

Traditional Chinese Political Culture

MA seminar # 46828, 2020/21 (Thursday, 8:30, room 2705)
Prof. Yuri Pines (yuri.pines@mail.huji.ac.il)
(Office 6145; office hours Monday 11:30-12:30, by pre-appointment)
This course is supported by Moodle2 <https://moodle2.cs.huji.ac.il/nu18/>

Chinese empire was an exceptionally durable political structure. How was this durability achieved? What were the advantages and disadvantages of traditional Chinese political system? The seminar analyzes the empire's functioning modes, comparing them, when appropriate, to those of other major continental Eurasian empires. The course explores Chinese political culture, including ideals and values that shaped the behavior of major political actors, and the actualization of these ideals and values in everyday political life. The discussion is not confined to a single period and the student is expected to have a basic knowledge of Chinese history from the Shang to the end of the imperial period.

Students' requirements: a) active participation in the classroom discussions (50% of the final grade); b) reading relevant materials before every class; c) oral presentation and a short book report from the list below (an alternative book is possible: please consult with me; 25%); d) a final book report or a short essay (25%). Students who submit a seminar paper must have the topic of the seminar paper approved no later than April 11, 2021.

The book that may help you to prepare for some of the discussions (and on which parts of this seminar are built) is: Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton University Press, 2012) (e-resource in the library). Most reading materials (excluding those for the book reports) are scanned on the Moodle.

Students without background in Chinese history are requested to contact me in advance and consult about extra reading materials.

A. Introduction

1. October 22: What is an empire? Chinese empire in a comparative perspective. Political culture and its role in ensuring the empire's functioning.

Goldstone, Jack A., and John F. Haldon. 2009. "Ancient States, Empires and Exploitation: Problems and Perspectives." In *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, edited by Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, 3–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

B. Intellectual foundations of Chinese political culture

2. October 29: Confucianism: politics and morality. Ritual and society. The intellectual's pride.

Lunyu, tr. Dim-Cheuk Lau or Ted Slingerland, chapters 1, 4, 8, 12, 17-18
Mencius, tr. D.C. Lau, chapters 1A, 3B, 4A

Xunzi, tr. Eric Hutton, chapters 8-9 [first part], pp. 52-77

* Note: multiple translations are available (the Hebrew translations are on the Moodle as well). You are most welcome to read the texts in the original.

3. November 5: Alternatives to morality in politics. Empowering the ruler and the state (“Legalism”) and questioning the guiding values (“Daoism”)

Book of Lord Shang, trans. Yuri Pines, chapters 6-8 and 25.

Han Feizi, chapters 49-50, trans. Burton Watson.

Laozi (trans. D.C. Lau or any good alternative)

Zhuangzi, chapters 2 (齊物論), 10 (胠篋), 17 (秋水) (trans. A.C. Graham or any good alternative)

* Note: multiple translations are available (the Hebrew translations are on the Moodle as well). You are most welcome to read the texts in the original.

C. Fundamental principles: Unity and Monarchism

4. November 12: The “Great Unity” Principle

Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire*, Chapter 1, “The Ideal of Great Unity,” pp 11-43 (of which pp. 32-37 to be discussed in the next class)

Sima Qian, “The Basic Annals of Xiang Yu,” in: *Records of the Grand Historian*, Vol. 1, ch. 7, 17-48

5. November 19: Limits of All-under-Heaven: Real and Imagined Unity

Pines, *The Everlasting Empire*, pp. 32-37.

James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998. [DS 793 S62 M55], pp. 20-43.

Matthew W. Mosca, “The Expansion of the Qing Empire before 1800.” In: *The Limits of Universal Rule: Eurasian Empires Compared*, ed. Yuri Pines et al. (Cambridge, forthcoming 2021)

6. November 26: The Monarch is above all 王者至上: Ideology of Monarchism

Sima Guang 司馬光, introductory comments in 資治通鑒 1.1 (draft translations into English and Hebrew are on the Moodle)

Ray Huang, 1587, *A Year of No Significance* (Yale, 1981), 1-41 and 95-103.

Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* (Honolulu, 2009), 13-53.

7. December 3: Sages and Mediocrities: The monarch’s qualifications

Yuri Pines, “Disputers of Abdication: Zhanguo Egalitarianism and the Sovereign’s Power,” *T’oung Pao* 91.4-5 (2005), 243-300.

“Kangxi’s Valedictory Edict, 1717” published in Pei-Kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, *The Search for Modern China, A Documentary Collection* (Norton, 1999).

Huang Zongxi's *Waiting for the Dawn* 明夷待訪錄, in Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince*. NY: Columbia, 1993, 89-110
Wei Zheng's 魏徵 evaluation of Sui Yangdi 隋煬帝 in 隋書 (from 初, 上自以籙王...;
no English translation; Hebrew is on the Moodle)

D. The Empire of the Bureaucrats?

8. December 10: “Yes, Your Majesty.” Ministers vs. the Ruler

Ray Huang, 1587, *A Year of No Significance*, 49-79; 88-93

9. December 17: Loyalty to whom? The dilemmas of *zhong* 忠

Yuri Pines, “Friends or Foes: Changing Concepts of Ruler-Minister Relations and the Notion of Loyalty in Pre-Imperial China,” *Monumenta Serica* 50 (2002): 35-74.

David A. Graff, “The Meritorious Cannibal: Chang Hsün Defense of Sui-yang and the Exaltation of Loyalty at the Age of Rebellion,” *Asia Major* 8.1 (1995): 1-17.

Wang Cheng-main [Chengmian], *The Life and Career of Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, 1593-1665: Public Service in a Time of Dynastic Change* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 1-10 and 241-252

Book Report:

Richard L. Davis, *Wind Against the Mountain* (Cambridge, 1996)

10. December 24: Cliques and “Parties” 黨: Officials’ Malady or Merit?

David S. Nivison, “Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in The Eighteenth Century,” in idem and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Berkeley, 1959), 202-243

Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Great Enterprise* (Berkeley, 1985), Vol. 1, 87-156

Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修“朋黨論” [Chinese only:

<http://ct4.ck.tp.edu.tw/yll/02/oldtext/o9/20.htm>]

Book Report (studies of Donglin 東林 movement):

Charles O. Hucker, “The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period,” in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. 132-162

John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and its Repression, 1620-1627* (Honolulu, 2002)

Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572–1644*.

Palgrave McMillan 2009, chapters 4-5, pp. 95-138.

E. Far from the Emperor’s Eyes: The power of local elites

11. December 31: Local elites: The sources of their durability

Cao Xueqin, *A Dream of Red Mansions*, tr. Yang Hsien-i and Gladys Yang, ch. 99, 273-282

Mary B. Rankin and Joseph E. Esherick, “Concluding Remarks,” in: idem, *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance* (Berkeley, 1990), 305-346

Book Report:

Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572–1644*.
Palgrave MacMillan 2009.

12. January 6: Kinship groups: the source of the elites' societal power

Mao Han-kuang, "The Evolution in the Nature of the Medieval Genteel Families,"
in: Albert Dien, ed., *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford,
1990), 73-109.

Patricia B. Ebrey, "The Early Stage in Development of Descent Group Organization,"
in idem and James L. Watson, eds., *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial
China 1000-1940* (Berkeley, 1985), 16-61 .

Book Report:

Hymes, Robert P., *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi,
in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, 1986).

13. January 13: "The father is the most respected" 父權至尊: family values and
domestic tyranny

A Dream of Red Mansions, ch. 33.

Mark Elvin, "Female Virtue and State in China," rpt. in idem, *Another History*
(Sydney 1996), 302-351.

