History 180A
“The Global Opium Trade, 1755-Present”
Syllabus

Instructor: H. P. James
Email: hpijames423@gmail.com
Voice: 617.797.8024
Office hours: Thursdays, 11AM – 12:30 PM (and by appointment)

Course Description

This course will investigate the history of the global opium trade from early times to the present. The course will begin with a historical overview of the origin and medicinal development of opium in South Asia. Detailed investigation will begin with the 18th century Chinese invention of intoxicating, smokable opium for recreational use. It will then proceed to the establishment of the East India Company’s opium monopoly in Gangetic India, which raised production and distribution to an industrial scale. Coverage will include the so-called “Malwa” trade in West India, where the business remained in private hands. The course will emphasize the British government’s lucrative participation in the 19th century opium trade, both legal and illegal, as well as the corrosive effects of that trade among consuming societies in China and Southeast Asia. Beginning with the 20th century, our focus will shift to the history of drug regulation, spearheaded by Theodore Roosevelt and the American Progressive movement. As the opium trade became illegal, it passed out of the hands of “legitimate” merchant companies and into the control of criminal gangs and corrupt politicians. We will investigate, for example, the political collusion between China’s Guomindang Party and Shanghai’s “Green Gang” drug syndicate, as well as the active participation of Japan’s Kwantung Army in the opiates trade both in China and the puppet state of Manchukuo. Postwar coverage will compare a variety of approaches to international drug regulation, from the successful opium eradication efforts in the People’s Republic of China to America’s contemporary War on Drugs.

Learning Objectives

Students taking this course will become familiar with the history of the global opium trade from the mid 18th century to the present. They will learn about the phases in the history of the trade, how its political economy evolved over time, and the social impact of the global trade in opiates on the cultures that produce, trade, and consume them. Students will learn how to analyze primary documents and to critique secondary texts, and will develop the investigatory and analytical skills necessary for the production of a major research paper.
Grading

Student evaluations will be based on in-class examinations, class participation, as well as the production of a major research paper. The course grade will be computed according to the following formula:

- Class Participation – 15%
- Midterm Examination – 20%
- Research Paper – 40%
- Final Examination – 25%

Course Books

Required:


Recommended:


All additional assigned readings, as well as the syllabus, handouts, and other classroom resources will be available online on LATTE.

Research Paper

The final research paper will be 10-12 pages in length. Paper topics should be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Please be practical about choosing your paper topics. You should certainly choose a topic that interests you. However, you should work carefully to frame the scope of your project narrowly enough that you can investigate the topics in depth, and then express the results in a term paper of between 10 and 12 pages in length. Your research should be based on no fewer than ten (10) published sources. These can be in the form of primary source material or secondary sources published by reputable publishers, (e.g. university presses). Online secondary source material should be limited to peer-reviewed academic journals. All bibliographic information, including citations, should be formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. 
Electronics Policy

There will be no use of mobile telephones or laptop computers during class without directly expressed, individual permission granted by the instructor.

Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University who wishes to have a reasonable accommodation made in this class should contact me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with and to follow the university’s policies on academic integrity. For more information, see Section 4, Rights and Responsibilities, at http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srrsrr/RR11.12.pdf. Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the university administration. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including, but not limited to, failing grades being issued, withdrawal from educational programs, and other consequences.

Class Schedule

Week 1
Tuesday, January 13: Introduction
Thursday, January 15: The Nature and History of Opium
Lee, Peter, Opium Culture: The Art and Ritual of Chinese Tradition.

Week 2
Tuesday, January 20: Opium Production in Early Times
Thursday, January 22: The East India Company in India and Elsewhere


Week 3

Tuesday, January 27: Plantation Agriculture and the Commoditization of Opium
Thursday, January 29: The East India Company Monopoly


Week 4

Tuesday, February 3: The Illegal Opium Trade with China
Thursday, February 5: The First Opium War and the Taiping Rebellion


Week 5

Tuesday, February 10: The Second Opium War and the Legalization of Opium
Thursday, February 12: The Physical Infrastructure of the Opium Trade


**Winter Break – February 16 – 20**

Week 6

Tuesday, February 24: Minority Entrepreneurship in the Asian Opium Trade

**Thursday, February 26: MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 7
  Tuesday, March 3: Opium and the U.S. “China Trade”
  Thursday, March 5: Opium Culture in China: Luxury Consumption


Week 8
  Tuesday, March 10: Mass Consumption and the Chinese Diaspora
  RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE

  Thursday, March 12: Medicalization, Prohibition, and Criminalization


Week 9
  Tuesday, March 17: End of the Legal Trade in Smokable Opium
  Thursday, March 19: The Kuomintang Party and Shanghai’s Opium Gangs


Week 10
Tuesday, March 24: Opium Money and the Shanghai Boom, 1919-1935

PAPER OUTLINES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE
Thursday, March 26: Japan’s Role in the International Opiates/Opioids Trade


Week 11
Tuesday, March 31: Postwar Anti-Opium Campaigns in the PRC and Elsewhere
Thursday, April 2: U.S. Regulatory Regimes: from the Progressives through Nixon


Passover Break – April 6 – 10
Week 12
  Tuesday, April 14: Opioids as a Global Commodity in the Postwar World
  Thursday, April 16: From Golden Triangle to the Afghan Trade


Week 13
  Tuesday, April 21: America’s “War on Drugs” and Its Fallout
  **FINAL PAPERS DUE**
  Thursday, April 23: Conclusion and Review

  Film: *The House I Live In*

**FINAL EXAM (tentative) – Wednesday, May 6, 6:00-9:00 PM**