

**HSTR 240: East Asian Civ(ilization[s]?)**  
TR 2:00-3:20, Rankin 202

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Office hours: Liberal Arts 263  
W 12:00-2:00 *and by appointment*

## Course Description

Is there an “East Asia?” Why do people think about China, Japan, and Korea as part of a coherent region? How do scholars study the diverse cultures, societies, and states of East Asia?

This course is an introduction to East Asia and to the field of East Asian Studies. Students will build a foundational knowledge of the history and geography of China, Japan, Korea, and greater East Asia. They will learn to look at Asia in different ways, not only through history, but through approaches from literature, religious studies, political economy, and beyond.

We will learn to interrogate big questions (such as “What is a region?”) in a serious and critical manner. We will develop an appreciation for the diversity and richness of East Asian cultures and societies both in space and in time. Students new to East Asia will acquire a foundational knowledge of the region’s history. Students with a background in one East Asian country will build on their knowledge and contextualize it in a new way.

This course is an opportunity to work on your critical reading and writing skills. Much of your dialogue with me will take place on the page, and so it is important that you read comments on the work that I hand back to you. Be sure to engage actively with the readings, with a pen or pencil in hand to take notes in the margins, and to be prepared to make direct reference to those sources in class.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 甲. Identify critical events, figures, and phenomena and define their significance in the history of East Asia
- 乙. Critically analyze the notion of “Asia” and similar concepts of centrality, regionality, and groupness that emerged historically in East Asia

## Required Readings

There is one required textbook: Charles Holcombe, *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). “Holcombe” for short.

All other materials will be posted on the course’s Moodle site. They will be under sections labeled “Week One,” “Week Two,” etc.

You must prepare all of these readings before Tuesday’s class. We will discuss them all over the course of the week.

## Assignments and Evaluation

In theory, you can earn up to 118 points in this course by doing the assignments outlined below.

While there are 118 available points, your final grade is still calculated as Your Points/100. Therefore, 90 points is still an A-, 89 is still a B+, 75 is still a C, etc.

The purpose of this grading scheme is to give you and me some flexibility in how you complete the course. For you, this is a chance to choose your path through the material. If something happens in your life and you end up missing an assignment, you will have a chance to catch up. For me, rather than create makeup assignments on an *ad hoc* basis, or keep track of dozens of exceptions, I can simply count the total points you have completed.

### *Participation (1 pts/meeting, 25 pts possible)*

Each time we meet as a class, you have the opportunity to earn points by speaking up and joining the conversation. The classroom is ideally a place to think out loud, listen to others, and respond. Not everyone is comfortable doing that. However, it will benefit you to learn. I hope that you feel safe and happy to talk in class.

As incentive, you will receive 1 point for each class meeting in which you participate actively in discussion. That will add up to 25 possible points.

Active participation means adding your voice to a productive discussion.

My criteria for good participation are these: excellent participation means listening to your classmates and engaging with what they say – either through substantive disagreement or by significantly building on it. To be able to do so, you must come to class prepared, both in the sense of having done your homework and in the sense of being ready to discuss. We will frequently break into small groups, in which your participation is even more important. An excellent class participant does the work.

Perhaps most importantly, excellent participation means asking questions. Good questions may certainly begin with, “I’m so confused. What does it mean when it says...” The first step to wisdom is acknowledging what you don’t know.

It will benefit you to print out copies of your readings, take notes by hand on these physical copies, and then bring them to class.

### *Come to Office Hours (3 pts)*

Early in the semester, schedule a time to meet with me for 15-30 minutes, so that we can talk about your interests. If you are shy in class, this is a good way to become more comfortable with speaking. It will also help me understand what you need from the course.

### *Quizzes (1 pt each, 5 pts total)*

We will have occasional quizzes. They are arranged purposefully, so as to help you structure your knowledge. See the semester schedule.

