

HIST 3313 MEDIEVAL CHINA

Fall 2025 | M 4:00–6:45 PM

Prof. J. Michael Farmer

JO 5.612

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Office Hours: By Appointment (in-person or virtual)

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions:

Prerequisite: Completion of a 060 core course. *Knowledge of Chinese language is not required.*

It is strongly suggested that History majors complete HIST 3301 Historical Inquiry prior to taking this class.

Course Description:

Chinese civilization, like its Greek and Roman counterparts in the Mediterranean, is both ancient and far-reaching, influencing the political, economic, social, intellectual, religious, and cultural systems of a hemisphere for over five thousand years. Traditional Chinese civilization coalesced around the turn of the Common Era, reached its zenith during the mid-eighth century, and then began its descent into the early modern world. This course will examine the history of Chinese civilization from the decline of the Han empire through the period of disunion and reunification under the Sui and Tang empires, focusing on political, social, economic, intellectual, and cultural developments of China's medieval age.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

The primary objective of this course is to increase your understanding of the history of medieval China, and introduce you to important scholarship in the field. Additionally, the course will provide opportunity for students to develop communication skills key to the practice of the discipline of history. Both of these SLOs (knowledge base and communication skills) will be regularly assessed through ongoing writing and discussion assignments. Brief descriptions of these assessment assignments are outlined below, and *detailed guidelines will be provided to students via eLearning.*

Textbooks and Materials:

Required Books:

No required books. All materials available through eLearning.

Assignments:

Primary Source Analyses [40% of final grade]:

Students will prepare a one page primary source analysis paper (PSA) on an assigned primary document most weeks. PSA-eligible documents are located on eLearning. Weekly reading assignments may contain several documents; write a PSA on only one (your choice). See assignment guidelines for details.

Article Captures [20% of final grade]:

Students will write a 5–7 page “Article Capture” on each of four scholarly articles of your choice on China’s medieval period.

Research Topic Statement [20% of final grade]:

Students will prepare Research Topic Statement for a *hypothetical* research paper on a medieval China-related topic based on primary and secondary sources used in Primary Source Analysis and Article Capture exercises.

Discussion Board Activity [20% of final grade]:

Students will actively participate in discussion of assigned readings on eLearning Discussion Boards. Weekly requirements include an Original Post, and Responses to posts by other class members.

Detailed guidelines for all assignments will be distributed via eLearning.

All assignments will be submitted via eLearning.

Note regarding eLearning’s Gradebook: The eLearning Gradebook is a basic record of raw scores for all scored course assignments. *I do NOT use the eLearning Gradebook to calculate final grades for the class;* I use a stand-alone program that allows me to weight assignment categories (as noted above) and make other calculations. Self-calculated grade estimates made from eLearning’s Gradebook are unlikely to be the same as on my gradebook. If you need to know your class average, please arrange an Office Hour session and I will happily give that information to you.

Tentative Schedule:

I will make every reasonable effort to follow this reading and discussion schedule, but sometimes changes must be made. Modification to this outline will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of the schedule and prepare the assigned materials.

All items available on eLearning.

Items prefaced by a X are not PSA-eligible (background / textbook readings).

Items prefaced by a plus sign (+) are PSA-eligible.

Items prefaced by an asterisk (*) and set in ***bold italics*** indicate a due date.

WK	Date	Medieval China
1	8/25	Introduction to the Course Han Empire X Ropp, <i>China</i> , Ch. 1–2 X Gernet, <i>Civilization</i> , Pts 1–2
2	9/1	Labor Day: No Class DB: AMA w/Dr. Farmer
3	9/8	The Three States Period X Ropp, <i>China</i> , Ch. 3 X Gernet, <i>Civilization</i> , Pt 3 X <i>Routledge Handbook</i> , Section 2 + “Poem in Seven Paces” + Zhuge Liang, “Deploying the Army” + Qiao Zhou * PSA 1 Due
4	9/15	The North and South + <i>Memories of Luoyang</i> + <i>Family Instructions for the Yan Clan</i> * PSA 2 Due
5	9/22	Early Medieval Religions + Selections from <i>Declarations of the Perfected</i> + “Mythic History: The First Monk, The First Temple, and the Emperor Ming” + Selection from <i>Lotus Sutra</i> * PSA 3 Due

