

EALC 5080-301 202330 Introduction To Inner Asian Civilizations

EALC-5080-301 Inner Asian History and Civilizations Syllabus

Fall, 2024

Professor: Dotno D. Pount

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Time: TBA

Place: TBA

This class is intended for new graduate students and upper-division undergraduates with some prerequisites who wish to get a solid grounding in the study of Mongolia, Manchuria, Xinjiang/East Turkestan, and Tibet -- the areas often called "Inner Asia." This course is intended to be useful either as a gateway to further study, or as a stand-alone class.

The class will introduce Inner Asia focused on the Mongolian plateau as a coherent civilizational network, focusing on five main movements: 1) the steppe-imperial tradition; 2) the Tibetan-rite Buddhist commonwealth that developed from the Tibetan and Mongol empires; 3) the Islamic Turco-Chinggisid synthesis in the post-Mongol period; 4) the increasing integration of the steppe-imperial and Tibetan-rite Buddhist civilizational patterns with that of imperial China; and 5) the revolutionary and nation-building impact of Russian/Soviet and Japanese empires in Inner Asia and their reflection in the early PRC.

Regionally, the class introduces 1) core Inner Asia (the Mongolian plateau, the Tarim Basin, the Tibetan plateau, and Manchuria) and 2) the main dynasties of China that formed in Inner Asia (Liao, Xia, Jin, Yuan, and Qing).

Chronologically, the class will mostly cover the period from the emergence of written Turkic cultures to the present. Prehistory and the contemporary period will not be covered.

Since most students have little exposure to Inner Asian literature, the class will be divided into two parts. In the first we will read a range of Inner Asian literary monuments in translation, focusing on eight seminal works. In the second part we will look at some of the key issues of interpretation in Inner Asian history and civilization through seminal articles, mostly in a "point-counterpoint" format.

Weekly structure overview:

Week 1: Intro

Week 2: Epics – *The Memorial Feast of Kökötöy; Jangar*

Week 3: *Tale of the Nisan Shamaness* and Manchu Shamanism

Week 4: *Life of Milarepa*; renunciation and the monastic biography

Week 5: *Secret History of the Mongols*

Week 6: *Secret History of the Mongols*

Week 7: Sagang Sechen's *Precious Summary*

Week 8: Musa Sayrami, *Tarikh-i Hamidi*

Week 9: Injannasi and the agony of bicultural identity; the introductory essays to the *Blue Chronicle*

Week 10: Inner Asia and Chinese identity

Week 11: Tribute, Trade, and Silk Road

Week 12: Pastoralist society and the questions of "tribes"

Week 13: Buddhism and the "Priest-Patron Relationship"

Week 14: Trans-border ties, modernization, and Border/Minority Nationalism

Week 15: Conclusion

Assignments and Grading

The class grade will be based on the following assignments:

Discussions: Each week there will be two discussion threads on Canvas: one to take place Sunday-Monday, and one to take place Tuesday to Wednesday of each week. There are thus twenty four discussions

Students will take turn being discussion leaders. They will lead off the discussion discussing the reading for the upcoming class; other students will then respond and add their comments.

For the readings in classic sources, discussion leaders and participants should consider: who is the audience for the work? What political/social/ritual behavior might this work justify? What basic ideas/institutions/environmental situation does it presume?

For the readings on historical issues, discussion leaders will analyze the primary areas of conflict between the differing interpretations, the sources the different writers have used, and the types of empirical data that might be used to distinguish between the various positions.

Final paper format: Students may choose one of two types of paper:

1. A historiography paper, researching an issue chosen in consultation with the professor and surveying the development of the field. This should be 4,000 to 7,000 words.
2. An essay or a combined essay and outline of about 2,500 to 5,000 words that applies the course material to designing three units of for a projected undergraduate survey course on Chinese, Asian, Eurasian, or World civilization. How would you organize your discussion of Inner Asia as a civilization? What excerpts from the literary monuments would you focus on and how would you frame them? How would you synthesize the scholarship we have read into your lectures? How will you incorporate debates within the field and revise established historical interpretations? Due at the end of the semester.

