

HSTR 443: Gender in Asia

Spring 2014
TR 10:50-12:05
Wilson 1122

*Don't tell me women are not heroes,
I rode the East Sea's winds – alone – for ten thousand miles. Qiu Jin*

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Course Description

Welcome to Gender in Asia. This course is going to focus on the history of women in East Asia – China, Japan, and Korea – from the pre-modern period to the present. This is not a



course that traces a neat narrative from women trapped in patriarchal structures prior to the introduction of Western thinking and “modernization,” which signaled liberation for women. We are, in fact, going to try our best to complicate that narrative. We are going to be looking at “slices of life” drawn from each of the three countries over many different periods. We will be looking at a wide variety of sources: literature, biography, autobiography, film, material culture, and art. What did it mean to be a Confucian woman in Ming-Qing China, or a “modern girl” in Shōwa Japan? How were notions about appropriate female conduct and status in society constructed by men, and how did women write about their own lives? To what purposes have the ideas

about women been put to? What do histories of East Asian women tell us about our own lives and assumptions?

In addition to thinking critically about and discussing these materials as they relate to question of women’s or gender history, we will be thinking about the process of *doing* history. Who writes history, and why? What impact do long-held narratives have on our perception of both past and present? It is my hope that by the end of the class, you will have a new appreciation for the diversity of experiences of women in East Asia, and have a better understanding of the craft and process of writing history.

Required Texts

The books are available for purchase at the MSU bookstore. All other readings will be posted to the course D2L site in PDF format.

JaHyun Kim Haboush, **The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea**

Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, Joan R. Piggott, eds., **Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan**

Susan L. Mann, **Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History**

Jennifer Robertson, **Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan**

Grading

Participation/In-class work	25%
QQCs	25%
Paper #1	25%
Paper #2	25%

In order to receive a passing grade for the course, all assignments must be completed.

Late QQCs will not be accepted, and any in-class assignments may not be made up. Essays are due by **10:50 AM on 2/27** and **midnight on April 30th**. Late essays will be penalized by **one letter grade for each day late** – beginning immediately after the due date.

Expectations and Policies

Participation

This is a reading and discussion intensive course, so it is imperative that you arrive at each class meeting having prepared the readings for that day. Readings are due on the day under which they are listed. This course will be run in more of a seminar style, with a large portion of each class period dedicated to group discussion, both in small groups and as a class. Your active participation – that means talking and asking questions! – forms an important part of your course grade. Everyone should arrive to class with questions and commentary in addition to your QQCs. I expect to hear from everyone **at least once per class**.

Attendance

Since this course is more collaborative than the typical lecture course, attendance is mandatory. In order to save us all the headache of attempting to determine “legitimate” from “unexcused” absences, the attendance policy is as follows:

- **1-3 absences** (for whatever reason, including illness and emergencies): no change to final grade
- **4-6 absences:** your semester grade is negatively affected
- **7 or more absences:** you are unable to pass the course

Arriving Late/Leaving Early: If you come to class 5 or more minutes late or leave 5 or more minutes early, you will be considered absent on that day. If you frequently arrive late (by less than 5 minutes), or leave early (by less than 5 minutes), your semester grade will be negatively impacted.

Attendance Sheet: An attendance sheet will be circulated in each class. It is **your responsibility** to ensure you have signed it, as it is the definitive and only record of attendance.

Personal, Family, and Medical Emergencies: If you already have 3 absences and then have a personal, family or medical emergency that will necessitate missing additional classes, please **speak with me as soon as possible**. I will do my best to accommodate you fairly, though I cannot guarantee it will not impact your grade or ability to pass the course. If an emergency comes up on your first, second, or third absence, these still count as one or more of your 3 “freebies.” That is, there is no distinction between types of absences. Only *after* your third absence, in the face of emergencies, should you come speak to me, at which point we will sort out what we can do to accommodate your situation.

QQCs

Each class period that has reading due, you will be required to turn in a “**QQC**”- “**Quote, Question, Comment**” at the end of class – which will be graded on a check plus (outstanding), check (sufficient), or check minus (insufficient) basis. Each time, you will need to present (in any order), a **short quote** from **one** of the readings, offer **your own commentary** and discussion, and **raise a question** that would be an appropriate topic for exploration during class discussion. These need not be lengthy, but they must demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the material. You are still responsible for the readings you have *not* completed a QQC on. Late QQCs will not be accepted.

Papers

You will be required to complete two 8-10 page papers in this course. There is no midterm or final, and these papers – combined with your QQCs and participation – make up your final grade. Specific topics and expectations will be handed out in class.

Electronics

Please turn **ALL** electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, laptops, etc.) **OFF** in class and put them away. If you are concerned about this and/or have dispensation for special use, please come speak with me.

Communication with me

I am available during my posted office hours (or by appointment). I am also available by email. Please allow 24-48 hours for a response (excluding weekends), although I will generally get back to you much sooner than that. Please use my email address listed at the top of this syllabus; **do not use D2L to email me**, as I don't check D2L regularly for messages. If you have emailed me and have *not* received a response in a timely manner, **please speak with me and let me know**. Emails do get lost in the ether with an alarming frequency! Please check your listed university email and the course D2L regularly.

Plagiarism and other conduct issues

You are expected to abide by the [MSU Student Conduct Code](#). Any plagiarism, cheating or other academic dishonesty will be met with an F for the course and will be reported to the Provost's Office. Please don't test me on this.

