

HIST 387 (001): Early (Ancient) China

Professor Michael Chang
 Horizon Hall 3151
 Virtual office hrs on Zoom by appt

Course time and location:
 10:30-11:45 am ET on Mondays and Wednesdays
 Krug Hall 210

Course Description: This course explores the historical formation of “Chinese civilization” from the Neolithic era (c. 10,000-2,000 BCE) through the Han empire (c. 206 BCE-220 CE). Although primarily intended to help students gain a fuller understanding of the political, socio-economic, and cultural changes in early China, the focus of the course will be on the emergence of a distinct Chinese “civilization” through the establishment of political (state) authority; the exploration of classical schools of philosophical thought; and the formation of China’s earliest empires—under the Qin and Han dynasties. By emphasizing dynamic historical processes of change over time as seen in both material (archaeological) evidence and textual records, this course will complicate the stereotypical notion of a monolithic and unchanging “ancient China.”

Required Texts:

1. *John S. Major and Constance A. Cook, *Ancient China: A History*. Routledge, 2017. [hereafter *AC*].
2. Bryan Van Norden. *Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy* [hereafter *ICCP*]. Hackett, 2011.
3. P. J. Ivanhoe & Bryan Van Norden. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* [hereafter *RCCP*]. 2nd ed. Hackett, 2005.
4. *Brian Lander. *The King’s Harvest: A Political Ecology of China from the First Farmers to the First Empire*. Yale, 2021.

Note: Titles (above) and readings in the course schedule (below) marked by a **single blue asterisk (*)** are accessible online through the Blackboard course site or the University Libraries catalog (JSTOR, HathiTrust, etc.). <http://library.gmu.edu/>

All required titles listed above are available for online purchase at the campus bookstore (Barnes & Noble).

Used copies may also be found on <http://bookfinder.com>

Requirements & Grading: Students must demonstrate serious engagement with *every* requirement in order to pass the course. The instructor reserves the final right to determine what constitutes “serious engagement.” **Note:** *Calculations of cumulative course grades that appear in Blackboard are not necessarily correctly “weighted” and thus do not accurately reflect one’s overall standing in the course. If you would like to know your overall course grade at any point in the semester, please contact the instructor via e-mail.*

1. Participation (25%): Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to be prepared. This means finishing assigned readings before coming to class. The quality of your verbal contributions both in class and online will be taken as indicators of engagement and participation. All opportunities to earn “extra credit” will count towards your participation grade.

2. In-class Chronology Quiz (5%): A study guide and detailed instructions will be provided. The quiz will be taken at the beginning of class on **Mon. 8/29/2022**.

3. Online Exercises (24%): Students are responsible for completing **eight (8) online exercises (on Blackboard)**. **For exact due dates, see the Course Schedule below**. Each exercise will count as 3% of your overall course grade. More detailed instructions may be found in the Weekly Folders on the Blackboard course site.

4. Short Paper (21%): Students are required to complete **a short (5-8 pg.) paper due (via Blackboard) on Fri. 11/4/2022**. Detailed instructions available on Blackboard.

5. Final Exam (25%): essays due via Blackboard **by 12:00 pm (noon) ET, Wed. 12/7/2022**. *No late work accepted.*

Grading Scale:

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	59 and below	F
94-96	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D		
90-93	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-		

Course Policies, Reminders, and Helpful Tips

a) Basic technology requirements: This is face-to-face course. However, asynchronous work will take place primarily on Blackboard, while live (in-person) classes will meet twice weekly on MW (and, if necessary, on the Zoom platform). For more details please see “What Technologies Do I Need?” on the “Start Here: Welcome” page of the Blackboard course site.

b) Class absences: Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course. In the event that you must miss class, you are responsible for the contents of the lecture or discussion. **Students are expected to come to class on time.** Late arrivals are disruptive, and late-comers may miss important information.

c) Cell phones and laptop computers: During class all phones must be switched off and put away. Neither students nor instructors should compose, read, or respond to text messages during class. Students who wish to use a laptop computer for note-taking are welcome to do so. However, students who use laptops for purposes other than taking notes (i.e., email, instant messaging, internet browsing unrelated to the course) will be asked to leave and will no longer be permitted to use a computer in class. Violation of these policies will result in a significant reduction in your course participation grade.

d) Submission of written work: All written work is due at the time(s) and on the day(s) indicated on the syllabus. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in a 12-point font. Your name should be on the paper, and all pages should be numbered. You should retain electronic copies of all written work, and your instructor may ask for an electronic copy of your paper in order to use it as an example in teaching or to submit to a plagiarism detection site like Turnitin.com.

