FA 176a: Fashion History of China  
Fall 2018  
T/F: 11:00am-12:20pm

Professor Aida Yuen Wong  
Office: 212 Mandel Center for the Humanities  
Office Hours: Friday 1:00-3:00pm or by appointment  
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Course Description  
This course examines the evolution of garments, accessories, hairstyles, shoes, and other bodily adornments in China through the lens of art history. Ancient murals, tomb objects, and representations in painting will be the primary materials of investigation. We learn about the importance of dress and fashion (and their visual representations) in shaping identities through the ages. Among the categories studied are court dress, leisure robes, military uniforms, and ritual vestments spanning 4000 years from ca. 2nd millennium BCE to the modern period. Skills in visual analysis are developed in the process of studying history. Clothing has been an integral part of social ordering in China, often following rules of color, shape, and symbolic pattern set down in official texts or by convention. As visual products, clothing and related objects worked in tandem with dynastic transitions, as the adoption of different garments echoed the dynamics of changing regimes. As part of the discussion on gender, the course explores changing concepts of masculinity and femininity in aesthetic and moral terms. The end of the course takes us to the period of modern nation-building, when Western styles started to play a prominent role in transforming Chinese fashion attitudes. This class brings together art history, politics, social history, material culture, and gender study.

(Note: This course is designed to coincide with the exhibition, “Empresses of China’s Forbidden City,” at the Peabody Essex Museum, August 2018-February 2019. A day-long field trip to the PEM is arranged for November 9, approx. 11am-4:00pm.)

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.).

Classroom Protocol:  
1. Arrive on time and try to be an active participant.  
2. Take notes assiduously.  
3. All non-note-taking electronic devices and social media must be off.

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 as early as possible.

Requirements:  
I. Attendance and Participation (15%)  

You are expected to attend all classes. More than three absences will significantly impact your attendance grade. Readings are posted on LATTE and should be completed weekly. You are encouraged to participate in class by raising and answering questions.

Understand that late arrivals constitute serious disruption. While in the classroom, refrain from using your computer for purposes other than note-taking and other assignments for this class.
II. Homework (15%): Occasional reading responses

III. Two Midterm Exams: October 2 (20%) and November 6 (30%); no final exam

There will be two mid-term examinations to test your ability to identify and discuss works of art studied in the course. No make-up will be granted without legitimate and written excuses. Late-comers will not be given extra time. These conditions are non-negotiable.

1. Study your notes and readings which will be the basis for the exams. Borrow any missed notes from your classmates.
2. Identify the slides viewed in class. Images viewed in class will be posted on LATTE at the end of each week. Be ready to explain the what, where, when, and why, etc.

IV. Term Paper: 20%: Due December 7, 2018

The paper (8-10 double-spaced pages) relates to the general scope of the course. Students will consult the professor in choosing the topic. More instructions will be given out in the second half of the course.

Weekly Schedule and Readings (Subject to Change):

Introduction (Week 1)

I. Prehistory to the Han Dynasty: Survival, Rituals, and Warfare (Weeks 2-4)
- Fong, Mary H. “The Origin of Chinese Pictorial Representation of the Human Figure.” Artibus Asiae 49, no. ½ (1988-1989): 5-38.

II. Six Dynasties, Sui and Tang Dynasties: Religious and Court Life (Weeks 5-6)

III. Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties: Gender and Identity (Weeks 7-9)


IV. Qing Dynasty to the 21st century: Geopolitics and Nationalism (Weeks 10-13)


*You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually in the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty (including plagiarism) 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.