**Fall 2014 Chinese Empire and Literature**

COLT 0610T I hour

Tue/Thur 10:30 am - 11:50 am Alumnae Hall 212

Professor Tamara Chin

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12.30-2.30pm

Email: tamara\_chin@brown.edu

This course explores ancient and modern approaches to empire and imperialism, focusing on the case of premodern China. We will explore different literary and visual genres from the Qin (221-206 BCE) through Tang (618-907 CE) empires and their reception in later Chinese and global contexts. Readings include China’s most famous work of historical literature, Sima Qian’s *Shiji*; poems, essays, tomb sculptures, novels, representations of Chinese empire in contemporary films; as well as critical essays on empire, colonization, sinicization, and cross-cultural heritage.

WEEK 1

Sept 4 Introduction: The Afterlives of Empire(s)

WEEK 2

Sept 9 Franz Kafka, *The Great Wall of China*

Valerie Hansen, “Introduction” in *The Open Empire*, pp. 3-14

**I Narrating Empire, Imperialism, Anti-Imperialism**

Sept 11 Hansen, “The Creation of Empire (221. B.C. – A.D. 200),” pp. 97-149

Sima Qian [=*Ssu-ma Chi’en*], “Shih Chi [=Shiji] 130: The Postface of the

Grand Historian.”

Sima Qian, “Letter in reply to Ren An,” pp. 136-142.

WEEK 3

Sept 16 Sima Qian, “Basic Annals of The Five Emperors” (Shiji 1)

Sima Qian, “The First Emperor of Chin”

Lothar Ledderose, “A Magic Army for the Emperor”

Sept 18 Erich Auerbach, Erich, “Odysseus’ Scar,” pp.3-23

WEEK 4

Sept 23 Sima Qian, “The Assassins”

Film: Hero (dir. Zhang Yimou, 2002, 99 mins)

Sept 25 Sima Qian, “Basic Annals of the Empress Dowager Lü”

Sima Qian, “Biographies of the Emperors’ Male Favorites”

Recommended: Sima Qian, “Hereditary Houses of Families Related to the Emperors by Marriage”

WEEK 5

Sept 30 Cai Wenji (c. 200 CE), “Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute”

Anon (18th-19th c. ballad), “Weeping at the Wall” 47-60

Sima Qian, “Account of the Xiongnu” (excerpt)

Oct 2 Michael Dietler, “The Cup of Gyptis: Introduction to a Colonial

Encounter,” 1-26

Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, 1-22

WEEK 6

Oct 7 Watch any one of these:

Film: The Emperor and the Assassin (Chen Kaige, 1998, 162 mins)

Opera: Tan Dun’s The First Emperor (dir. Zhang Yimou, 2006, 176 mins)

Alexander (dir. Oliver Stone, 2004, 214 mins)

Jodhaa Akbar (dir. Ashutosh Gowariker, 2008, 214 mins)

Oct 9 **\*IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS\***

**II Poetics of Empire**

WEEK 7

Oct 14 W. Idema & B Grant, “Women on and Behind the Throne” (focus on

“Precepts for my Daughters” pp. 36-42”

Yu-shih Chen, “The Historical Template of Pan Chao’s Nü-chieh,”

*T’oung Pao* 82 (1996): pp. 229-57

Michael Nylan, “Notes on a Case of Illicit Sex from Zhangjiashan: A

Translation and Commentary.” 25-45

Oct 16 Sima Qian, “Biography of Sima Xiangru,” 259-307

David Knechtges, “Fu poetry: An ancient-style rhapsody (gufu).”

Wu Hung, “Emperor Wu’s Fictional Garden” 165-176

WEEK 8

Oct 21 Ban Gu, “Rhapsody on Two Capitals”

Ban Zhao, “Rhapsody on an Ostrich” from W. Idema, “Women on and

Behind the Throne,” pp. 27-28

Anthony Barbieri-Low, “Knock-offs and Jingles” from Artisans in Early

Imperial China, pp. 142-152

Oct 23 Emperor Tang Taizong (r. 626-49), “Rhapsody on Daming Palace”

Hansen, “China’s Golden Age (589-755), pp.191-219

Recommended: Jack Chen, “Palatial Form and the Rhapsodic Imagination”

**III Words and Things**

WEEK 9

Oct 28 Hansen, “China’s Religious Landscape (A.D. 200-600), pp. 151-189

John Kieschnick, “Introduction.” From *The Impact of Buddhism on*

*Chinese Material Culture*, pp. 1-23.

Oct 30 Sengyou (445-518), “A Record of Similarities and Differences in

Pronunciation and Meaning When Translating Scriptures from Western Languages to Chinese” in Daniel Boucher, “Buddhism and Language in Early Medieval China,” pp. 265-269

Lydia Liu, “Writing,” pp. 310-326.

WEEK 10

Nov 4 Yang, Hsüan-chih [=Yang Xuanzhi], “Preface to the Lo-yang ch’ieh-lan

chih” and Chapter 5: Northern Suburbs.” From *A Record of*

*Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang*, pp. 3-12, 211-248.

Nov 6 Han Yu (768-824 CE), “Memorial on the Relic of the Buddha” in

“Buddhism and Indigenous Chinese Culture,” pp. 355-358; Han Yu “The Original Way,” pp. 359-362

Mark Elliott, “*Hushuo*: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han

Chinese,” pp. 173-190

**IV Imperial Transactions**

WEEK 11

Nov 11 David Graeber, “Exchange”

Nov 13 Sima Qian, “Treatise on the Balanced Standard”

Lü Bao, “On the Money God” (c. 3rd c. CE)

Recommended: Sima Qian, “The Biography of Money-makers”

WEEK 12

Nov 18 Janet Abu-Lughod, “One World System or a Succession of Systems?”

Recommended: Hansen, “Coming to Terms with Money”

Nov 20 Anon (18th c.), *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*

WEEK 13

Nov 25 Anon (18th c.), *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*

Nov 27 THANKSGIVING

WEEK 14

Dec 2 Film: *Chinese Zodiac* (dir. Jackie Chan, 2012, 123 mins)

James Hevia, “Looting Beijing, 1860, 1900” pp 192-213.

Recommended: James Hevia, “The Return of the Repressed,

Recirculations, and Chinese Patriotism.” pp. 316-345.

Dec 4 NO CLASS

Extra Office Hours to schedule individually

Email final paper to me by December 12, 5pm

**Requirements and grading**

20%: Class attendance and regular participation

50%: Ten weekly responses/discussion on Canvas (due by 8am before class)

10%: In-class presentation (Oct 9)

20%: Final paper (7-10pp) due December 12, 5pm (email to me)

**To purchase:**

Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire* (W.W. Norton & Co, 2000)

Anonymous, *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee (Dee Gong An): An Authentic Eighteenth*

*Century Detective Novel. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Robert*

*Van Gulik* (Dover, 1976)

Course pack (remaining items are on Canvas)