

Fall 2025

EALC 8725: Topics in Song History – **Draft Version**

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Seminar meetings: Wednesdays, 5:15-8:15, in the Willoughby East Asia Seminar Room.
Office Hours: Mondays, 10-11am; Thursdays, 2-3pm; any day by appointment.

This seminar will introduce graduate students to current scholarship on the Song dynasty (960-1276). The course will proceed topically, with each week of the semester addressing one aspect of scholarship on Song history. Readings in English will combine classic works in the field and the most recent contributions, giving students a foundation in how historians have interpreted the Song period and introducing them to major debates within the field. No background in Chinese studies is required.

For the fall 2025 semester, we will focus our attention on recent major monographs in Song history, with some weeks devoted to important older works.

Students are required to attend class and to do the reading on time. Assigned readings present historical analyses in English, and the whole seminar is responsible for reading these in their entirety; supplemental readings may be assigned to individual participants to present to the seminar.

In addition to active, thoughtful, and informed participation in each week's seminar, there are two assignments:

1. Students will write a final paper. This may take the form of a literature review for a dissertation prospectus or for a grant proposal. The length will generally be about 10,000 words, but the exact details of format and length will be worked out individually with me. I am happy to discuss prospective paper topics with each of you over the course of the semester. A preliminary title and abstract are due on Sept. 24. An annotated bibliography will be Oct. 15. The final paper is due at the end of the semester, Dec. 18.
2. An essay or a combined essay and outline of about 2,500 words that applies the course material to three units of an undergraduate Chinese history survey course. How would you organize your discussion of the Song dynasty? 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, May 18.

Final grades will be calculated from: in-class performance (30%), final paper (45%), teaching essay (25%).

Students are expected to find and download their own copies of readings that are available electronically through the Penn Libraries. Skilled library use is an important element of our seminar. Other articles and book chapters I will post to our Canvas site. I will order electronic copies for as many of the assigned books as are commercially available. For others, it is important to plan ahead and order print copies through Borrow Direct, EZ Borrow, and Interlibrary Loan. **Important:** If you run into any trouble obtaining readings—or just have questions about library resources—please ask! I'm an information professional.

Note on romanization:

In order to present a well-rounded sense of the field and to include some classic scholarship, our readings employ two different systems for romanizing Chinese: the currently more common *pinyin* system and the older Wade-Giles system. It may take a little practice to move smoothly between the two, but you can do it! A convenient conversion table is here:

<https://www.eastasianlib.org/ctp/RomTable/Chipinyintowade.pdf>

Note on the use of artificial intelligence:

You may use generative artificial intelligence programs (for example, ChatGPT) in brainstorming and developing your ideas. Do note, though, that AI programs often produce inaccurate material and fabricated content. Moreover, the prose generated by AI is typically poor. Relying on such tools wastes a valuable opportunity to express yourself in developing and expressing an argument and will likely produce a low-quality result.

You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material. Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be addressed in accordance with relevant Penn policies.

Readings

Week 1, Aug 27: Introduction to the Course

Week 2, Sept. 3: The Tang-Song Transition

Read in the order: Hisayuki, Hartwell, von Glahn.

Robert M. Hartwell. "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 (1982): 365-442.

Miyakawa Hisayuki. "An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis and Its Effects on Japanese Studies of China." *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14 (1955): 533-52.

Richard von Glahn. "Imagining Pre-modern China." In *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Supplementary:

Naitō Konan 内藤湖南. "Gaikatsuteki Tō-Sō jidai kan" 概括的唐宋時代観. *Rekishi to chiri* 歴史と地理 9.5 (1922): 1-12.

Week 3, Sept. 10: **TBA.**

This week may require a schedule adjustment. But we can discuss the best approach together.

Week 4, Sept. 17: Song Government and Political Economy

Peter J. Golas. "The Sung Fiscal Administration." In *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 5 part 2, *Sung China, 960-1279*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, pp. 139-213. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Charles Hartman. "Sung Government and Politics." In *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 5 part 2, *Sung China, 960-1279*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, pp. 19-138. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Week 5, Sept. 24: Economic and Social Change. **Paper Title and Abstract Due.**

Robert Hymes. "Sung Society and Social Change." In *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 5 part 2, *Sung China, 960-1279*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, pp. 526-664. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Joseph P. McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu. "Economic Change in China, 960-1279." In *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 5 part 2, *Sung China, 960-1279*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, pp. 321-436. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Week 6, Oct. 1: The Localism Thesis

Robert Hymes. *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern And Southern Sung*. Cambridge University Press, 1986. **Selected Chapters.**

Sukhee Lee. *Negotiated Power: The State, Elites, and Local Governance in Twelfth- to Fourteenth-century China*. Harvard University Asia Center, 2014.

Week 7, Oct. 8: Localism Applied

Peter K. Bol. *Localizing Learning: The Literati Enterprise in Wuzhou, 1100-1600*. Harvard University Asia Center, 2022.

Week 8, Oct. 15: Song Publishing. **Paper Bibliography Due.**

Susan Cherniack. "Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54 (1994): 5-125.

Lucille Chia. *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Asia Center, 2002, **pages 65-146**.

Ronald Egan. "To Count Grains of Sand on the Ocean Floor: Changing Perceptions of Books and Learning in the Song dynasty." In *Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900-1400*, edited by Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd, pp. 33-62. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Joseph P. McDermott. "The Ascendance of the Imprint in China." In *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, pp. 55-104. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Week 9, Oct. 22: The Information Order in Song China

Hilde De Weerd. *Information, Territory, and Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015.

Week 10, Oct. 29: Writing History and the Song History Master Narrative

Charles Hartman. *The Making of Song Dynasty History: Sources and Narratives, 960-1279 CE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Week 11, Nov. 5: The Song State

Charles Hartman. *Structures of Governance in Song Dynasty China, 960-1279 CE*. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Week 12, Nov. 12: Travel in Song China

Cong Ellen Zhang. *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2011.

Week 13, Nov. 19: Song Cities

Christian de Pee. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in Middle-Period China, 800–1100 CE*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022. **Selected sections**.

Xin Wen. "The Song Rediscovery of Chang'an." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 53 (2024): 127-190.

Adjusted Schedule; No class Nov. 26

Week 14, Dec. 3: Song Literati and the Arts

Amy McNair. *The Painting Master's Shame: Liang Shicheng and the "Xuanhe Catalogue of Paintings."* Harvard University Asia Center, 2023.

Alternate week: Jeffrey Moser. *Nominal Things: Bronzes in the Making of Medieval China.* University of Chicago Press, 2023.

Fall Term Ends: Dec. 18. **Final Papers and Teaching Essays Due**