Students With Disabilities

If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodation(s), please contact me and Disability Services as soon as possible.

How to address me

You are welcome to call me Maggie or Professor (or Dr.) Greene, whichever you are most comfortable with. Please do not refer to me as Miss, Ms., Mrs., or Ma'am. In email communication, please refrain from treating your missive like a text message to a friend: it's professional communication and should be approached as such.

This syllabus is subject to change

Week 1

1/9 – Introduction to the course

Week 2: Foundations

1/14 – Writing histories of (East Asian) women

- Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis"
- Gail Hershatter & Wang Zheng, "Chinese History: A Useful Category of Gender Analysis"

1/16 – Overview of Confucianism(s) & East Asian cultures

- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, “Introduction,”
- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 2, “The Last Classical Female Sovereign”
- Ban Zhao: Admonitions for Women (excerpts)

Week 3: Ideals versus Reality

Begin reading Lady Hyegyong

1/21 – High & Low, Inner & Outer: Smudged Boundaries

- “The Peacock Southeast Flew”
- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 5, “Women in Song China”
- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 1, “The Patriarchal Family Paradigm in Eighth-Century Japan”

1/23 - Writing Themselves, Being Written by Others

- Selections from Korean & Chinese funerary inscriptions
- *The Gossamer Years* (excerpts)
- *Women Writers of Imperial China* (excerpts)

Week 4: Transcendents and Phantoms

Continue reading Lady Hyegyong

1/28 – Daoism & Buddhism

- Biography of the Great Compassionate One of Xiangshan
- Record of Past Karma
- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 10, “Discipline and Transformation”

1/30 – *The Peony Pavilion*, phantom heroines, and writing women

- *The Peony Pavilion* (excerpts)
- Zeitlin, “Three Wives Commentary”

Week 5: Virtuous Women in Chosŏn Korea

2/4 - Film: *Chunhyang* (dir. Im Kwon-taek, 2000)

- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 6, “Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea”
- Biographies & poetry of Hŏ Kyŏngbŏn and Yi Sugwŏn

2/6 - *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong* (focus on the Intro, Memoir of 1795 and Memoir of 1805)

Week 6: Heroes & Martyrs

2/11 – The legend of Mulan and warrior women

- The legend(s) of Mulan
- “Selected Short Works by Wang Duanshu”
- Wen Tianxiang & Wu Meicun (excerpts)

2/13 – Confucianism Gone Overboard

- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 9, “Competing Claims on Womanly Virtue in Late Imperial China”
- Weijing Lu, *True To Her Word* (excerpts)

Week 7: On the Road to Modernity

2/18 – Towards a New Narrative of Footbinding

- Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters* (excerpts)
- Joan Judge, *The Precious Raft of History* (excerpts)

2/20 – Mothering for the Nation

- *Women and Confucian Cultures*, Ch. 8, “Norms and Texts for Women’s Education in Tokugawa Japan”
- Jordan Sands, *House and Home in Modern Japan* (excerpts)

Week 8: Writing histories

Paper #1 Due by start of class, 2/27

2/25 – The Question of Women in the Early 20th Century

- Hyaeweol Choi, *New Women in Colonial Korea* (excerpts)
- Chen Duxiu, “Way of Confucius”
- Ye Shengtao, “Is This Also a Human?”
- *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History*, Intro – Ch. 3

2/27 – Setting the History

- Lu Xun, “New Year’s Sacrifice”
- Lu Xun, “What Happens After Nora Leaves Home”
- Mao Zedong et al., writings on the suicide of Miss Zhao

Week 9: Women & Radical Movements

3/4 – Radical Women of China

- *Women Writers Anthology* (Qiu Jin et al., biographies & excerpts)
- Writings from He-Yin Zhen

3/6 – Radical Women in Japan

- Selections from *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows*

Week 10: SPRING BREAK!

Week 11: Who's afraid of the modern girl?

Begin reading Takarazuka

3/18 – Film: *Sweet Dream* (Mimong, aka *Death's Lullaby*, dir. Yang Ju-nam, 1936)

- Barbara Sato, "Contesting Consumerisms in Mass Women's Magazines"

3/20 – "So many parts to a woman"

- Antonia Finnane, "What Should Chinese Women Wear?"

- *Linglong* assignment

Week 12: "So Many Parts" – Bodies, Sex & Gender

Continue reading Takarazuka

3/25 – Bridging the past & present

- Mann, *Gender and Sexuality*, Ch. 4-6

3/27 – **No class, Maggie away at a conference**

Week 13: Takarazuka

4/1 – Gender & pop culture in Japan

- *Takarazuka*

4/3 – **TBD**

Week 14: Women in the PRC: Promises and Reality

4/8 – Holding Up Half the Sky

- Gail Hershatter, *Gender of Memory* (selections)

4/10 – Iron Girls

- *Some of Us* (excerpts)

- Emily Honig, "Maoist Mappings of Gender"

Week 15: Love For Sale

4/15 – Film: *The Great Happiness Space: Tales of an Osaka Love Thief* (dir. Jake Clennell, 2006)

4/17 – Host Bars & Hostess Clubs: Sexuality & Capitalism in Japan

- Anne Allison, *Nightwork* (excerpts)

Week 16: Present Realities, and On the Uses of History

4/22 – The Far Horizon Road

- Mann, *Gender and Sexuality*, Conclusion

- *Once Iron Girls* (excerpts)

4/24 – Concluding thoughts

Finals Week

Paper #2 due no later than **midnight on April 30th**.