17 (2021), pp. 1-31.
2. David Porter, “Bannermen as Translators: Manchu Language Education in the Hanjun Banners,” *Late Imperial China* 40.2 (December, 2019), pp. 1-43.
3. Leping, selections from *Muwa gisun* (described in the Fitzgerald article), <http://www.manchustudiesgroup.org/translations/muwa-gisun-section-two/>, read sections 1-5.
4. Excerpt from the *Fuzhou Garrison Gazetteer*, 3 pp.

Week 5 – Women and Gender

February 2 – Women's Sphere and Women's Work

Reading:

1. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*, "Introduction: Gender and the Politics of Chinese History" and ch. 3, "Margins of Domesticity: Enlarging the Women's Sphere," pp. 1-29 and 115-142.
2. Francesca Bray, *Technology, Gender, and History in Imperial China: Great Transformations Reconsidered*, ch. 3, "Women's Work and Women's Place: Textiles and Gender," pp. 93-120.

February 4 – The Widow Chastity Cult

Reading:

1. Susan Mann, "Widows in the Kinship, Class, and Community Structures of Qing Dynasty China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46.1 (February, 1987), pp. 37-56.
2. Siyen Fei, "Writing for Justice: An Activist Beginning of the Cult of Female Chastity in Late Imperial China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71.4 (November, 2012), pp. 991-1012.
3. Weijing Lu, *True to Her Word: The Faithful Maiden Cult in Late Imperial China*, ch. 5, "Dying for an Ideal," pp. 129-166
4. "Widows Loyal Unto Death," 3 pp.

Week 6 – Law

February 9 – Legal Process

Reading:

1. Nancy Park, "Imperial Chinese Justice and the Law of Torture," *Late Imperial China* 29.2 (December, 2008), pp. 37-67.
2. Thomas Buoye, "Filial Felons: Leniency and Legal Reasoning in Qing China," in *Writing and Law in Late Imperial China*, ch. 4, pp. 109-124.
3. Robert E. Hegel, *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China: Twenty Case Histories*, case 2, "Li Huaiyu: The Missing Brother," case 7, "Rui Meisheng: Murder over an Outhouse," and case 19, "Luo Fenpeng: A Phony Scholar Official," pp. 37-51, 90-96, 218-225.

February 11 – Sex, Gender, and Law

Note: This class will (among other topics) deal with issues of sexual violence, most prominently in relation to the Theiss reading

Reading:

1. Matthew Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, ch. 5, "Widows in the Qing Chastity Cult: The Nexus of Sex and Property in Law and in Women's Lives," pp. 166-209.

2. Janet Theiss, *Disgraceful Matters: The Politics of Chastity in Eighteenth-Century China*, Part 3 “Prologue: A Compromised Widow Sacrifices Her Body to Defend Inner Virtue” and ch. 6, “The Wages of Wanton Mixing: Violation and Gender Disorder,” pp. 121-153.
3. Robert E. Hegel, *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China: Twenty Case Histories*, case 6, “Du Huailiang: Adultery that Brought Disaster,” and case 14, “Ms. Ma: Disguised Poisoning,” pp. 79-90 and pp. 142-146.

Week 7 – Lineage, Kinship, and Family

February 16 – Marriage and the Household

Reading:

1. Weijing Lu, *Arranged Companions: Marriage and Intimacy in Qing China*, ch. 4, “Managing Familial and Marital Relationships,” pp. 107-132.
2. David Wakefield, *Fenjia: Household Division and Inheritance in Qing and Republican China*, ch. 3, “Qing Household Division: Why, When, and How?,” pp. 34-63.
3. “Concubines,” 8 pp.

February 18 – Lineage Structures

Reading:

1. Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China*, ch. 2, “Genealogical Tracing and Ethnic Labeling,” and ch. 4, “The Ancestral Hall,” pp. 26-55 and 90-137.
2. Gilbert Chen, “Castration and Connection: Kinship Organization among Ming Eunuchs,” *Ming Studies* 74 (2016), pp. 27-47.
3. “Family Instructions,” 7 pp.
4. “Genealogy Rules,” 5 pp.

Week 8 – Economy and State Finances

February 23 – The State, Taxation, and the Agricultural Economy

Reading:

1. R. Bin Wong, “Foundations of Success, 1650-1735” and “The Grand Structure, 1736-1780,” in *Nourish the People: The State Civilian Granary System in China, 1650-1850*, ch. 2-3, pp. 25-74.
2. Siyen Fei, “We Must Be Taxed: A Case of Populist Urban Fiscal Reform in Ming Nanjing (1368-1644),” *Late Imperial China* 28.2 (December, 2007), pp. 1-40.
3. “Taxes and Labor Service,” 5 pp.
4. “Tenants,” 3 pp.

February 25 – The Chinese Economy in Comparative Perspective

Reading:

1. Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, ch. 1, “Europe before Asia? Population, Capital Accumulation, and Technology in Explanations of European Development,” and ch. 2, “Market Economies in Europe and Asia,” pp. 31-107.
2. “Commercial Activities,” 8 pp.
3. “What the Weaver Said,” 2 pp.

