

## HH2005 East Asia: Tradition and Modernity

Academic Year: 2025-2026, S1

AU: 3 AU

Course Type: Seminar

Lecturer: Dr. Alasdair Chi [alasdair.chi@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:alasdair.chi@ntu.edu.sg)

Location and Timeslot: LHS TR+53, LHS-B1-09 (The Hive), Fridays 1430-1720

### Learning Outcomes

This course provides students with a good overview of East Asian history. Students can also develop in the following ways.

- Analytical skills: by collating information, providing critical analysis, evaluating evidence (sources), and developing a structured argument.
- Communication skills: through group discussion and written assessments.
- Problem Solving: by identifying unexamined questions and suggesting answers.
- Research Skills: developing a major essay topic and sourcing library materials.

### Course Content

This course aims to provide students with foundational understanding of the East Asia's past from prehistory to the early 20th century, including major dynastic reigns, philosophical, cultural and literary works, the influence and movement of religious traditions, and changing intra-regional relations and trade. Those interested in understanding East Asian identity, regional relations, cultural practices, and political and social values will benefit from this course. This will prove foundational for contextualizing the later contact with, and adaptation to, European influences in the region; this course will also provide context for deeper studies of East Asian philosophy, literature and religion. Students will write about regional identity, the flows of cultural practice, the processes of cultural assimilation, the *longue-durée* of inter state relations and the uses of "tradition" and "modernity" in the past and present to justify philosophies and policies. Students will find this course useful beyond its historical contents as to this day these histories inform rhetoric, public policy and communication and even current narratives used in tourism.

### Readings

Patricia B. Ebrey's and A. Walthall's *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) is the main text for this course. This can be read on NTULearn. Chapters for each week are indicated in the class schedule. Supplementary readings will be made available and posted in coming weeks.

### Seminars:

The start of the semester will develop a student-led inquiry into the terms "tradition" and "modernity" which will be followed through each the course. Seminars will following the lecture topics closely whilst frequently touching upon this topic.

Students should ensure they have completed the required weekly lecture reading as this forms the basis of the tutorial discussion. In some instances specific tutorial readings will be made available via NTULearn. Each week tutorial questions will be distributed prior to class –use these to prepare for class discussion.

## Student Assessment:

The assessment for this course comprises of the following elements:

- **Mid-Term Test: 15%** This will be conducted as a take-home exam due in **WEEK 7**.
- **Research Essay: 25%** 2,000 words (excluding bibliography) with a 10% margin, on a topic of your choice. This is due at the end of Friday of **WEEK 10**.
  - Consultation regarding topics is strongly encouraged, and appointments are available in **Week 8 and 9**. No late submissions will be accepted.
- **Class Participation: 10%**
- **Examination: 50%** 2.5 hrs.

## Research Paper

Some of the key skills in research include formulation of a viable research question, and the ability to adapt and reformulate it in the face of new, or missing, evidence. You can pick any topic from the regions and periods discussed in the syllabus. Use the Sinological style sheet provided. You must include basic elements like dates and full names of individuals, texts and reign periods. A minimum of 6 secondary sources and 1 primary source from outside of the course syllabus are required. This can be a material object.

Proposal: You will have a chance to submit your research proposal to the instructor and get feedback on the viability of the project and suggestions for available sources. Your proposal should be roughly half a page or more, and state the basic research question, fundamental assumptions, and the argument you plan to make. It should include a bibliography, correctly formatted, of six or more items.

## Office Hours

I am a part-time lecturer but will be free after class most times. Just send me an email and we can plan a time around our schedules as I may be seeing multiple students. Give me one day to respond.

## Bibliography and Sinological Style

Writing about East Asian historical figures, texts and regions requires attention to specific details. It is expected you will learn and master the formal methods for referring to periods, people, texts and regions using Sinograph characters even if you do not know how to read them. A stylesheet is provided and exercises will be given in class.

## Plagiarism

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

## **GAI Usage**

Use of General Artificial Intelligence (GAI) is permitted in the following situations: 1) Assist in generating key ideas only; 2) Assist in refining syntax and grammar for correct language submission only. The final write-up MUST be the student's own work.

Students must preserve a digital paper trail showing the way the GAI assistant was used. This should be a Word document specifying the particular GAI assistant used and include the prompts given to the GAI assistant and the GAI output, or outputs if several are generated. Use of GAI assistance is not permitted in the development or generation of this assignment or project.

