Empire at the Margins: Borderlands in Late Imperial China  
Spring 2014

Class Meeting Times: 5:00 – 6:20 PM,  
Mondays (M), Wednesdays (W)  
Olin-Sang 112

Instructor: Xing Hang  
Office hours: (M) 2:00 – 3:00 PM,  
(W) 4:00 – 5:00 PM  
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Course Description and Objectives

Frontiers, both on land and sea, are ambivalent spaces where different ethnicities, cultures, and political and social organizations meet, interact, and collide. These transitional zones, where one state gradually blends into others, serve as fluid conduits for trade and diplomacy, the spread of ideas and technology, and the creation of identity at the centers. This course will take us on a tour of the borderlands around late imperial China during the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. We will journey in spatial and chronological order, starting from the shores of Japan and winding our way through the Korean Peninsula and Manchurian forests. We then traverse the steppes and deserts of Inner and Central Asia, stopping briefly to enjoy a commanding view from the Tibetan Plateau. After crossing the tropical jungles of Southeast Asia, we conclude by setting sail among the waves. Main characters along the way include Ming and Qing emperors, officials, and generals; Han peasants, merchants, and settlers; Manchus, Mongols, and other Inner Asian tribes; Koreans, Japanese, and Vietnamese; the overseas Chinese diaspora; and European rulers, adventurers, and missionaries. The conflicts and interactions among all of these actors shed light upon the nature of Chinese/Qing imperialism and expansion, the reach of the center in Beijing in a period before modern communications, ethnic relations, the economic role of the periphery, and cross-cultural (mis)perceptions. By 1850, frontiers had redefined China as a multiethnic empire even as its neighbors acquired crucial aspects of their own identities in relation to China.

The course ponders the origins of modern East Asia, the identities of its nation-states, and the plight of its ethnic minorities through a study of their margins and points of intersection. Students are thus challenged to think beyond the confines of national boundaries and examine the interconnectedness and openness of the region to outside forces, and the sharp differences that divide it. Through lectures, discussions, and essays, all based upon the careful examination of primary documents and select academic scholarship, students learn to clearly convey their thoughts and apply their analytical abilities in speech and writing. These are crucial skills that can transfer into their careers and other aspects of their lives.
**Course Requirements**

1) **Attendance and participation in discussion. 30%**

Although there are lectures, a significant portion of this class is discussion-driven. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every meeting; two excused absences are allowed—any undocumented absences beyond that count against the final grade (that is, you will get a grade of 0 per missed meeting). **Active participation and engagement**, not mere presence, is necessary to earn a high grade. Substantial and frequent tardiness will count as absences. Students should have read all the assignments listed each week in the **Course Outline before** the next meeting, with specific questions and issues in mind.

2) **Reading logs** (1-2 pages double-spaced equivalent). **10%**

Students should post onto the LATTE forum a short reading log every week by the end of the day before the class meeting of their choice. These relatively informal written assignments will be available for the viewing of the class. They can be used by students as a way of facilitating discussion and to serve as practice for more formal essays. In writing, start with an interesting aspect, general impression, or something that struck you as you read through the assignments. Then, write a short analysis using concrete examples from your sources. You may also raise any questions you have encountered in the course of your readings that could be brought on the agenda of a possible discussion. The logs may either be an original contribution or a response to the other posters.

3) Three **analytical essays. 60%**

Since one of the goals of this course is to improve students’ critical thinking and writing skills, they will hand in THREE (3) papers. The first and second essays (due 2/24 and 4/14, respectively), consisting of 6-8 double-spaced pages, will each critically examine two of our readings, including at least one primary source. Together, they make up 30% of the final grade. The last paper, which forms the other 30%, will be a research paper of 10-15 pages (due 5/14) focusing upon a broad spatial and/or thematic topic of the student’s choice. All essays are to be handed in **BEFORE** the start of class on the stated dates, or they will be considered a day late and marked down one letter grade. After receiving their papers, students should carefully read over the critiques and comments about their writing and will have an opportunity to submit a polished, final draft within one week. Detailed instructions will be handed out in class.

**Technology Policy**

I encourage the use of technology in the classroom, including laptops and tablet PCs, as they are a crucial trend in the future of higher education. However, they are not to be abused for purposes unrelated to the class. I reserve the right to restrict or ban their use if necessary.
General Rules

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

No late assignments will be accepted without the prior agreement of the instructor and/or the submission of a valid written explanation. Course overloads and work duties are not acceptable excuses for late assignments or failure to participate fully in other class activities. Late papers will be marked down a letter grade for each day they are late, weekends included.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

Any part of this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. LATTE contains all of the assignments listed below under “Course Outline” and reflects updates and modifications. In cases of conflict, refer to LATTE as a living version of this syllabus.

Required Readings

All assigned readings, as well as the syllabus, handouts, and classroom resources are available online on LATTE.

Course Outline

Week 1  Introduction: Frontiers in Chinese and World History
1/13 (M):    1. The Frontiers of Imperial China


              Review the Chinese map, timeline, and Romanization conversion charts.

Week 2
1/20 (M):    2. NO CLASS

Week 3 **Japan**

1/30 (W): 5. Lynn Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 114-121; Fogel, 88-125.

Week 4 **The First East Asian World War**

2/5 (W): 7. Swope, 184-233, 264-299;

Week 5 **Korea**


Week 6 **NO CLASS**

Week 7 **Manchuria and Mongolia**
2/24 (M): 10. ESSAY 1 DUE BEFORE CLASS

Pak Chiwŏn, *The Jehol Diary*, trans. by Yang-hi Choe Wall (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2010), 1-15;


Week 8  **Xinjiang and Tibet**

Week 9  **The Gilded Age of Qianlong**

Week 10  **The Southwest**

Week 11  **Vietnam**

Week 12  **The Southeastern Littoral**

Week 13  **Maritime Encounters**


**Week 15  Frontier Legacies**

4/14 (M): 24. ESSAY 2 DUE BEFORE CLASS


4/17 (W): NO CLASS

Week 16

4/21 (M): NO CLASS


Week 16


5/10 (F): FINAL ESSAY DUE