e) Late policy: All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. Late work will be penalized **ONE FULL LETTER GRADE (10 pts.) per day (including weekends & holidays)**. The only exceptions will be when you have explicit, advance permission from your instructor. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you must contact your instructor for how to submit late work. Late assignments will not be considered as “received” until a copy is in the instructor’s hands. **No late work will be accepted for the final assignment.**

f) Plagiarism: Don’t do it. It’s easy to spot & can result in expulsion from the University and loss of degree. **What is plagiarism?** As noted by the American Historical Association (AHA), “Writers plagiarize... when they fail to use quotation marks around borrowed material and to cite the source, use an inadequate paraphrase that makes only superficial changes to a text, or neglect to cite the source of a paraphrase.” For details see pgs. 3-4 of this document: http://www.historians.org/Documents/Plagiarism/Curriculum_Plagiarism.pdf If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or about when or how to properly cite a source, talk to your instructor before you write!

g) Academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented condition that warrants academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. **All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS** (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>). Additional support may be obtained through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

h) Recording and distribution of class materials: Any audio or visual recording by students of class meetings, lectures, discussions or other class activities is allowed only under terms and conditions as approved by George Mason University’s Office of Disability Services (ODS). If you are entitled to audio or visual recording through ODS, please communicate with me before any recording occurs. The results of a recording may only be used for personal use, unless I authorize use by other students in the course. Recordings and course material may not be reproduced or exchanged or distributed. At the end of the semester, you are required to destroy any recordings made in this course.

i) Electronic communication. It is best to contact me at mchang5[at]gmu[dot]edu. I usually check email during normal business hours, namely M-F, 9 am-5 pm. Please allow 24-48 hours for a reply to an email request or inquiry (excluding weekends). Please sure to indicate your course number in your email subject line and include both your first and last name in your signature. For general advice on the best way to communicate via email, see: <http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>

j) Academic integrity: All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code (<http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>) All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

k) Administrative deadlines

Last day to add classes: Mon. 8/29/2022

Last day to drop (w/no tuition penalty): Tue. 9/6/2022

l) Final disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements of changes will be made online and during class meetings. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 00 (Thu. 8/18/2022 – Sat. 8/20/2022): Course Orientation

Read: “Start Here: Welcome” and “Syllabus” pages on Blackboard course site

Do: **Check** basic tech set-up, **activate** your Zoom Basic account, and **verify** access to required books

Week 01 (Sun. 8/21/2022 – Sat. 8/27/2022): Course Introduction and Language, Geography, and Climate

Read: *Ancient China* [hereafter *AC*], Chapter 1 (1-9) and Chapter 2 (10-27)

Do: **Post** a self-introduction to “HIST 387-001 Self Introductions” forum (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Mon. 8/22/2022**

Online Exercise #1: *Ancient China*, Chapter 1

Post responses to “Online Exercise #1” forum (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 8/23/2022**

Study for the Chronology Quiz (see Chronology Quiz Study Guide on Blackboard)

Attend: [class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 8/22/2022](#)

[class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 8/24/2022](#)

Week 02 (Sun. 8/28/2022 – Sat. 9/3/2022): The Neolithic Era and the Early Bronze Age (Erlitou)

Read: *AC*, Chapter 3 (28-57) and Chapter 4 (58-74)

Do: **Online Exercise #2:** *Ancient China*, Chapters 3-4

Post responses to “Online Exercise #2” forum (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 8/30/2022**

Study for the Chronology Quiz (see Chronology Quiz Study Guide on Blackboard)

Attend: [class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 8/29/2022](#)

IN-CLASS CHRONOLOGY QUIZ (see Study Guide on Blackboard)

[class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 8/31/2022](#)

Week 03 (Sun. 9/4/2022 – Sat. 9/10/2022): The Shang Dynasty

Read: *AC*, Chapter 5 (75-98); and *"Shang Dynasty Oracle-Bone Inscriptions" (.pdf on Blackboard)

Attend: **LABOR DAY—NO CLASS on Mon. 9/5/2022**

[class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 9/7/2022](#)

Week 04 (Sun. 9/11/2022 – Sat. 9/17/2022): Shang Neighbors and the Zhou Conquest and Rule

Read: *AC*, Chapter 6 (99-124); and *"Shang and Zhou Ritual Bronze Inscriptions" (.pdf on Blackboard)

Attend: [class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 9/12/2022](#)

[class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 9/14/2022](#)

Week 05 (Sun. 9/18/2022 – Sat. 9/24/2022): Decline of the (Western) Zhou

Read: *AC*, Chapter 7 (125-145) and Chapter 8 (146-178)

Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy [hereafter *ICCP*], Preface (XI-XII) and Chapter 1 (1-15)

Do: **Online Exercise #3:** *ICCP*, Chapter 1

Post responses to “Online Exercise #3” forum (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 9/20/2022**

Attend: [class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 9/19/2022](#)

NO CLASS on Wed. 9/21/2022 – work on assigned readings

Week 06 (Sun. 9/25/2022 – Sat. 10/1/2022): The Eastern Zhou—the Spring & Autumn and Warring States Periods

Read: Guidelines for Short Paper (on Warring States philosophies)

Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy [hereafter *RCCP*], Preface (VII-VIII) and Introduction (XI-XVII)

ICCP, Chapter 2 (17-32), Chapter 3 (33-47), and Chapter 6 (83-100).

