Arts of the Ming Dynasty  
Spring 2017  
FA 170a Mon & Wed: 5:00-6:20 pm

Professor: Aida Yuen Wong  
Office: 212, Mandel Humanities Center  
Office hours: Fri 11:00am-1:00 pm (by appointment)  
E-mail: aida@brandeis.edu  
Office phone: x62670

Course Description
One of the most glorious periods in Chinese art history, the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) witnessed the flourishing of painting, porcelain production, lacquer ware, garden construction, elegant hardwood furniture, among other refinements. The decorative arts propelled by technical innovations filled the houses and palaces of the Ming people. Imperial power expanded along with the rise of an incipient capitalism that was defined by active commerce, especially in the cities. Literati infused the art of ink painting and calligraphy with personal meaning. This dynasty also saw the broadening of China’s material influence in other parts of Asia and beyond. It was an age of internationalism. But not all was rosy; political upheavals during the dynasty prompted ideological and emotional responses in the arts.

Through studying a wide array of art and handicrafts, this course presents the richness of Ming history and sheds light on much of what we regard today as “Chinese taste.”

Students will learn to analyze a variety of art historical subjects, formats, and techniques in different media. Apart from their aesthetic value, the works will be examined in connection with political, cultural, commercial, and religious/ritual practices.

Requirements

Attendance and Participation

You are expected to attend all classes. You may be excused if 1) you have a health emergency (please email to explain as soon as possible); 2) you are celebrating an ethnic or religious holiday; 3) other urgencies, in which case, you must provide a written reason with relevant documentation.

Be an active participant. Follow closely all reading assignments so you will be in the position to intervene in class discussions.

If you have more than three unexcused absences, your final grade will be negatively affected. No make-up exams will be granted without legitimate and documented excuses. Late-comers to examinations will not be given extra time. These conditions are non-negotiable.

Examinations and Grade Distribution

There will be two mid-term exams and no final exam. A term paper is due towards the end of the semester.

Attendance and participation: 15%  
First Exam (February 15): 20%  
Second Exam (April 3): 30%  
Quizzes and Homework: 15%  
Term Paper (due May 1): 20% Write an 8-10 page paper on a topic in Ming arts. More instructions will be distributed.
Taking Notes

Your notes and weekly readings will serve as your primary texts for the course. It is important that your notes be legible and as detailed as possible. Master specialized terms and be able to use them in the description and analysis of works of art. Downloadable readings will be assigned on LATTE.

Expected Workload
Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (e.g. readings, papers, interviews, fieldwork, researching relevant news and media stories, studying, etc.).

Slides for each class will be posted on LATTE weekly

Topics to be covered; check LATTE regularly for precise calendar.

Founding of the “Brilliant Dynasty”
Imperial Portraiture
Dual Capitals
  The Court in Nanjing
  Building Beijing and the Forbidden City
Chinese Porcelain: In and Out of the Country
  Jingdezhen and Imperial Kilns
  Maritime Expeditions
  Export Porcelain
Court Life and Rituals
Elite and Literati Taste Outside the Court
  Painting for Collecting and Private Pleasures
  Garden Rocks and Hardwood Furniture
  Other Luxuries Goods: Lacquer ware, Bamboo, and Jade Works
Late Ming: Popular Culture, Turmoil, Dissent, and Dynastic Change

Readings: (This list may change; follow LATTE updates.)


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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 provide the relevant documentation immediately.

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential Sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.
Access Image Files on LATTE

Downloading the OIV: (*popup blocker must be turned off for this to work*)

Go to the Brandeis Scholar
scholar.brandeis.edu

Under Most Popular Databases (on the right), choose ARTstor

If you have already created an ARTstor account, click Log in at the upper right and enter your username and password

If you have NOT already created an ARTstor account, click Register at the upper right

To create an account: your username must be your full Brandeis email address (XXX@brandeis.edu); your password can be anything you want; Role at Institution is College/University Undergraduate Student; Academic Department is Fine Arts

Click Submit

Once you are logged on, click on Tools (in grey letters on the grey bar, at the top, towards the right side of the bar). From the drop-down menu, choose Download Offline Presentation Tool (OIV).

Click Accept to agree to ARTstor’s terms.

The system will detect the kind of computer you are using, and will choose the version of the OIV that you should install. Click Download.

Follow the prompts to download the software to your local system and install it.