

Traditional Asia and Its Legacy

(adapted to Georgia Tech Europe Program)

HTS 2061
Summer 2026
Section 1: MW 10:25 am – 12:20 pm
Section 2: MW 1:30 am – 3:25 pm
Classroom: TBA

Professor Hanchao Lu
Office: TBA
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: hl22@gatech.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a wide-ranging survey of the civilizations of Asia from their beginnings to the middle of the nineteenth century. Emphasis is given to China and Japan from a global history perspective, such as the interaction of East and West as reflected by Marco Polo's career in China's Mongol dynasty, Dutch Learning in Tokugawa Japan, and the impact of Indian culture on an essentially Confucian world. Topics also include formation of empires, religious systems, ethics and philosophies, popular culture and folk customs, women's social status, scientific inventions, expansion of commerce, development of political and social institutions, and the foundation of modern East Asia.

No pre or/and co-requisites.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

- Students will receive a basic introduction to a wide variety of topics regarding the role of diverse groups in Asia and how their cultures and ethics have shaped the world today.
- Students will develop critical analysis skills based on the historical facts introduced in the class.

Course Attributes:

- Social Science Requirement
- Ethics Requirement
- Country and Region Requirement for the International Plan (IP)
- East Asia Certificate

REQUIRED READINGS:

The following books are available at the GT bookstore as well Amazon and Barnes & Noble's:

1. Jonathan Clements, *A Brief History of China* (Tuttle Publishing, 2019).
2. Brett L. Walker, *A Concise History of Japan* (Cambridge University Press, 2015, 2018).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) Quizzes (total three, pre-announced and reviews)	60%
2) Take-home final exam (a short essay)	30%
4) Attendance	10%

In evaluating a student's performance, consideration will also be given to informed participation in classroom discussions.

DOCUMENTARY FILMES (supplementary, subject to change):

China

Film: *All of China's Dynasties in ONE Video*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fz_uQNOBK0g

Film: *Qin Shi Huang - The Emperor Who Tried To Conquer Death*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VqfcGQ4oog>

Film: *The Mandate of Heaven*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjH9lsgkqR4>

Buddhism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMTISB20Q78>

Japan

Film: *Buddha in the Land of the Kami*:

<https://videos.rccd.edu/mediasite/Play/13ab12c794cb4371a168511680535ca51d>

Film: *The Mysterious Shogunate That Ruled Japan for 265 Year*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuqHQZ1HnN4>

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

Week 1	May 20 & 22 Asia: An Overview Clements 22-27; Walker 1-9
Week 2	May 27 & 29 China: From Legend to History Clements 22-50
Week 3	June 1 & 3 The Golden Age of Thought: Ethics, Philosophy, and Religions Clements 51-74
Week 4	June 8 & 10 The Establishment of Confucian Ethics and the Tributary System Clements 75-10

Week 5	June 15 & 17 (Quiz I) Introduction of Buddhism from India and Buddhist Ethics Clements 104-124
Week 6	June 22 & 24 An Open Empire in its Golden Age Clements 125-153
Week 7	June 29 & July 1 (Quiz II) Late Imperial China Clements 154-211; Walker 1-9
Week 8	July 6 & 8 The Origin and Early History of the Japanese Walker chap. 1-2
Week 9	July 15 & 17 Classic Japan Walker chap. 3-4
Week 10	July 20 (Quiz III) & 22 The Shogunate and Tokugawa Japan Walker chap. 5-8
Week 11	July 27 Documentary video session

Students will have the topics and guidelines for the take-home final exam before Thanksgiving. The take-home final exam is due on the official scheduled date to be announced and can be sent to the instructor via email attachment. The details are to be announced.

In all class activities, including the take-home exam, the Georgia Tech Honor Code is strictly followed. For policies regarding the honor code, see <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>

Statement on Inclusion: *The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.*

About instructor: *Hanchao Lu is Professor of History in the School of History and Sociology at Georgia Tech's Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts and Director of the China Research Center in Atlanta.*