

**This is an unofficial copy of the HIST 2341 course syllabus.  
The syllabus of record will be distributed to enrolled members of the course via  
eLearning. Contents subject to change.  
\*\*\*This unofficial syllabus is for informational purposes only.\*\*\***

## **HIST 2341 East Asian Civilizations**

Spring 2026 | MW 8:30–9:45 PM | JO 3.516

Prof. J. Michael Farmer

farmer@utdallas.edu | Office: JO 5.612 | Office Hours: By appointment.

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

There are no pre-requisites or other restrictions for this course.

Knowledge of an East Asian language is not required.

This course may be used to satisfy General Core Area 040 Language, Philosophy & Culture requirements.

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed as an introduction to major themes in the culture (history, thought, literature, and art) of East Asian societies from antiquity to present. General themes such as the creation of East Asia (the origins of the Confucian-Legalist bureaucratic state, the spread of Buddhism, the limits of sinicization) and East Asia and the World (encounters with the West, reform and revolution, and the impact of East Asian nation-states in the contemporary world) will be addressed.

### **Required Textbooks:**

Holcombe, Charles. *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Paperback. ISBN: 1107544890.

ADDITIONAL READINGS via eLearning

## Assignments

### **East Asia By the Numbers [15%]:**

Students will compile quantitative information on contemporary East Asian states and administrative units based on data from the CIA World Factbook. See assignment guidelines for details.

### **Map Assignment [15%]:**

Students will identify a set of locations on the Rand McNally outline map of China and Japan (provided) and complete a test on eLearning. See assignment guidelines for details.

### **Discussion Board Activity [30%]:**

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. See assignment guidelines for details.

### **East Asia in the News Final Analysis Essay [25%]**

Students will also prepare an East Asia in the News Final Analysis Essay of approximately 500–1000 words as a capstone to the East Asia in the News Discussion Board activity. See Discussion Board guidelines for details.

### **Quizzes [15%]**

Three quizzes consisting of objective-type questions based on assigned readings and other course material will be administered via eLearning.

### **QUIZ EXEMPTION POLICY:**

For students who have no more than one absence from class during a quiz unit, the quiz will be OPTIONAL.

For students who have more than one absence from class during a quiz unit, the quiz will be REQUIRED.

*Attendance will be taken each class session at the beginning of class. Falsification of attendance documents (marking for another student, marking “present” when actually absent, etc.) is an act of academic dishonesty and reported to the Office of Community Conduct.*

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Detailed guidelines for all assignments will be distributed via eLearning.  
All assignments will be submitted via eLearning.

Written assignments 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, 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).  
Map assignment test completed in eLearning.

Assignments not meeting these technical specifications will not be accepted.

***There are no group assignments in this class. All assignments must be completed and submitted by each student individually.***

***THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI IS PROHIBITED IN THIS CLASS. Every element of every class assignment must be fully prepared by the student.***

### Tentative Schedule

I will make every reasonable effort to follow this reading and discussion schedule. Any modifications to this outline will be announced via eLearning. It is your responsibility to be aware of the schedule and prepare the assigned materials.

Key: *History* = Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*  
 + = Item available via eLearning.  
 \* = Due Date for Assignment

WK	Date	East Asian Civ Honors
1	1/19	<b>MLK Holiday: No Class</b>
	1/21	<b>Introduction to the Course</b> DB: Intro
2	1/26	<b>What is East Asia?</b> <i>History</i> , Intro, Ch. 1 <b>* East Asia By The Numbers Due</b> DB: AMA
	1/28	<b>FORMATIVE ERA</b> <b>Historical Overview</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 2
3	2/2	<b>FORMATIVE ERA</b> <b>Chinese Writing: Oracle Bones and Odes</b> + Oracle Bone Inscriptions + Book of Songs <b>* Map assignment Due</b> DB: PS
	2/4	<b>FORMATIVE ERA</b> <b>Early Cosmology and Daoism</b> + Classical Daoism
4	2/9	<b>FORMATIVE ERA</b> <b>Confucius and Classicism</b> The Analects DB: ITN
	2/11	<b>FORMATIVE ERA</b> <b>Legalism</b> + Legalism
5	2/16	<b>FORMATIVE ERA</b> <b>The Han State and Society</b> + "Debate on Salt and Iron" <b>* Quiz 1 [Availability TBA]</b> DB: PS

