The Qing Empire in Global Context  
Course #AS.100.311  
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**Course description:**
This upper level undergraduate class focuses on early modern empires. It uses the Qing empire (1644-1912) as a central case study, situating recent scholarship on the Qing in relation to that dealing with other empires. Students will thus consider questions of imperial control and colonialism, gender, war, and knowledge-making. An earlier generation of scholarship portrayed the Qing dynasty as the victim of Western imperialism or emphasized “sinification” and “Chinese exceptionalism”; new works compare the Qing to other early modern maritime and land empires. They acknowledge the expansionism of the Qing and also focus on the ways in which heterogenous cultural or ethnic encounters shaped the empire’s territorial ambitions and ruling style.

By comparing the Qing with other empires from the 17th to 19th century and reconsidering the legacies of the Qing empire in the 20th century through extensive reading of secondary literature, students will learn more about the dynamics between the colonizers and colonized, the politics of categorization and comparative studies, and the legacies of imperialism.

**Learning goals:**
1. Gain an understanding of the varied experience of historical and political actors within the empires studied.
2. Identify major political, social, cultural, environmental, and intellectual trends of the early modern world.
3. Analyze and evaluate major scholarly trends in the study of early modern empires, including especially the study of the Qing empire.
4. Examine arguments, texts, and other sources within their historical contexts.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the post-colonial world order and vestigial problems associated with the legacies of imperialism today.

**Assignments:**
1. Class participation (in class discussion, peer review activity): 30%
2. Weekly reading notes: 40%
3. Three book reviews: 30%
Class participation: In-class discussion will comprise a significant portion of the grade. Students are expected to come to class ready to discuss the assigned reading and to take an active part in discussions. Be ready to discuss the readings in class by synthesizing authors’ arguments, posing questions, and responding to other students’ points of view. We are also going to do peer-review in every class. Attendance will be taken every week. Absences must be excused prior to the class meeting. Unexcused absences will result in a “0” for that week. At the end of each class, students will be asked to read others’ weekly reading notes and learn from each other about how people read differently.

Reading notes: Students are expected to submit reading notes in nearly every class session. Students do not need to submit reading notes for the sessions in which we have guest speakers. Please select one of the articles or books that you read for each class session about which to write reading notes, and please bring a hard copy of your reading notes to each class. Please see the file on Blackboard for the format of the weekly reading notes. Students only need to fill out the designed questions and share them with the classmates at the end of each class. Students are required to submit 20 weekly reading notes in total. You will get full points for each weekly reading notes as long as you submit.

Book Reviews: Students will submit three book reviews over the course of the semester. The first two book reviews are worth 8% each and should be 2-3 pages long. For the last book review, which should be 5-10 pages long, students should compare 3 to 5 books. This last book review is worth 14% of the final grade. We will discuss how to write a book review on 9/14, and how to write a longer book review on 12/2. Please see the end of the syllabus for the list of books that you can choose from. Please do not choose books to review from the weekly assigned readings. The first book review is due on 10/21, the second on 11/16, and the third on 12/21.

Guest Speakers: We will have two joint classes and one guest speaker throughout the semester. The first joint class is on 10/12 and the second one on 10/21. On those dates, we are going to meet with the students and instructor of “The Politics of American Imperialism: The Founding to the Present” for a comparative discussion of imperialism in different times and spaces. On 10/26, we will have a guest speaker to talk about sexual control as part of the colonial project. For those three classes, students do not need to submit reading notes. The format of those three classes will be announced when the time approaches.
All writing assignments should be double spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins.

All required readings are available on e-Reserve.

**W1 (8/31) Administrative Introduction**

**W1 (9/2) Academic Introduction**

**W2 (9/7) Comparing Empires**


**W2 (9/9) Comparing Empires**


**W3 (9/14) Considering the Qing as an Empire**

*No Reading Notes*

- Rowe, William T. China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing.

➔ We will also talk about how to write book reviews.

**W3 (9/16) Considering the Qing as an Empire**

Imperial nor Early Modern: Efflorescences and the Qing Formation in World History” by Jack Goldstone.


W4 (9/21) How did empires work? Bureaucracy – 1


W4 (9/23) How did empires work? Intermediaries – 1


W5 (9/28) How did empires work? Bureaucracy – 2


W5 (9/30) How did empires work? Intermediaries – 2

- Spence, Jonathan D. Ts’ao Yin and the K’ang-hsi Emperor: Bondservant and Master. Yale University Press, 1966. (Skim or focus on Ch3-6.)
- Crossley, Pamela K, “The Tong in Two Worlds: Cultural Identities in Liaodong and Nurgan during the 13th-17th centuries”, in Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i, Volume 4, Number 9, June 1983, pp. 21-46

W6 (10/5) Encounters and Control – 1


W6 (10/7) Encounter and Control – 1


**W7 (10/12) Encounter and Control – 2**

*No Reading Notes*

**W7 (10/15) Encounter and Control – 2**


**W8 (10/19) Marriage and sexuality – 1**


**W8 (10/21) Marriage and sexuality – 1**

*No Reading Notes*

First Book Review Due

**W8 (10/26) Marriage and sexuality – 2**

*No Reading Notes*

**W9 (10/28) Marriage and sexuality – 2**


**W10 (11/2) Law and Society**

**W10 (11/4) Law and Society**


**W11 (11/9) Law and Society**

- Allee, Mark A. *Law and Local Society in Late Imperial China: Northern Taiwan in the Nineteenth Century.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994. Read Ch 3 for background info and choose at least one chapter from 4 to 7 for case study.

**W11 (11/11) Law and Society**


**W12 (11/16) Making the imperial past**

Second Book Review Due

W12 (11/18) Making the imperial past

W13 Thanksgiving!

W14 (11/30) After empire

W14 (12/2) After empire

We will talk about how to write longer book review.

12/21 Third Book Review Due

**Reading list:**


Brown, Kathleen M. Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power In Colonial Virginia. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996.


Rowe, William T. *Speaking of Profit: Bao Shichen and Reform in Nineteenth Century China*. Harvard University Asia Center, 2018.