Charlotte Furth, "The Patriarch's Legacy: Household Instructions and the
Transmission of Orthodox Values," in: Liu Kwang-ching, ed., *Orthodoxy In Late
Imperial China* (Berkeley, 1990), 187-211

or, alternatively: Hui-chen Wang Liu, "An analysis of Chinese Clan Rules:
Confucian Theories in Action," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Confucianism and
Chinese Civilization*, (NY: Atheneum, 1964), 16-49

Book Report:

Janet M. Theiss, *Disgraceful Matters: The politics of Chastity in Eighteenth-
century China* (Berkeley, 2004) [BJ 1533 C4 T44 2004]

Preliminary Summary: The Empire's Durability Revisited

14. January 20: The orthodox values 三綱五常 and their price

Liu Kwang-ching, "Introduction. Orthodoxy in Chinese Society," in idem, ed.,
Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China (Berkeley, 1990), 1-24 (optional: idem,
"Socioethics as Orthodoxy," pp. 53-100 [DS 754.14 O78]).

Book Report:

Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*. Harvard U. Asia Center, 2008.

F. Meritocracy or Elite Reproduction: The Examination System

15. March 18: How to become a *junzi*? Selection and Examinations

Sima Guang 司馬光 on *junzi* 君子 and *xiaoren* 小人 (臣光曰 in 資治通鑒 1.2)
Wu Ching-tzu (Wu Jingzi), *The Scholars*, ch. 3

Benjamin A. Elman, "Political, Social and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50.1 (1991), 7-28.

16. April 8: The empire of the text: the examinations' content as political weapon

Peter K. Bol, "Examination and Orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 Compared," and Benjamin A. Elman, "The Formation of 'Dao Learning' as Imperial Ideology During the Early Ming Dynasty," in: *Culture and State in Chinese History*, Eds. Theodore Hutters et al (Stanford, 1997), 29-57 and 58-82

Book Report:

Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000)

G. "Good iron doesn't make nails": China's Military

17. April 22: China's strategic quagmire and Chinese military thought

Li Hua 李華, "Ancient battlefield" 吊古戰場 (Hebrew or English+Chinese on the Moodle)

Sunzi (Sawyer or other translation; Hebrew on the moodle), chapters 1-3, 11

Mark E. Lewis, "The Han abolition of universal military service", in Hans Van de Ven, ed., *Warfare in Chinese History* (Brill, 2000), 33-76

Rafe de Crespigny, *Northern Frontier: The Policies and Strategy of the Later Han Empire* (Canberra: ANU, 1984), pp. 417-437.

Book Report:

Alastair I. Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, 1995).

18. April 29: Military personnel and their changing social status

Ban Gu, "The Biography of Li Guang," in Burton Watson, tr., *Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China* (NYC 1974), 12-33 and 45

Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance*, 156-188

Dai Yingcong, "To Nourish a Strong Military: Kangxi's Preferential Treatment of His Military Officials," *War & Society* 18.2 (2000): 71-91

H. "We and Them": Myths and Reality of Pre-modern Chinese "Nationalism"

19. May 6: "Human face and beast's heart"? Perceptions of the Other

Yuri Pines, "Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of Sino-Barbarian Dichotomy," in Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, eds., *Mongols, Turks and Others* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 59-102

Hoyt C. Tillman, "Proto-Nationalism in Twelfth-Century China? The Case of Ch'en Liang," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 39. 2 (1979): 403-428.

Book Report:

Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order*. Cambridge, 2017.

20. May 13: Alien occupants, Chinese collaborators, and the question of “Sinification”

David B. Honey, “Stripping off Felt and Fur: An Essay on Nomadic Sinification,”
Papers on Inner Asia 21, 1-39

John D. Langlois Jr., “Chinese Culturalism and the Yüan Analogy: Seventeenth
Century Perspectives,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 40.2 (1981): 355-374
(or to 398).