Attend: [class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 9/26/2022](#)

[class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 9/28/2022](#)

Week 07 (Sun. 10/2/2022– Sat. 10/8/2022): Kongzi (Confucius) and Mengzi (Mencius)

Read: *ICCP*, Appendix A (223-233);

RCCP, Chapter 1 (1-28 [up to Book Ten], 31-41 [Book Fourteen, through 14.12], and 44-47 [Book Fifteen]); and Chapter 3 (115-125 [Intro and Book One], 129-136 [2A6 - 3B2], 138-139 [4A17 - 4B12], 144-145 [6A1 - 6A2], 147-148 [6A6], 149-151 [6A8 - 6A15], and 152 [7A15])

Do: **Online Exercise #4:** Kongzi and Mengzi

Post quotations and questions for “Online Exercise #4” (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 10/4/2022**

Attend: [class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 10/3/2022](#)

[class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 10/5/2022](#)

Week 08 (Sun. 10/9/2022 – Sat. 10/15/2022): The *Daodejing* (Laozi)**Read:** *ICCP*, Chapter 8 (121-139)*RCCP*, Chapter 4 (161-203 [the *Daodejing*])**Do:** **Online Exercise #5:** The *Daodejing***Post** quotation and questions for “Online Exercise #5” (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 10/11/2022****Attend:** class meeting at **10:30 am ET, Tue. 10/11/2022** [Mon 10/10 classes meet on Tue 10/11 due to Columbus Day]

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 10/12/2022

Week 09 (Sun. 10/16/2022 – Sat. 10/22/2022): Xunzi**Read:** *ICCP*, Chapter 10 (161-183)*RCCP*, Chapter 6 (255-286 [to Chapter Twenty-One] and 298-307 [Chapter Twenty-Three - Chapter Twenty-Nine]).**Do:** **Online Exercise #6:** Xunzi**Post** quotation and questions for “Online Exercise #6” (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 10/18/2022****Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 10/17/2022

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 10/19/2022

Week 10 (Sun. 10/23/2022 – Sat. 10/29/2022): Han Feizi**Read:** *ICCP*, Chapter 11 (185-199)*RCCP*, Chapter 7 (311-359)**Do:** **Online Exercise #7:** Han Feizi**Post** quotation and questions for “Online Exercise #7” (Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 10/25/2022****Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 10/24/2022

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 10/26/2022

Week 11 (Sun. 10/30/2022 – Sat. 11/5/2022): Warring States Debate and the Rise of the Qin Dynasty**Read:** Guidelines for Short Paper (on Warring States philosophies) and prepare for in-class debate on Mon. 10/31/2022**Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 10/31/2022 **IN-CLASS DEBATE** (see Weekly Folder on Blackboard for details)

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 11/2/2022

Do: **Submit Short Paper** on Warring States philosophies (via Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Fri. 11/4/2022****Week 12 (Sun. 11/6/2022 – Sat. 11/12/2022): The Qin Conquest and Collapse****Read:** *The King's Harvest*, Introduction (1-13), Chapter 1 (14-31), Chapter 2 (32-73), and Chapter 3 (74-113)**Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 11/7/2022

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 11/9/2022

Week 13 (Sun. 11/13/2022 – Sat. 11/19/2022): The Western (Former) Han Dynasty**Read:** *The King's Harvest*, Chapter 4 (114-153), Chapter 5 (154-189), Chapter 6 (190-200), and Epilogue (201-204).*AC*, Chapter 9 (179-196)**Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 11/14/2022

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 11/16/2022

Week 14 (Sun. 11/20/2022 – Sat. 11/26/2022): The Eastern (Latter) Han Dynasty**Read:** *AC*, Chapter 10 (197-231) and Chapter 11 (232-248)**Guidelines for Final Exam****Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 11/21/2022**THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS on Wed. 11/23/2022****Week 15 (Sun. 11/27/2022 – Sat. 12/3/2022): Wrap-Up and Review****Read:** **Guidelines for Final Exam***AC*, Chapter 12 (249-270)**Do:** **Online Exercise #8:** draft thesis for Final Exam (Part A)**Post** “draft thesis statement” for Final Exam (Part A) **by 11:59 pm ET, Sun. 11/27/2022****Extra credit:** Provide feedback on a classmate’s thesis statement **by 11:59 pm ET, Tue. 11/29/2022****Attend:** class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Mon. 11/28/2022

class meeting at 10:30 am ET, Wed. 11/30/2022

Exam Period (Wed. 12/7/2022 – Wed. 12/14/2022)**Do:** **Submit Final Exam** (via Blackboard) **by 11:59 pm ET, Wed. 12/7/2022. No late work accepted for final exam.**