### **On the Digital Paper Trail:**

Students are required, besides submitting the final work in the NTULearn facility, to also submit the paper trail as a Word document or documents, in a second and separate assignment section for this purpose under NTULearn. For assignments where the submission is non-digital, the students can create a photo journal or a blog to document the journey and submit the pdf of this instead.

This digital paper trail must be maintained for later reference, at least until the end of the Academic Year following the semester in which the relevant assignment is submitted. This is to preserve the potential evidence in case there is a later complaint or suspicion relating to academic integrity violations regarding that submission, or for further investigation by the school or other schools or the university when other academic integrity matters are raised regarding the same student, and it is deemed desirable to cross-check conduct in earlier courses.

The student must sign and submit with the assignment/project write-up a declaration regarding such use. In addition, the student must provide footnote or in-text references in the submission indicating any text paraphrase or significant fact or idea that originated with the GAI assistant.

*See example below:*

Reference list entry example (with a shareable link generated by the AI tool)

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Aug 7 version) [Large language model].

<https://chat.openai.com/share/46ce4720-19bd-4c21-84f0-7a69ec4af03d>

## Reading List

You are expected to review chapter excerpts in Ebrey as background for each class.

Ebrey, P.B. and Walthall, A. (2013) *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*: Cengage Learning.

- Barshay, Andrew. (2014) "Shinron (Commentary)" In *Japan Historical Text Initiative*: University of California at Berkley. <https://jhti.studentorg.berkeley.edu/texts22.htm>
- Bira, Sh. "The Mongols and Their State in the Twelfth to Thirteenth Century." In *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia*, edited by Asimov M. S. and C. E. Bosworth, 4:248–64. UNESCO Publishing, 1998.
- Bol, Peter "For Perfect Order: Wang An-shih and Ssu-ma Kuang," *This Culture of Ours*, 212-253.
- Chabrowski, Igor Iwo. "Instrumentalization of "China" in Southeast Asia's Global Entrepôt: Ayutthaya in the Times of the Ming and the Early Qing Dynasties." *Journal of Chinese History* □ □ 歷史學刊 6, no. 1 (2022): 69-91.
- Chin, James K. "Junk trade, business networks and sojourning communities: Hokkien merchants in Early Maritime Asia." *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 6, no. 2 (2010): 157-215.
- Chittick, A. *The Jiankang Empire in Chinese and World History*. New York, NY [USA]: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Cohen, W.I. (2000) *East Asia at the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World*: Columbia University Press.
- de Bary, Wm. Theodore. and Irene, B. (1999) *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume 1*, 2nd ed: Columbia University Press.
- de Bary, W.T. (2010) *Sources of Japanese Tradition Volume 1: From Earliest Times to 1600*, Eds. D. Keene, G. Tanabe and P. Varley, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Department of Asian Art. (2004) "Art of the Pleasure Quarters and the Ukiyo-e Style." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd\\_plea.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd_plea.htm)
- Ebrey, Patricia *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*, 1-44, 261-272.
- Ebrey, Patricia. "Huizong and the Imperial Dragon: Exploring the Material Culture of Imperial Sovereignty." □ □ □ □ 41, no. 1 (2011): 39-71.
- Ennin (1955) *Ennin's diary: the record of a pilgrimage to China in search of the law*, Reischauer, E.O. trans. New York: Ronald Press Co.
- Farris, W.W. (1992) *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500-1300*: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University.
- Farris, W.W. (1998) *Sacred texts and buried treasures: issues in the historical archaeology of ancient Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press
- Friday, Karl. "The Samurai." *Education About ASIA* 10, no. 3 (2005).
- Heng, Derek. (2009) *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy from the Tenth through the Fourteenth Century*. Athens : Ohio University Press
- Ho Khai Leong (2009) *Connecting and Distancing: Southeast Asia and China*: ISEAS Publishing
- Holcombe, Charles. (2001) *The Genesis of East Asia, 221 B.C.-A.D. 907*: University of Hawaii Press
- Horvat, A. (2018). Bushidō and the legacy of "Samurai Values" in contemporary Japan. *Asian Studies*, 6(2), 189-208.
- Ikegami, E. (1997) *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*: Harvard University Press
- J. Edward Kidder, Jr. (2007) *Himiko and Japan's elusive chiefdom of Yamatai: archaeology, history, and mythology*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Jeong, Eun Kyung. "A study of the Korean nationalistic thought movement in the late Joseon