6	9/29	No Class * Article Capture 1 Due DB: TBA
7	10/6	Early Medieval Thought & Literature + “Bamboo Grove, Golden Valley, Orchid Pavilion” + Poems by T’ao Yuan-ming + Women in Early Medieval Poetry; “The Ballad of Mulan” * PSA 4 Due
8	10/13	Women, Politics, and Art + Zhang Hua, “Admonitions of the Female Scribe” + Gu Kaizhi, “Admonitions” * Article Capture 2 Due
9	10/20	Sui-Tang Empire X Ropp, <i>China</i> , Ch. 4 X Gernet, <i>Civilization</i> , Pt 4 X <i>Routledge Handbook</i> , Section 3 + “The Labyrinth” + Taizong on Good Government + The Tang Code + The Examination System * PSA 5 Due
10	10/27	Tang & the World/Chang’an + Xuanzang + The Turks + Nestorian Stele + “The Gay Quarters” pt. 1–2 * PSA 6 Due
11	11/3	Women in the Tang + “Yü Hsüan-chi” + “Analects for Women” * Article Capture 3 Due

12	11/10	Tang Literature and Art + Bo Xingjian, “The Story of Miss Li” + Poems by Li Bo and Du Fu + Zhou Fang, “Tang Court Ladies” + Tang Horses <i>* PSA 7 Due</i>
13	11/17	Tang Religions + Transformations of Barbarians + Laughing at the Dao + Mogao Cave 323 [slide set] + Ennin’s Diary + “Mu-lien Rescues His Mother” <i>* PSA 8 Due</i>
14	11/24	Fall Break: No Class
15	12/1	The An Lushan Rebellion + “Flight from the Capital” + “Dancing Horses of the Tang” + Bo Juyi, “Song of Lasting Regret” + Du Fu, “Autumn Meditations” <i>* Article Capture 4 Due</i>
16	12/8	The Fall of the Tang & the End of Traditional China + Han Yu, “Memorial on the Bone of the Buddha” + Wuzong, “Edict of the Eighth Month” <i>* Research Topic Statement Due</i>
Final		No Final Exam

Course & Instructor Policies:**Grading Policy:**

Percentages for the course assignments have been noted above. The following gradescale will be used: 0–59 [F]; 60–62 [D-]; 63–66 [D]; 67–69 [D+]; 70–72 [C-]; 73–76 [C]; 77–79 [C+]; 80–82 [B-]; 83–86 [B]; 87–89 [B+]; 90–92 [A-]; 93–100 [A]. In narrative form, [F]=failing; [D]=below average; [C]=average; [B]=above average; [A]=exceptional.

The professor reserves the right to curve, round, or otherwise adjust grades at his sole discretion.

Note regarding eLearning's Gradebook: The eLearning Gradebook is a basic record of raw scores for all scored course assignments. *I do NOT use the eLearning Gradebook to calculate final grades for the class;* I use a stand-alone program that allows me to weight assignment categories (as noted above) and make other calculations. Self-calculated grade estimates made from eLearning's Gradebook are unlikely to be the same as on my gradebook. If you need to know your class average, please arrange an Office Hour session and I will happily give that information to you.

Yes, I know this information is included twice. There is a reason for that. Don't be that reason.

Attendance, Participation, and Discussion:

Attendance is mandatory! Please consult the university calendar before scheduling vacations, weddings, or other extra-curricular events that may keep you from your responsibilities in this class. You are responsible for the material and any assignments regardless of whether you were in a given class meeting or not. Any extended absence (two or more consecutive sessions) should be reported to me via email as soon as possible. Every student is expected to actively participate in the discussion of the assigned readings. While there may be no set percentage of the course grade dedicated to this requirement category, students who do not regularly attend and actively participate in class will not fare well in the course.

Allowances will be made in accordance with University policy to students who must miss class due to Covid infection and/or exposure. I will extend this allowance to other students who may be ill with other communicable illnesses. Please contact me directly to arrange accommodations.