Discussion thread: 30 points

Final Paper: 60 points

Class Participation: 10 points

Class Participation, Ethics, and Etiquette:

The Remote format this semester will demand many changes and much flexibility. I am still learning and will be working with discussion threads, Zoom class meetings, brief Panopto presentations, office hours and many other tools to make this class as engaging as possible without face to face meetings. The class's success will depend on us all actively participating in these formats, in open conversation on how to address issues as they arise, and in going the extra mile to listen to fellow class participants. If it works, it will be a learning experience for all of us.

The class will be conducted with a mix of synchronous and asynchronous tools. All of the synchronous tools will also be taped, so that they can be accessed asynchronously as needed.

By the way, plagiarism STILL 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 must include 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.

Weekly Syllabus and Readings (these weekly readings will be divided in two for each with, with specific reading pages).

Week 1: August 27

Introduction to Inner Asia

Week 2: Sept. 6

Kyrgyz Turkic epic: *The Memorial Feast of Kökötöy* (excerpts from the *Manas* cycle)

Kalmyk Mongolian epic: Bougdaeva trans. *Jangar* (excerpts)

Week 3: Sept. 13

Tale of the Nisan Shamaness and Manchu Shamanism

Week 4: Sept. 20

Life of Milarepa; renunciation and monastic biography

Week 5: Sept. 27

Secret History of the Mongols

**** Fall Break ****

Week 6: Oct. 2, 4 ??

Secret History of the Mongols

Week 7: Oct. 11

Sasang Sechen's *Precious Chronicle*

Week 8: Oct. 18

Islamic historical tradition: Musa Sayrami's *Tarakh-i Hamidi*

Week 9: Oct. 25

Injannasi and the agony and opportunity of bicultural identity; the introductory essays to the *Blue Chronicle*

Week 10: Nov. 1

Inner Asian peoples and Chinese identity

Mark Elliot, "Hushuo"; Fried, "From Tribe to State in Ancient China"; Shao-yun Yang, "Their Lands are Peripheral and Their Qi is Blocked Up"

Week 11: Nov. 8

Tribute, Trade, and Silk Roads

John K. Fairbank, "Preliminary Framework," in *Chinese World Order*, pp. 12-19; Sixiang Wang, *Boundless Winds of Empire*, Introduction, chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 1-21, 129-71); Xin Wen, *The King's Road*, chapters 8 and 9 (pp. 201-60); Christopher Beckwith, "The Impact of the Horse and Silk Trade on the Economies of T'ang China and the Uighur Empire"; Thomas Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 1-17, 63-76

Week 12: Nov. 15

Week 11: Pastoralist society and the questions of "tribes"

David Sneath, *Headless State*; Lh. Munkh-Erdene, "Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From?"; Atwood, "Administrative Origins"; Atwood, "Banner, Otog, Thousand: Appanage Community"

Week 13: Nov. 20

Buddhism and the "Priest-Patron Relationship"

Debreczeny, "Faith and Empire: An Overview," Dunnell, "Hsia Origins of the Yüan Institution of Imperial Preceptor"; Oidtmann, *Forging the Golden Urn*, Intro and "Act III"; Uradyn E. Bulag, *Thirteenth Dalai Lama on the Run*, "Introduction"

Week 14: Nov. 27

Trans-border ties, modernization, and Border/Minority Nationalism

Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*, introduction and chapter 3; Atwood, "Inner Mongolian Nationalism in the 1920s"; Don Lopez, *Buddhism and Science*, chapter 3

Draft of final essay due: December 5 (Tuesday), 5 PM for discussion December 6 or 11.

Week 15: December 4, 6

Paper presentations, 20 minutes maximum, 10 minutes discussion;

Final Essay due: Dec. 19