### *Timeline Chart (5 pts)*

Our course will focus on history in the *longue durée* – that is, we will examine long-term change on a grand scale. Near the end of the semester, you will be in a position to look back on this epic story. Find a way to present it in a single chart, diagram, or image. Bring this chart to class on April 17.

### *Three Essays (10 pts each, 30 pts total)*

You will write three essays for this class. Each should be about **1,000 words in length**. Each will follow the conclusion of one of the course’s “parts.” I will provide you with three prompts, of which you may choose one. The prompt will ask you to synthesize what you have learned during the preceding “part” and give you the opportunity to relate your conclusions back to the previous “part.”

Each essay must consist of an argument supported by textual evidence. You may draw on your primary source readings and on our related discussions in class.

I advise you to write concisely. 1,000 words is about four pages of double-spaced text. In order to help you do so, I will ask you to turn in a draft of the first essay one week before its due date. The comments on this draft are meant to help you do the best job you can going forward.

See the due dates in the schedule. The essays must be uploaded as files to the drop boxes on the Moodle site.

**Note: I cannot open .pages files. DO NOT submit .pages files. The two best formats to use are .docx/.doc or .pdf.**

### *Text and Object Analysis Exercises (“Gobbets”) (2 pts each, 20 pts total)*

I will frequently present you with 1. a piece of text or 2. an artifact. Most of the time, the text or artifact will be familiar from your reading, but sometimes not. Your task is to spend a few minutes working out 1. what the text is and 2. why it is significant, and 3. putting it in its historical context. In other words, you will relate the thing you see in front of you to the homework you did the previous night, and ideally to anything else of relevance that you have learned. We call this a “gobbet.”

The goals of this task are 1. to learn history not as a series of facts, but as a variety of contexts, and 2. to become confident in applying the historical method. When we do gobbets, we are not just spitting out what we read – we are applying it, and thus learning and reinforcing it. Our gobbet exercises will take place at the beginning of class time, and they will open up our conversation for the rest of the meeting.

At first, many of these exercises will be done together or in small groups. Sometimes, I will ask you to do them quietly at the beginning of class, and then send them to a special e-mail address, so that we can look at our answers together and talk about how to improve.

About every other week, we will tackle gobbets for grades. (This is the 20 pts.) You will have 15 minutes to read the passage and write up to 300 words discussing, in very concise language, 1. what it is and 2. why it is important. You will turn these in on paper or electronically, and then we will proceed as normal. I will grade, comment on, and return them.

### *Midterm (10 pts)*

The written component consists of one “gobbet” to be completed in a 15-minute period at the end of class on March 1. You will not have seen the text or object in class before, but it may have been in your homework. You may choose one of three gobbets.

### *Final (20 pts)*

The course also has a written final exam. The written component consists of two “gobbets.” You will not have seen the text or object in class before, but it may have been in your homework. You may choose two out of four gobbets.

We will hold the final exam in a 30-minute period at the end of class on May 1.

## Schedule of Meetings, Topics, and Readings

Apart from the textbook readings, there will be **related readings posted on the Moodle site**. You must do all of the readings.

### Part I: The Rise of the Sinocentric World Order

Week 1: The Basics; Orientalism (Jan 23, 25)

- ❖ Countries and languages
- ❖ Holcombe, “Introduction: What Is East Asia?”
- ❖ **Syllabus Quiz** due at 5:00 PM on Friday January 26. The **Syllabus Quiz** is on the Moodle!