Late work:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late work will not be accepted. For all work not completed by the due date, the student will receive a grade of 0 (zero) for the assignment. Exceptional circumstances may be taken into account. If you feel your circumstances merit special consideration, please notify me via email or in person as soon as possible.

All assignments will be submitted via eLearning.

Written assignments (PSAs, Article Captures) must be uploaded in either Word or PDF formats.

These assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in a 10–12 point serif typeface (Times, Palatino, Garamond, Gentium, etc.). Pages must have one-inch margins and contain your name and page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

Discussion Board assignments are submitted directly in eLearning (no file attachments).

Assignments not meeting these technical specifications will not be accepted.

Personal Electronics:

Any non-class related use of personal electronics in the classroom will result in the immediate confiscation of the device. Confiscated devices will be returned at the end of the class period. Repeat offenses will result in a failing grade in the course.

Class Recordings:

Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Class Materials and Intellectual Property:

The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Office Gun Policy

All persons entering my office (JO 5.612) will be given oral notice indicating that my office is an exclusion zone.

Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact

the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the Women's Center (972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), the clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

Course and Instructor Amendments to the University Policies:

Email Use:

Email is the preferred method of communication for this course. I generally reply to messages that require a response (and not all messages require or merit a response from the professor!) within two business days. While you may find a phone number listed for me, I do not have a university-provided phone. Calls to that number will not be answered, nor will voice messages left at that number be heard or responded to. **Email me!**

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Your Responsibility:

Students are responsible for all information contained in this syllabus and schedule, as well as any amendments or changes announced by the professor or Teaching Assistant(s) in class. Changes to the course schedule or syllabus will also be announced in class and/or by email. It is your responsibility to regularly check your UTD email account.

Failure to abide by the policies contained in the syllabus and any amendments or changes announced by the professor may result in a failing grade in the course.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

[revised 21 May 2025]

History, Writing, and this Class:

Most of you are enrolled in this class because at some level you have developed an interest in history. To this point your interests have likely been passive; that is to say, you have enjoyed reading books, watching documentaries, or playing video games about historical topics. In this course you will shift from being consumers of history to producers of history. You will learn how to “do history.”

“Doing history” might be summed up by three interrelated acts: reading, thinking, and communicating your ideas about the past. The written word lies at the heart of the historical enterprise. Many of the surviving artifacts from the past are written documents, and most of the scholarship that attempts to make sense of these artifacts is also in written form. As such, you will be regularly engaged with writing. You will read the documents from the past. You will read ancient and modern historians’ attempts to organize the artifacts into meaningful representations of different times and places. You will think about both the primary and secondary documents at your disposal and offer your own representation of the past. You will do this through a variety of written assignments; that is how the professional historian works.

Although the creation of original ideas (or critical examinations of old ones) is the most significant act that the historian performs, for ideas to be tested and accepted they must first be shared. These ideas are shared in the form of books, articles, and short essays presented orally at conferences. Audiences will vary. At times historians write for each other. Other times they write for non-specialist or lay readers. And at other times they write for students. Depending on the audience, historians adopt a variety of voices—some formal, others informal. It is important to know how to present your ideas to each specific audience.

The format of historical writing is not simply to satisfy the whims of senior historians (or history professors). Rather, proper presentation of your ideas in writing adds credibility to your argument. Correct style, tone, format, documentation of evidence, etc. tell the reader that you have “sweated the small stuff,” and therefore your big ideas can be taken seriously. Conversely, failure to follow the conventions of the discipline signals to your reader that you have not mastered the simple matters of style, causing them to possibly doubt your ability to handle the more complex issues of content. While the viewpoint expressed above (“bad writing = unintelligence”) is most likely unfair and untrue, the perception remains. Thus it is your responsibility to demonstrate a competency in the craft of historical writing if you want your ideas to be taken seriously.

In this course you will have ample opportunity to examine primary and secondary documents, formulate your own ideas about them, and express those ideas in clear and concise essays. You will not only learn the “facts” about the history of medieval China, you will “do history.”