- Period." *Academic studies in social, human and administrative sciences* (2019): 297-316.
- Mezur, K., & Mezur, K. (2005). Transforming Genders: Performing the Kabuki Paradigm of Female-likeness, Bodies Beneath, and Beautiful Boys. *Beautiful Boys/Outlaw Bodies: Devising Kabuki Female-Likeness*, 1-15.
  - Miksic, John N. "'Archaeology of Early Chinese Settlement in Southeast Asia.'" *Old World: Journal of Ancient Africa and Eurasia*, 2021, 1–28.
  - Peter, H.L., Wm. Theodore de B., Yongho, C.o., and Hugh, H.W.K. (1997) *Sources of Korean Tradition: Volume One*: Columbia University Press.
  - Rawski, Evelyn S. (2015) *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia Cross-Border Perspectives*: Cambridge University Press
  - Ruiz-Stovel, Guillermo. "Chinese Merchants, Silver Galleons, and Ethnic Violence in Spanish Manila, 1603-1686." *México y la Cuenca del Pacífico* 12, no.36 (2009):47-63.
  - Rogers, M. (1968) "The Myth of the Battle of the Fei River (A.D. 383)" *T'oung Pao, Second Series*, Vol. 54, Livr. 1/3, pp. 61-62
  - Seth, M.J. (2011) *A history of Korea : from antiquity to the present*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
  - Soumaré, M. (2009) *Japan in Five Ancient Chinese Chronicles: Wo, the Land of Yamatai, and Queen Himiko*, Eds. A.J. Bryant, D. Mana and M. Hall: Kurodahan Press.
  - Tiedemann, R.G. (2006) "Christianity in East Asia". In Brown, S.J. and Tackett, T. (Eds.) *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, pp.451-474
  - Turnbull, Stephen. (2012) *The Samurai Invasion of Korea 1592–98*: Osprey Publishing.
  - Wang Zhenping (2005) *Ambassadors from the islands of immortals: China-Japan relations in the Han-Tang period*: University of Hawaii Press.

### Timetable for HH2005 East Asia: Tradition and Modernity

Week	Topic	Readings/ Activities
1	Introduction, East Asian Prehistory, the Shang Dynasty, and the Invention of Tradition	<p>Ebrey and Walthall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, 1—7</li> <li>• Ch. 1: "China in the Bronze Age", 8—19</li> </ul> <p>Reviews of <i>The Invention of Tradition</i> by Hobsbawm and Ranger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagel, <i>American Journal of Sociology</i></li> <li>• Burke, <i>The English Historical Review</i></li> </ul> <p>Sivin, Nathan. "Max Weber, Joseph Needham, Benjamin Nelson: The Question of Chinese Science." <i>Comparative Civilizations Review</i> 10, no. 10 (1985): 6</p> <p>Pines, Yuri. "To rebel is justified? The image of Zhouxin and the legitimacy of rebellion in the Chinese political tradition." <i>Oriens Extremus</i> 47 (2008): 1-4</p>
2	China: Spring and Autumn and the Warring States, Birth of Chinese Philosophies	<p>Ebrey and Walthall, Ch.2 "Philosophers and Warring States During the Eastern Zhou period", 20—33</p> <p><i>East Asia at the Center</i>, Ch. 1, pp. 1—17</p> <p>Choose between excerpts of the following as seen in Stanley-Baker, "Health and philosophy in pre- and early imperial China", in P. Adamson (ed.) <i>Health: a history</i>, for weekly reflection or presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lü,"</li> <li>• "The Guanzi,"</li> <li>• "The Syncretist Chapters of the Zhuangzi"</li> </ul>