Week 2: Texts and Artifacts (Jan 30, Feb 1)

- ❖ **Quiz 1: Regions and Languages.** Be prepared to identify and label the regions and major geographical features of East Asia on a blank map, and to identify modern Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese writing.
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 1, “The Origins of Civilization in East Asia”

Week 3: China’s Axial Age (Feb 6, 8)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 2, “The Formative Era”

Week 4: Early Korea and Japan; the Emergence of East Asian Buddhism (Feb 13, 15)

- ❖ **Quiz 2: Timeline Quiz: major dynasties through the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE**
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 3, “The Age of Cosmopolitanism”

Week 5: A China-Centered World (Feb 20, 22)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 4, “The Creation of a Community: China, Korea, and Japan (7th-10th Centuries)”
- ❖ **February 23: Essay 1 Draft due by 8:00 PM (drop box on the Moodle)**

### Part II: Competing Imperial Formations

Week 6: East Asia/Inner Asia; the Mongol Empire (Feb 27, March 1)

- ❖ **Quiz 3: Timeline Quiz: major dynasties 13<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries CE**
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 5, “Mature Independent Trajectories (10th-16th Centuries)”
- ❖ **March 2: Essay 1 Due by 8:00 PM (drop box on the Moodle)**

Week 7: The Gunpowder Age (March 6, 8)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 6, “Early-Modern East Asia (16th-18th Centuries)”
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 7, “Dai Viet (Vietnam Before the Nineteenth Century)”

Week 8: The World Turned Upside-Down (March 13, 15)

- ❖ **Quiz 4: Countries and major cities**
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 8, “The Nineteenth-Century Encounter of Civilizations”

Week 9: East Asia Realigns (March 20, 22)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 9, “The Age of Westernization (1900-1929)”

Week 10: Empires of Free Nations (April 3, 5)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 10, “The Dark Valley (1930-1945)”
- ❖ **April 6: Essay 2 Due by 8:00 PM (drop box on Moodle)**

### Part III: Modern East Asia

Week 11: Economic Miracle (April 10, 12)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 11, “Japan Since 1945”

Week 12: Wealth and Power (April 17, 19)

- ❖ **Timeline Chart: Bring to class on April 17**
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 14, “China Since 1945”

Week 13: American Empire (April 24, 26)

- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 12, “Korea Since 1945”
- ❖ Holcombe, Ch. 13, “Vietnam Since 1945”

Week 14: Orientalism Revisited (May 1, 3)

- ❖ Holcombe, “Afterword”
- ❖ **May 4: Essay 3 Due by 8:00 PM (drop box on Moodle)**

## About Writing

### Chinese Names

**Chinese names in China are not like European names. In Chinese names, the surname comes first. Therefore, Deng Xiaoping is Mr. Deng, NOT Mr. Xiaoping.**

Sometimes there are exceptions. If a book or article is in English, the name might be reversed: Deng Xiaoping might be rendered as “Xiaoping Deng.” In this case, the surname is still Deng.

### Writing Well

*Most of this section was originally written by Prof. Maggie Greene of Montana State University. It is used with her permission.*

When you write your exams or your papers, I want to know **what you think**, and I want you to **support your argument using appropriate sources**.

**SOURCES:** While you may cite lecture notes and other materials, the bulk of your writing must be centered on primary and *appropriate* secondary sources. The point of the paper is not to rehash the sources, but to use them to argue convincingly for your thesis. **DO NOT** write the equivalent of an encyclopedia entry. **DO NOT** quote excessively. **DO NOT use block quotes.** Excessive quotation will be penalized. **You should be paraphrasing and using direct quotations sparingly. I want to see your writing and ideas, not how well you can copy quotations.** Likewise, I want to see how you make use of the sources, not how well you can summarize them. Stay off the internet. The point of the paper is not to provide an event-by-event rehashing of the history, but to show how

you are engaging with sources and using them to discuss some aspect of the history we've discussed this semester.

**CITATIONS:** Papers MUST be properly cited. You must cite any and all material you are using, even if you are simply paraphrasing. Papers with poor citation practices will be penalized heavily. If you turn in a paper with poor citations, you will be unable to achieve more than C+.

