

**EALC 0080-401: Mongolian Civilization: Nomadic and Sedentary****Spring 2025****Instructor:** Christopher P. Atwood ([catwood@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:catwood@sas.upenn.edu))**Location:** Williams #205**MWF** 3:30pm-4:29 PM**Office Hours:** R 2-3, Williams Hall #850 (certain weeks it will be T 2-3-- I will announce ahead of time in that case)**Syllabus** (Subject to revision)

This course will explore how two intertwined ways of life – pastoral nomadism and settling down for religious, educational, and economic reasons – have shaped the cultural, artistic, and intellectual traditions of Mongolia. In this course students will learn about Mongolian pastoral nomadism, and how the Mongolian economy, literature, and steppe empires were built on grass and livestock. We will also explore how Mongolians have also just as consistently used the foundations of empire to build sedentary monuments and buildings, whether funerary complexes, Buddhist monasteries, socialist boarding schools, or modern capitals. Over time, these cities have changed shape, location, and ideology, all the while remaining linked to the mobile pastoralists in the countryside. We will also explore how these traditions of mobile pastoralism and urbanism were transformed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by urbanization, communist ideology, and the new reality of free-market democracy, ideological pluralism, and a new mining dependent economy. We will meet modern painters and musicians who interweave Mongolian nomadic traditions with contemporary world trends and consider the future of rural traditions in a modern world.

In this class students learn the following skills:

- Cross-Cultural Analysis:
  1. Students will learn how to analyze the impact of pastoral nomadism, imperial conquest, Tibetan-rite Buddhism, and collectivization on works of literature, visual arts, and music
  2. Students will learn to see how the above legacies shape Mongolian artists, musicians, authors, and other creative workers living in a contemporary transnational, neo-liberal, and nationalist cultural space.
- Humanities and Social Science
  1. Students will learn how to use basic social science and environmental history concepts to analyze the changing relations of humans to their environment, especially to the animal world, and to their own communities.

2. Students will learn how to relate film, visual arts, music, short stories, and other creative works to changing environmental positions and ideologies in a way that is historically sensitive, but not reductionistic.
- Research methods
    1. Students will learn how to give a short, but effective presentation of a previously unfamiliar research topic
    2. Students will learn how to critique peer work constructively and insightfully
    3. Students will learn how to analyze news about foreign countries in light of presuppositions, evaluating overall reliability and extracting useful information even from problematic materials

#### Academic conduct:

Plagiarism constitutes using others' ideas, words or images without properly giving credit to those sources. If you turn in any work with your name affixed to it, I assume that work is your own and that all sources are indicated and documented in the text (with quotations and/or citations). I and/or your section instructors will respond to acts of academic misconduct according to university policy concerning plagiarism; sanctions for plagiarism can include a grade of F for the assignment in question and/or for the course and a report to the Dean of Students Office.

While in class, students are expected to pay attention and not distract other students with disruptive activities. Laptop computers and cell phones should be closed and off during the duration of class, please. Pedagogical research is clear that notetaking by hand significantly aids comprehension.

On the question of AI, I am learning, like everyone else. But the following statements roughly capture where I am at today:

"You may use AI programs, e.g., ChatGPT, to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity" (Holly Fernandez-Lynch, BIOE 5540: Bioethics and the Law)

"All large language models still have a tendency to make up incorrect facts and fake citations, code generation models have a tendency to produce inaccurate outputs, and image generation models can occasionally come up with highly offensive products. You will be responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content you submit, regardless of whether it originally comes from you or a foundation model. If you use a foundation model, its contribution must be acknowledged in the handin; you will be penalized for using a foundation model without acknowledgement." (Ryan Baker EDUC 6191: Core Methods in Educational Data Mining)

## Assignments

- Weekly in class quizzes: 12 best scores for Full credit, 1 points: 12X1=12 points
- Attendance & Participation: 39 sessions for full credit, 2/3 points: 39X2/3=26 points (extra 1/3 per session for outstanding participation)
- 3 Trip posts/replies on Nüürnom ("Facebook" in Mongolian) Group: 3X5=15 points
- 1 Class presentation based on outside research: 12 points
- 1 Discussant of class presentation: 5 points
- 1 Final paper based on outside research 15 points
- 1 Illustrated exhibition or documentary prospectus: 15 points

NOTE: Failure to complete any class of assignment (each bullet point = one class of assignment) will result in an automatic cap of your grade at C+

## Weekly Syllabus

### **Week 1:** Jan. 15, 17

#### Introduction

### **Week 2:** Jan. 22, 23

#### Introduction to Pastoral Nomadism & Mongolia's environment

#### Readings:

W: Natsagdorj, "Son of the Old World" and "My Native Land";

F: Endicott, *Land Use in Mongolia*, chapters 1 and 2

*Jan. 22, introduce Penn Global Personnel*

### **Week 3:** Jan. 27, 29, 31

#### Human-animal relations

#### Readings:

M: Fijn, *Living with Herds*, prologue & introduction, chapter 5;

