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EALC 3429/7429: Sex and Society in Ancient China

Ancient Chinese writers considered sexual activity to be an essential component of humanity, and the study of human sexuality to be essential to the study of human history. Sexuality constituted a fundamental source of imagery and categories that informed the classical Chinese conception of social, political, and military relationships. This course will survey the major sources dealing with sex and society in ancient China. There are no prerequisites, and no knowledge of Chinese is presumed. Graduate students may take the course as EALC 7429 and should see the instructor for additional course requirements.

N.b.: In a course on sex and society in ancient China, we will confront primary sources that may disturb you. There will be abundant examples of exploitation, sexism, and heteronormativity. Our purpose is not to promote such visions of sexuality, but to understand them.

There are five books required for this course:

EBREY, Patricia Buckley. *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. ISBN 978-0520081581.

GOLDIN, Paul Rakita. *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002. ISBN 978-0824824822.

van GULIK, R.H. *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1644 A.D.* Ed. Paul R. Goldin. Revised edition. Leiden: Brill, 2003. ISBN 978-9004126015.

KO, Dorothy. *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. ISBN 978-0520253902.

WILE, Douglas. *Art of the Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics Including Women's Solo Meditation Texts*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. ISBN 978-0791408865.

The requirements of the course are as follows:

(a) participation in all class meetings, Wednesdays, 3:30-6:30 P.M. (20%);

- (b) one short paper (ca. 1,250 words), due on February 28 (20%);
- (c) one in-class presentation of research (ca. 10 minutes), April 24 (20%);
- (d) one term paper (ca. 4,000 words), due on May 6 (40%).

WARNING: If you submit plagiarized work, you will fail the assignment, fail the course, and have your case forwarded to the Center for Community Standards and Accountability. No exceptions. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the instructor *before* submitting any work. See the university's Code of Academic Integrity at:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

Schedule of Meetings

- Jan. 24. Introduction: What This Class Is and What This Class Isn't.
No readings.
- Jan. 31. Twentieth-Century Studies of Sex in Traditional China.
Goldin, *The Culture of Sex*, 1-7; Goldin, "Introduction," in Van Gulik, xiii-xxv; Wile, 51-73.
- Feb. 7. Sexual Vampirism.
Goldin, handout; Van Gulik, 119-69; Wile, 77-113.
- Feb. 14. Sex and Society in the Shang and Chou Dynasties.
Goldin, *The Culture of Sex*, 8-74; Van Gulik, 3-51.
- Feb. 21. Sex and Society in the Han Dynasty and Period of Disunion.
Goldin, *The Culture of Sex*, 75-122; Van Gulik, 55-115.
- Feb. 28. Sex and Society in the T'ang and Sung Dynasties.
SHORT PAPER DUE.
Van Gulik, 170-242.
- March 6. NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
- March 13. Marriage and Separation of the Sexes in the Sung Dynasty.
Ebrey, 21-98.
- March 20. Women as Wives and Mothers.
Ebrey, 99-187.
- March 27. Widowhood, Remarriage, Concubinage, Adultery, Incest, Divorce.
Ebrey, 188-271.
- April 3. Footbinding: Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Objections.
Ko, 9-106.
- April 10. The Origin and Culture of Footbinding.
Ko, 109-229.
- April 17. The Heyday of Chinese Pornography.
Van Gulik, 263-336.
- April 24. Student presentations.