

HIEA 124: Life in Ming China (1368-1644)
WINTER 2024

Class Time: MWF 3-3:50

Professor: Dr. Schneewind

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The emperor plows a ceremonial furrow in spring. From a Ming encyclopedia.

Most courses on pre-modern Chinese history focus on members of the elite, or ruling class. This course focusses instead on ordinary people and their working lives. Between 1368 and 1644, under the Ming dynasty and its bureaucratic government, the Chinese commercial economy boomed. How did men and women of different ranks and classes live and work in Ming times? How did their work shape their identities and experiences? How did their work shape Ming society and culture? To glean answers to these questions from primary and secondary sources, we will apply a body of sociological theory on work, and revise it to fit Ming better.

Required to Buy Now

Buy at the campus bookstore now and always bring to class: **the coursepack**. It contains most of the readings, and they will not be posted.

Pay at the campus bookstore now: the **materials fees** for the two Craft Center Classes.

Optional to buy and read for Ming background: John W. Dardess, *Ming China, 1368-1644: A Concise History of a Resilient Empire* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012)

Requirements

This is a reading, thinking, talking, listening, writing, and doing course. You'll need to work every day to keep up with the reading, participate in class, and submit all assignments on time.

For a 4-credit course, the University requires 12 hours of work, including class time. That means 9 hours a week outside of class reading, studying, writing, or doing other work for the course. If you are spending *more* than 9 hours, come and talk to me right away, so we can find a solution. Plan your travels, doctor's appointments, etc. so that you can attend class. If you must miss class, arrange with a classmate to get the notes. Classes will not be podcast or recorded.

You will earn your grade through two course components, each about half of your grade.

Complete assignments on time. I will not accept late work. Extra assignments are built in, so you can miss up to two weeks of work for illness and still potentially earn the full 100 points.

1. On-time attendance in every class (unless you are sick) and active, intelligent, informed participation based on the reading. Bring your reading and class notes and the coursepack. Be ready to take a quiz, take notes by hand, do group work, explain concepts and facts, listen to others and change your mind, and do various kinds of written work. About 5 points per week.
2. Short written assignments every week on course readings. They will include analytical posts on Canvas in discussion with other members of the class (which means you are also responsible for reading and responding to other people's posts), short papers, and creative assignments. About 5 points per week.
3. It is also required that you let the professor or TA know about any problems right away.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read, assess, and learn from articles on history.
2. Describe, compare, contrast, and connect aspects of some Ming people's working lives.
3. Apply a theoretical framework to primary and secondary sources to learn about the past.
4. Explain their own knowledge and views in writing and speech, and discuss productively.
5. Exercise historical empathy for people who lived in the past.

Academic Integrity Lies at the Heart of Good Scholarship

If I even *suspect* you of cheating or plagiarism, University policy requires me to report it. If you are not sure about the rules, ask me ahead of time. I encourage you to discuss the reading with others inside and outside of class, but you must write alone, with only course material open before you. If you learned from a classmate's writing or comments, cite them. Do not google or use the internet or Chat GBT or another generative AI unless I say you may ahead of time.

A historian aims at finding the truth, gives evidence for his/her claims (also called "arguments") and cites where the evidence and ideas came from, so that readers can assess the reliability of the conclusions. If you lack good evidence for a claim and are making an educated guess, that's fine: just say so. ("On the basis of ..., I speculate that...") If you find evidence that contradicts your argument, you must revise, refine, or even reject the argument, just as with a failed experiment in science.

-- The syllabus may change. --
* marks a primary source
Readings are in the coursepack unless otherwise noted.

Week One: Starting Points

Sarah Schneewind, *The Social Drama of Work Past, Concise Edition*.

Sarah Schneewind, "Formal Features of a Scholarly Article"

Wang Yuquan, "Some Salient Features of the Ming Labor Service System," *Ming Studies* 1986.1: 1-44. Excerpts.

Week Two: Farmers

No class Monday

Mi Chu Wiens, "Lord and Peasant: The Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *Modern China* 6.1 (1980): 3-39. Read pp. 3-28, and 34-39. Answer the reading questions in your notes.

Canvas: Brian Lander, Mindi Schneider, and Katherine Brunson, "A History of Pigs in China: From Curious Omnivores to Industrial Pork," *Journal of Asian Studies* 79.4 (2020). Read only pp. 869-875. Answer the reading questions in your notes.

Canvas: Recorded Lecture on Rice Farming – will become available on Canvas at the right time.

Week Three: Boatmen and Porcelain Workers

Nanny Kim, "The Houseboat in Pre-Modern China: Technology and Culture in Mobility History," *The Journal of Transport History* 37.1 (2016): pp. 5-26.

Michael Dillon, "Transport and Marketing in the Development of the Jingdezhen Porcelain Industry during the Ming And Qing Dynasties," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* XXXV (1957): 278-290.

On Canvas: Anne Gerritsen, "Making the Place Work: Managing Labour in Early Modern China," in Anne Gerritsen and Christian de Vito, *Micro-Spatial Histories of Global Labour* (Springer International, 2018), 123-146.