**Citations MUST be formatted according to the “notes and bibliography” format presented in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which is the standard in most history writing. A very simple, straightforward citation guide can be found here:**

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

Here is an example of a correct citation of a book.<sup>1</sup> This is how you cite a book the first time. Notice a few things: 1. the book title is in *italics*, NOT “quotes.” 2. Each element is connected with a comma (,), NOT a period (.). 3. The author’s name is not reversed – “Zadie Smith,” NOT “Smith, Zadie.” 4. The citation includes page numbers, without which I could never find your reference in the text.

Here is an example of how you cite the same book the *second* time, and each time thereafter.<sup>2</sup> Note: 1. Only the author’s surname is included. 2. Each element is connected with a comma (,), NOT a period (.).

Here is how you would cite an article in a journal or other periodical.<sup>3</sup> There’s all sorts of funny things happening here: look at the placement of that colon (!) This citation tells us that you are citing page 170 of Susan Satterfield’s article “Livy and the *Pax Deum*” in the journal *Classical Philology*, volume 111, number 2. If you cite it a second time, this is how you would do it.<sup>4</sup> Note that the titles of journal articles are in “quotes,” NOT *italics*.

Many students are confused about how to cite two sources at the same time. You just use one note and join the citations together with a semicolon (;).<sup>5</sup>

**Incorrect citation formats will reduce your grade significantly.**

**OVERCITE:** If it’s not your original thought in any way (even if you’re just echoing someone else’s ideas or knowledge) put the name in the body of the paper AND cite at the end of EACH sentence – better too many citations than too few. If you look at a paragraph and have no citations, something is wrong.

### Evaluation Rubric

All of your writing will be evaluated according to a strict rubric, is posted on the course site. Your grades are not subjective. When I return your work, it will be accompanied by a copy of this rubric and specific notes on why your writing earned the grade it did.

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<sup>1</sup> Zadie Smith, *Swing Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 315–16.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *Swing Time*, 202.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Satterfield, “Livy and the *Pax Deum*,” *Classical Philology* 111, no. 2 (April 2016): 170.

<sup>4</sup> Satterfield, “Livy,” 172–73.

<sup>5</sup> Satterfield, “Livy,” 180; Smith, *Swing Time*, 56.

Yay, you're reading the syllabus!

Email me a picture of a dog for extra credit.

## Policies

### Office Hours and Meetings

I will do my best to be available to meet with you. If you cannot attend my office hours, let me know, and we can arrange a different time to meet.

If you make an appointment for a given time, I expect you to be there at that time. An appointment at 2:30 means you will come to my office at 2:30. If you come late, we may not have enough time to talk.

### Your Feedback

Your feedback is important to me. You will have three opportunities to answer *totally anonymous* online surveys about our course. The results of these surveys will help me shape the class and, if necessary, make changes to it.

### Attendance Policy

If you miss a quiz a mandatory graded activity, you must arrange with me a reasonable way to make up the work.

### Policy on Late Work

For every 24 hours an assignment is late, its grade will fall by one letter grade, ex. A to A-, B+ to B, C- to D+, etc. These assignments may be optional – the deadlines are not.

### Policy on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code:

([http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)).

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as “Representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own.” When I ask you a question, it may be tempting to look up the answer online, copy it, and alter a few words to make it sound like your own thoughts. If you do so, you will betray your own education. I am invested in you as a student – I want you to learn this material, and to become a better thinker. Because plagiarism harms your development, I will discourage it: in the first instance of plagiarism, the assignment in question will receive a grade of 0 with no chance for revision. In the second instance, we will pursue the matter through established university disciplinary procedures.

**Note:** Let us say, for example, that you turn in a paper. When I read the paper, it becomes immediately apparent that the entire thing has been copied from a website. To be fair, you did cite the website, and you did rephrase some parts of it. Nevertheless, none of the ideas are yours, and neither are most of the words. You have shown me someone else’s work, jumbled it around a little, and pretended that it is “yours.” This is still plagiarism. This is still representing another person’s ideas, words, data, or materials as your own.

### Statement on Accommodations

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or at (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide and appropriate modification.