3	China: Unification in the Qin and Han Dynasties, Three Kingdoms	<p>Ebrey and Walthall 3</p> <p>Cohen, Ch. 1, pp. 19-43</p> <p>De Bary et al., <i>Sources of Chinese Tradition (SCT)</i>, Section: “The Theoretical Basis of the Imperial Institution,” pp. 234-273</p> <p>Holcombe, Ch. 3: “Civilizing Mission: Conceiving East Asia,” 30—38</p> <p>Martinon-Torres et al., “Making Weapons for the Terracotta Army”</p>
4	China: Northern and Southern Dynasties, the ‘Jiankang Empire’ thesis, Buddhism and Daoism	<p>Ebrey and Walthall 4</p> <p>Chittick:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1-1.2 “Introduction” and “The Discourse of Ethnicity”, 39-66</li> <li>• 2.7 “Managing Prosperity”, 177-182, 199-205</li> <li>• 3.10 “The Buddhist Repertoire”, 269-282</li> </ul> <p>Ebrey about Seals (2011), Rogers (1968)</p> <p>SCT, Ch.15 (pp.415-432) “The Introduction of Buddhism”</p>
5	Japan and Korea: Foundations in the Yayoi to Nara Period	<p>Ebrey and Walthall 6 (p.98-106), 7</p> <p>Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures, Ch. 1 and 2: “The Lost Realm of Yamatai” and “Ancient Japan’s Korea Connection” p.9—54 &amp; 55—122</p>
6	China: Tang Dynasty and the Cosmopolitan Metropolis of Chang’an, Chinese in Heian and Silla	<p>Ebrey 5, 6, 9</p> <p>SJT, “Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories,” pp1-17</p> <p>Holcombe Ch.4 “Beyond East Asia” 78-108</p>
7	East Asia: Diplomacy and Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty	<p>Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals, Ch.6 &amp; 7: “Diplomacy in the Tang Capital”, “Weight and Nuances in State Letters,”: pp.103-138; 139-179</p> <p>Ennin’s Diary, pp.152-188</p> <p>“Ennin”, Encyclopaedia of World Biography</p>
8	China: The Song Dynasty Economic Revolutions and the Maritime Silk Road, Kamakura and Goryeo	<p>Ebrey China: 8, Japan: 9 (158-161) &amp; 11, Korea: 10 (176-182)</p> <p>Ebrey <i>Inner Quarters</i>, 1-44</p> <p>Farris (1996), 320-328</p> <p><u>Class Discussions</u></p> <p>Bol, 212-253</p> <p>Farris (1996), 163-203</p> <p>Friday (2005)</p> <p>Ikegami (1998), 47-77</p>

9	East Asia at War: Mongolian invasions and influence—Yuan, Kamakura to Muromachi and Goryeo	Ebrey Korea: 10 (178-181), China 12, Japan 11 (195-197)  Bira (1998) Cohen, 128-148 Farris (1996), 328-335
10	Global Maritime East Asia: Ming, Joseon, Ashikaga to Sengoku, Closed Doors and European contact and influence	Ebrey 13, 14, 15 (247-254)  Heng 3 Cohen 6 (179-2)
11	Modernity in East Asia: Qing, Joseon and the Tokugawa Shogunate's Edo Period	Ebrey 15 (254-269), 16, 17 Horvat (2018) Bushido Mezur (1998) Kabuki; Met Museum (2004) "Ukiyo-e" Tiedemann (2006) "Christianity in East Asia"
12	Epilogue: The "European" Nineteenth Century, the Meiji Revolution and the Turn of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Ebrey 18-20
13	Review Session	

## **Declaration on Academic Honesty\***

**Academic year and semester:** AY2025-2026 Semester 1

### **What is academic dishonesty?**

All members of the NTU community are responsible for upholding the values of academic integrity in all academic undertakings (including, but not limited to, written and oral assignments, presentations, course work, quizzes and exams). Students should not cheat, plagiarise, or attempt to pass off another's work as their own. This includes, but is not limited to, the writing or ideas of another person, without acknowledging or appropriately crediting the source from which the writing or ideas are taken. NTU takes a serious view of any form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other forms of academic dishonesty are considered serious offences for which penalties will be imposed.

### **Declaration**

By signing this form, you declare that you have read and understood NTU's Policy on Student Code of Conduct

(<http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/ForEveryone/Pages/NTUAcademicIntegrityPolicy.aspx>) and that all graded and non-graded assignments you have turned in are your/your group's own work and will not involve any plagiarism or collusion. Reliance on other people's work, when allowed, will be appropriately referenced. You are responsible for knowing the appropriate form of referencing used for this course. Quotation marks will be used around materials written verbatim from other sources; citations will clearly indicate paraphrasing of other sources. You will not submit any work for this course that was (in whole or part) graded work for another course, or will be.

**You must print, sign, and return the lower section of this form to the Lecturer by Week Two. No participation credit will be given until this is returned.**

\*Adapted from 'Academic Honesty Declaration' for HS7003.

## **Declaration on Academic Honesty**

**Course code:** HH2005

**Name (as registered):**

---

**Matriculation number:**

---

**Signature & date**

---