	2/18	<b>COSMOPOLITAN ERA</b> <b>Historical Overview</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 3–4
6	2/23	<b>COSMOPOLITAN ERA</b> <b>Buddhism &amp; The Silk Roads</b> + Selections Lotus Sutra +Xuanzang +Ennin DB: ITN
	2/25	<b>COSMOPOLITAN ERA</b> <b>Tang China: Literature and Exams</b> + Major Tang Poets I + Examination System
7	3/2	<b>COSMOPOLITAN ERA</b> <b>Silla Korea</b> + Selections Samgok yusa DB: PS
	3/4	<b>COSMOPOLITAN ERA</b> <b>Nara and Heian Japan</b> + Selections from Tale of Genji + Murasaki, “Art of Fiction”
8	3/9	<b>EARLY MODERN ERA</b> <b>Historical Overview</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 5 DB: ITN
	3/11	<b>EARLY MODERN ERA</b> <b>Commercial China (Song)</b> + Qingming scroll DB: PS
9	3/16	<b>Spring Break</b>
	3/18	<b>Spring Break</b>
10	3/23	<b>EARLY MODERN ERA</b> <b>Confucian Korea (Choson)</b> + Yi Hwang and Sage Learning + Sijo Poetry
	3/25	<b>EARLY MODERN ERA</b> <b>Warrior Japan (Tokugawa)</b> + The Way of the Warrior + Bashō, “Narrow Road of Oku” DB: ITN

11	3/30	<b>EARLY MODERN ERA</b> <b>The Mongol Empire</b> + Mongol Accounts by William of Rubruck and Marco Polo <b>* Quiz 2 [Availability TBA]</b>
	4/1	<b>EAST ASIA &amp; THE WEST</b> <b>Global China (Ming)</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 6 + Zheng He: Bio + Inscriptions DB: PS
12	4/6	<b>EAST ASIA &amp; THE WEST</b> <b>Meiji Restoration</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 8–9 + Rescript on Education
	4/8	<b>EAST ASIA &amp; THE WEST</b> <b>Opium Wars &amp; Reform</b> + “Letter to Queen Victoria” DB: ITN
13	4/13	<b>Revolution in China</b> + “A Madman’s Diary”
	4/15	<b>EAST ASIA &amp; THE WEST</b> <b>WWII/War in Asia</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 10 DB: PS
14	4/20	<b>MODERN EAST ASIA</b> <b>Japan Since 1945</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 11 DB: ITN
	4/22	<b>MODERN EAST ASIA</b> <b>Japan Since 1945</b> + Gojira (1954) [screenplay + film]
15	4/27	<b>MODERN EAST ASIA</b> <b>Korea Since 1945</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 12 + “To Build a Nation” + “On Juche”
	4/29	<b>MODERN EAST ASIA</b> <b>China Since 1945</b> <i>History</i> , Ch. 14 + Selections from Mao Zedong + 20th Century Chinese Art DB: Takeaways

16	5/4	<b>MODERN EAST ASIA</b> <b>China Since 1945</b> + “The Fifth Modernization” + Deathsong of the River, episode 1 [screenplay + video] DB: Takeaways
	5/6	<b>TBA</b> <b>* East Asia in the News Final Analysis Essay Due</b>
Final		<b>* Quiz 3 [Availability TBA]</b>

## 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 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 the eLearning Gradebook are not likely 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.

### 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, or 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 generally 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 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 clergy person (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>.

### **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.

**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 20260105]

## Generative AI Policy

**THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI IS PROHIBITED IN THIS CLASS.**  
*Every element of every class assignment must be fully prepared by the student.*

The use of ANY application or “AI tool” that produces content submitted for a class assignment (including discussion board posts, primary source analyses, book or article captures, project statements, reading summaries, outlines, and/or papers) is prohibited.

The use of such technologies is an impediment to learning and mastering the fundamental skills of history and the humanities: careful reading, thoughtful consideration of evidence, and clear communication. Moreover, the use of such technology is a violation of professional ethics, since such usage constitutes “double-plagiarism” in that the “AI tools” have plagiarized the intellectual work of others with neither consent, attribution/citation, nor compensation (first plagiarism strike!), and the user of such tools then presents the generated content as their own original work (second plagiarism strike!).

Unauthorized use of generative AI technologies constitutes a violation of UTDSP5003, and will be treated as academic dishonesty/plagiarism.

*The use of spell-check programs is permitted, and encouraged.*

*If you have questions about what constitutes a violation of this class policy, please contact me.*

See UTDSP5017 Generative AI Use in Academic Work

Full Text of the Policy Statement is here: <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5017>

Dr. J. Michael Farmer  
[revised 20260105]