Book Report: (Debates about the Sinification of the Manchus)

Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial
Institutions* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 1-13

Evelyn S. Rawski, “Presidential address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance
of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55.4 (1996),
829-850

Ho Ping-ti, “In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski’s,
‘Reenvisioning the Qing’,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57.1 (1998), 123-155

Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial
Ideology* (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 1-52

I. Should the Monk bow to the Emperor? State and Religion in China

21. May 20: Mapping Chinese Religions: Official and Popular Cults

Romeyn Taylor, “Official and Popular Religion and Organization of Chinese
Society in the Ming,” in: Liu Kwang-ching, ed., *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial
China* (Berkeley, 1990), 126-157

Meir Shahrar and Robert D. Weller, “Gods and Society in China,” in: idem, eds.,
Unruly Gods (Honolulu, 1996), 1-21

Book Report:

Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton, 1990)

22. May 27: Organized Religion: Taming its Challenges

Erik Zürcher, “Eschatology and Messianism in Early Chinese Buddhism,” in Wilt
L. Idema, ed., *Leiden Studies in Sinology* (Brill, 1981), 34-56

Andreas Janousch, “The Emperor as Boddhisattva: The Boddhisattva Ordination and
Ritual Assemblies of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty,” in Joseph P.
Mcdermott, ed., *State and Court Ritual in China* (Cambridge 1999), 112-147

Timothy Brook, “At the Margin of Public Authority: The Ming State and Buddhism,”
in idem, *Chinese State in Ming Society* (London and NY, 2006), 139-158.

Book Report:

Barend J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden,
1992)

J. Feeding the People: Economic Management

23. June 3: State and Economy: Macro questions

Paul T. Smith, "State Power and Economic Activism During the New Policies, 1068-1085: The Tea and Horse Trade and the 'Green Sprouts' Loan Policy," in: *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, ed. Robert R. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), 76-127
Peter C. Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1500-1850* (Harvard, 1987), 1-24; 234-252

Book Report (Two books compared)

Pierre-Etienne Will, *Bureaucracy and Famine in Eighteenth-century China* (Stanford, 1990)

Richard Von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700* (Berkeley, 1996)

24. June 10: Reforms and their Opponents: The recurrent cycle?

Salt and Iron Debates 鹽鐵論, chapters 1-2 (Gale's translation or Hebrew translation on the Moodle)

Peter K. Bol, "Government, Society and State: On the Political Visions of Ssuma Kuang and Wang An-shih," in: Hymes and Schirokauer, eds., *Ordering the World*, 128-192

Book Report

Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth-Century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley, 1984).

K. Rebellion and its Cooptation: Taming 亂

25 June 17: "The least revolutionary and the most rebellious of all nations".
Dynamics of popular rebellions

Joseph W. Esherick, "Symposium on Peasant Rebellions: Some Introductory Comments," *Modern China* 9.3 (1983), 275-284.

William G. Crowell, "Social Unrest and Rebellion in Jiangnan during the Six Dynasties," *Modern China* 9.3 (1983), 319-354.

Françoise Aubin, "The Rebirth of Chinese Rule in Times of Trouble: North China in The Early Thirteenth Century," in: Stewart Schram, ed., *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China* (Hong Kong 1987), 113-146

Sima Qian, "The Hereditary House of Chen She", in Burton Watson, tr., *Records of the Grand Historian*, Vol. 1, ch. 48, 1-10

Book Report:

Naquin, Susan, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976. [DS 756 N365]

26 June 24: "Revolutionary violence of the masses" in historical perspective

Barend J. ter Haar, "Rethinking 'Violence' in Chinese Culture," in: Göran Aijmer and Jos Abbink eds., *Meanings of Violence: a Cross Cultural Perspective* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 123-140.

Howard S. Levy, trans., *Biography of Huang Ch'ao* (1955), 1-7; 26-45.

Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong [supposed authors], *Outlaws of the Marsh (Shui hu zhuan 水滸傳)*, trans. by Sidney Shapiro (Bloomington, 1981), chps. 27-31

Summary: The Tyranny of History?

27. June 29 (Tuesday, taught as Thursday): China's imperial longevity: image, reality, and historical verdict

Reading TBA