Week Four: Weavers

On Wednesday, we will meet at the Craft Center for a weaving class.

On Canvas: Christopher Cullen, "Patients and Healers in Late Imperial China: Evidence from the Jinpingmei," *History of Science* 31.2 (June 1993): 99-150. Read only pp. 104-106 now.

*Feng Menglong (1574-1646), "Shi Fu Meets a Friend at Tanque" ("Shih Jun-tse Meets a Friend at the Strand"). In his *Stories to Awaken the World: A Ming Dynasty Collection* (1627), translated by Shuhui Yang and Yunqin Yang (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), pp. 373-395. **Focus on the production side -- how to make silk.**

Jo-lan Yi, "Gender and Sericulture Ritual Practice in Sixteenth-Century China," *Journal of Asian History* 48.2 (2014): 281-302.

Canvas: "Making Cloth" and "Sericulture" links from the University of Washington.

Week Five: Merchants and Brokers

Re-read *Feng, “Shi Fu Meets a Friend at Tanque.” Focus on the business side this time.
Hanchao Lu, “Arrested Development: Cotton and Cotton Markets in Shanghai, 1350-1843,”
Modern China 18.4 (1992): 468-499. Read pp. 468-91, 495-96.
On Friday we will have a special guest.

Week Six: Builders

Klass Ruitenbeek, “Craft and Ritual in Traditional Chinese Carpentry: With a Bibliographical Note on the ‘Lu Ban Jing’,” *Chinese Science* 7 (1986): 1–23. Read only pp. 1-12.
Alison Hardie, “The Life of a Seventeenth-Century Chinese Garden Designer: ‘The Biography of Zhang Nanyuan,’ by Wu Weiye (1609-71),” *Garden History* 32.1 (2004): 137-140.
Canvas: “Houses” and “Gardens” links from the University of Washington
Electronic reserve: Ronald Knapp, *China’s Old Dwellings*: pp. 21-163. This looks really long, but there are lots of pictures. Focus on the house carpenter and other workers.
Optional, on electronic and hard-copy reserve: Ronald Knapp, *China’s Living House: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentations*, pp. 8-55. Great stuff, more pictures.

Week Seven: Soldiers and Bandits

No class Monday

Michael Szonyi, “How to dodge the draft and make it as a pirate in Ming China: institutions and everyday politics on China’s southeast coast,” short talk through link on Canvas.
Michael Szonyi, *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China*, chapter 3, “An Officer in Cahoots with Pirates: Coastal Garrisons and Maritime Smuggling” (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 83-108.
David M. Robinson, “Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: The Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525),” *Journal of Social History* 33.3 (2000): 527–563.
On Canvas: Tonio Andrade, “The Musket in East Asia,” chapter 12 in his *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 166-187.
On Canvas: David Robinson, “Military Labor in China, c. 1500,” in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative Study of Military Labor 1500-2000*, edited by Erik-Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013).
Optional on Canvas: Thomas G. Nimick, “Ch’i Chi-kuang [Qi Jiguang] and I-wu [Yiwu] County,” *Ming Studies* 34 (1995): 17-29
Optional, on reserve: Peter Lorge, *Chinese Martial Arts from Antiquity to the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chapter 8 (Ming), pp. 157-184.

Week Eight: Entertainers

Wednesday: Meet at the Craft Center for pottery or printmaking class.
Grant Shen, “Acting in the Private Theatre of the Ming Dynasty,” *Asian Theatre Journal* (1998): 64-86.
Wei-hua Zhang, “Music in Ming Daily Life as Portrayed in the Narrative ‘Jin Ping Mei.’” *Asian*

Music: Journal of the Society for Asian Music 23.2 (1992): 105–134. Focus on 111-117.
*On Canvas: Hou Fangyu, “Biography of Actor Ma,” in *The Soter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Victor Mair (Columbia UP, 2000), pp. 460-2.
Other pictures and pages on Canvas.

Week Nine: Healers

Victoria B. Cass, “Female Healers in the Ming and the Lodge of Ritual and Ceremony.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106.1 (1986): 233-245.
Joanna Grant, “Medical Practice in the Ming Dynasty – A Practitioner’s View” Evidence from Wang Ji’s ‘Shishan yi’an,” *Chinese Science* 15 (1998): 37-80. Read pp. 37-40, 55-77.
Yunü Chen, “Buddhism and the Medical Treatment of Women in the Ming Dynasty,” *Nan Nü* (2008): 279-303.
On Canvas: Christopher Cullen, “Patients and Healers in Late Imperial China: Evidence from the Jinpingmei,” *History of Science* 31. 2 (1993): 99–150. Read only pp. 99-132.

Week Ten: What about the Emperor?

No class Friday.

Shih-shan Henry Tsai, “A Day in the Life of Yongle’s Court: April 12, 1423,” from his *Perpetual Happiness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 3-19.

Ming timeline

1368

1402

1424

1436

1449

1457

1465

1488

1506

1522

1567

1573

1621

1628

1644