W: Marchina, *Nomadic Pastoralism among the Mongol Herders*, Introduction & chapter 4

F: Gombojab Hangin, trans. epic "Khan Kharangui" (in Hangin, "Mongolian Folklore," Part 4 file)

**Week 4:** Feb. 3, 5, 7

The Transition

Readings:

M: Endicott, chapter 5;

W: Avery, *Women of Mongolia*

F: Film: *Story of the Weeping Camel* (available here:  
<https://archive.org/details/TheStoryOfTheWeepingCamel> )

**Week 5:** Feb. 10, 12, 14

Mongol conquests and the *ordo* or imperial camps

M: *Secret History of the Mongols*, Introduction;

W: *Secret History of the Mongols* selections: §§1-24, 54-138 (Genealogy; Yisukei captures a wife, Chinggis Khan's childhood, Campaign against the Merkit, Belgütei and Böri the Brawny)

F: *Secret History of the Mongols* selections: 193-198, 200-202, 244-46, 254-55, 265-73, 279-82 (battles, death of Jamuqa, Conspiracy of Kökecü, succession debates, Öködei and his brothers, Öködei's regime).

**Week 6:** Feb. 17, 19, 21

Imperial cities and peri-urban environments

Readings:

M: Shiraishi, "Seasonal Migrations";

W: Jackson and Morgan, trans., *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, pp. 59-101, 130-37, 172-81,

F: Jackson and Morgan, trans., *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, 183-200, 209-16, 221-53.

**Week 7:** Feb. 24, 26, 28

Zanabazar and the Mongolian Buddhist Tradition

Uranchimeg Tsultemin, *Monastery on the Move*, 1-80, 143-75

**Week 8:** March 3, 5, 7

Mongolian Revolution, Heroes and Purges

M: Intro and biographies of Damdinsuren and Magsarjav from Onon, *Mongolian Heroes of the Twentieth Century*,

W: Kaplonski *The Lama Question*, chapter 9;

F: Film: *Storm over Asia* (access to streaming from Penn Libraries at: <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/storm-over-asia> )

Spring Break

**Week 9:** March 17, 19, 21

Social change and its representation in Mongolian literature

M: Damdinsuren's "Rejected Girl"

W: Simon Wickhamsmith, *Politics and Literature in Mongolia*, chapter four "Leftward Together"

F: S. Erdene's "Dust of the Herds," "Kulan," and "Solitude";

("Solitude" is at: <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/october-2018-dalit-writing-solitude-erdene-seng-kenneth-linden> ; other stories -- see pdfs with titles "Damdinsuren, Cendiin Short Stories and poems" and "Erdene, Sengiin Short Stories")

**Week 10:** March 24, 26, 28

Shamanism and the Ghosts of Stalinism

Readings:

M: Shimamura, *Roots Seekers*, intro and chapter 5

W: Manduhai, *Tragic Spirits*, chapter three

**Week 11:** March 31, April 2

Mining and the New Mongolian Economy

M: Endicott, *History of Land Use in Mongolia*, chapter 6;

W: Reeves, "Mongolia's Environmental Security";

F: Bum-Ochir, *The State, Popular Mobilization, and Gold-Mining in Mongolia*, preface, introduction, chapter 3

**Week 12:** April 7, 9, 11

*Mongol Zurag* and representing tradition in art

M: Atwood, "Art and Architecture of Mongolia";

W: *Fine Arts in Contemporary Mongolia* (1971 album; read intro and view pictures);

F: Ts. Uranchimeg, "Political Ecology in Batzorig's Art" and "Buddhist Revelations in Davaakhuugin Soyolmaa's Contemporary Mongolian Art"

April 9: Museum Visit! Class at the Penn Museum

List of objects we will be viewing: <https://www.penn.museum/collections/list.php?id=11928>

**Week 13:** April 14, 16, 18

*Khöömii*, horse-head fiddles and representing tradition in music

Readings:

M: Carole Pegg, "Mongolian Conceptualizations of Overtone Singing (xoomii)";

W: Sunmin Yoon, "Mobilities, Experienced and Performed, in Mongolia's Urtyn Duu Tradition"; Peter Marsh "Our Generation is Opening Its Eyes"

April 14: SHS Health Consultation -- no class

F: Presentations & Discussion

**Week 14:** April 21, 23, 25

M: Film: *Mongolian Bling* (connect to streaming video here: [https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/catalog/FRANKLIN\\_9964749593503681](https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/catalog/FRANKLIN_9964749593503681) )

Wrapping up, preparing for the Trip!

Presentations & Discussion

**Week 15:** April 28, 29

Wrap-up final Q & A

Presentations & Discussion

Final Paper due: May 5-13

MONGOLIA TRIP!