LEGAL CASE PAPER DUE – February 26 at 5 PM

WINTER READING BREAK, February 28 – March 4

Week 9 – Inner Asia

March 9 – Mongolia

Reading:

1. David M. Robinson, “Politics, Force and Ethnicity in Ming China: Mongols and the Abortive Coup of 1461,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.1 (June, 1999), pp. 79-123.
2. Yue Du, “Legal Justice in Eighteenth-Century Mongolia: Gender, Ethnicity, and Politics in the Manchu-Mongol Marriage Alliance,” *Late Imperial China* 37.2 (Dec. 2016), pp. 1-40.

March 11 – Tibet

Reading:

1. Natalie Köhle, “Why Did the Kangxi Emperor Go to Wutai Shan?: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court,” *Late Imperial China* 29.1 (June, 2008), pp. 73-119.
2. Max Oidtmann, *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet*, Act I, “The Royal Regulations,” pp. 53-94.
3. “Translation of the Qianlong Emperor’s Discourse on Lamas,” in *Forging the Golden Urn*, pp. 239-243.

Proposed Paper Topic and Preliminary Bibliography due March 12 at 5 PM

Week 10 – The Southwest

March 16 – Imperial Expansion

Reading:

1. John E. Herman, “The Cant of Conquest: Tusi Offices and China’s Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontier,” in *Empire at the Margins*, ch. 5, pp. 135-168.

2. C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier*, ch. 2, "New Frontier Militarism," and ch. 5, "A Motley Throng," pp. 43-63, 127-158.

March 18 – Representing Local Peoples

Reading:

1. Eloise Wright, "History and Autoethnography: Accounting for the Indigenous Population of Yunnan, 1550-1650," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 22.1 (Spring, 2021), pp. 1-24.
2. Laura Hostetler, "Qing Connections to the Early Modern World: Ethnography and Cartography in Eighteenth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies* 34.3 (July, 2000), pp. 623-662.
3. Emma Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*, ch. 6, "Picturing Savagery: Visual Representations of Racial Difference," pp. 149-172.
4. In *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*, there are 15 color plates between pages 186 and 187. Please look at and think about these images in relation to the readings. You can see them by downloading the chapter entitled "The Island of Women: The Discourse of Gender" but you are not required to read the chapter, just to view the images.

Week 11 – Environment

March 23 – Forests

Reading:

1. Ian Miller, *Fir and Empire: The Transformation of Forests in Early Modern China*, ch. 4, "Deeds, Shares, and Pettifoggers," ch. 7, "Beijing Palaces and the Ends of Empire," pp. 77-96, 140-159.
2. Meng Zhang, *Timber and Forestry in Qing China: Sustaining the Market*, ch. 3, "Sustaining the Resources," pp. 80-113.

March 25 – Animals and Empire

Reading:

1. Jonathan Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing Rule*, ch. 4, "Nature in the Land of Fur," pp. 129-166.
2. David Bello, "To Go Where No Han Could Go For Long: Malaria and the Qing Construction of Ethnic Administrative Space in Frontier Yunnan," *Modern China* 31.3 (2005), pp 283-317.

Week 12 – Religion and the Supernatural

March 30 – Chinese Views of the Supernatural

Reading:

1. Jeffrey Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells: State Rainmaking and Local Governance in Late Imperial China*, ch. 4, “No Sacrifices Withheld,” pp. 83-118.
2. James L. Watson, “Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T’ien Hou (‘Empress of Heaven’) Along the South China Coast, 960-1960,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ch. 10, pp. 292-324.

April 1 – “Foreign” Religions

Reading:

1. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*, ch. 4, “Muhammad and His Dao: Knowledge and Identity in the Han Kitab,” pp. 163-213.
2. Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary’s Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village*, ch. 1, “The Ancestors Who Founded the Village,” pp. 13-40.

Week 13 – The Outside World

April 6 – The Ming in the World

Reading:

1. Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700*, ch. 4, “Foreign Silver and China’s ‘Silver Century,’ 1550-1650,” pp. 113-141.
2. Geoff Wade, “The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 78.1 (2005), pp. 37-58.
3. Tansen Sen, “The Impact of Zheng He’s Expeditions on Indian Ocean Interactions,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 79.3 (October, 2016), pp. 609-636.

April 8 – The Qing in the World

Reading:

1. Henrietta Harrison, “The Qianlong Emperor’s Letter to George III and the Early-Twentieth-Century Origins of Ideas about Traditional China’s Foreign Relations,” *The American Historical Review* 122.3 (June, 2017), pp. 680-701.
2. Melissa Macauley, *Distant Shores: Colonial Encounters on China’s Maritime Frontiers*, ch. 2, “Back in the World: The Emergence of Maritime Chaozhou, 1767-1840,” pp. 45-74.
3. “Qianlong’s Rejection of Macartney’s Demands: Two Edicts,” 7 pp.

FINAL PROJECT DUE – April 12, 8:00 PM