

Course Syllabus

HUMA2520: History of Tea in East Asia

Important: Subject to change (especially in light of Covid social distancing measures)

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Spring 2022

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-4:00pm, or by appointment -- ZOOM ID: 281 828 6834 (passcode: huma)

Tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world. Its consumption began in China, and the first book on tea, Lu Yu's *Classic of Tea*, was written in the 8th century. Since then it is a custom that has spread far and wide, and its cultivation spans the globe from Japan to Argentina. This course is designed to explore the origins of tea drinking, the transmission of tea culture to Japan, Inner Asia, and then to the West, and the role tea played in trade and commerce in the Early Modern world, with a focus on its development in East Asia. Through an understanding of the context in which tea drinking took place it also gives us insight as to the changes that were taking place in the societies that enjoyed this beverage and the greater forces affecting world history.

One is the objective of exposing students to the subject at hand, but the other and arguably more important goal is to familiarize students with the practice of history and historical analysis. Through the subject matter of tea, students are exposed to academic arguments based on original sources as well as given an opportunity to present their own thesis based on such materials.

Course Hours:

Tuesday/Thursdays: 12:00pm – 1:20pm

Location:

Rm 6573, Lift 29-30

Evaluation:

10% tea diary assignment

20% response papers (4)

15% film comparative paper

15% William Melrose assignment

20% final project

20% attendance/participation

CILOs:

Explain the history of tea from a broad, interdisciplinary perspective

Analyze and critique academic arguments based on original sources

Present coherent arguments using primary or secondary sources on subjects related to the course both in writing and oral presentation

Late assignments:

Assignments are due at assigned time, and anything submitted subsequent to the due time is considered late. For each day of lateness, one third of a letter grade will be deducted from the assignment's grade, including weekends.

Laptops & electronic devices:

Cell phones and other devices that will make noises during the class need to be shut off (no vibrating backpacks, please!)

Written Work:

Tea Diary

Tea is ubiquitous, but how ubiquitous is it exactly? This assignment asks you to keep track of what you drink for a week, and to reflect on the biggest source of tea drinking in your daily life. How often are you offered tea, and how often are you drinking or consuming tea in some way (green tea ice cream, for example) without really considering it?

Response Papers

You will be required to write a one-page response paper to assigned readings of the day. You will need to write 4 total – 2 for the first half of the semester, 2 for the second half of the semester. The response paper should be your thoughts and observations about the reading in question. These will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Film Analysis

We will be watching two films this semester with a 5-7 pages written assignment on issues surrounding the films' portrayal of the central figure of tea in Japan – Sen no Rikyu.

William Melrose assignment

William Melrose was a Scottish trader who worked in China from 1845-1855. The book *William Melrose in China* is a collection of his letters from this period. Open any page, and you can see his concerns as a tea trader living in a foreign country at the time. What were his concerns? What, if any, can we as historians tell about the past using these letters as an aid? I would like you to pick a few letters from a selection and analyze them – how can those of us trying to learn about the past use the letters in creative ways?

Final project

I would like to you to examine the contents of an online social media account of some tea establishment, and to view their information with a critical pair of eyes. More details will be given later.

Class schedule:

8th Feb: Introduction to *Camellia Sinensis*

10th Feb: Origins of tea drinking and early records

Lu Yu, *The Classic of Tea*, trans. Francis Ross Carpenter, Boston: Little Brown, 1974. Selections (PDF on Canvas)

Mair, Victor and Erling Hoh. *A True History of Tea* (Links to an external site.). London: Thames & Hudson, 2009. ch. 4

15th Feb: Making tea Tang style

17th Feb: The Song legacy of powdered tea

Mair, ch. 5 ([Links to an external site.](#))

Ludwig, Theodore M., "Before Rikyu. Religious and Aesthetic Influences in the Early History of the Tea Ceremony," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter, 1981), pp. 367-390 ([PDF on Canvas](#))

22nd Feb: Making powdered tea

24th Feb: The Japanese tradition

Mair, ch. 7 ([Links to an external site.](#)), 8 ([Links to an external site.](#))

([Links to an external site.](#))

1st Mar: Switching to leaf tea in the Ming

* Tu Long (1542-1605), *Cha jian* (Notes on Tea), selections. ([PDF on Canvas](#))

Mair, ch. 9 ([Links to an external site.](#))

3rd Mar: Teaware and the transmission of knowledge

Cort, Louise Allison, "Shopping for Pots in Momoyama Japan", in *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*, edited by Morgan Pitelka. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. ([PDF on Canvas](#))

Graham, Patricia J. "Karamono for Sencha: Transformations in the Taste for Chinese Art", *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*, edited by Morgan Pitelka. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. ([PDF on Canvas](#))

8th Mar: A whirlwind tour of famous teaware

Tea diary due

10th Mar: Early Western understanding of tea

Ellis, Markman, et al. *Empire of Tea: The Asian Leaf that Conquered the World*. London: Reaktion Books. Chapters 1&2. (PDF on Canvas)

15th Mar: Is tea good for you?

Zhang, Lawrence. "Becoming Healthy: Changing Perception of Tea's Effects on the Body," in *Moral Foods: The Construction of Nutrition and Health in Modern Asia*. Edited by Angela Ki Che Leung and Melissa L. Caldwell, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2019. (PDF on Canvas)

17th Mar: Ming/Qing innovation and the Canton trade

Ellis, Markman, et al. *Empire of Tea: The Asian Leaf that Conquered the World*. London: Reaktion Books. Chapters 3&4. (PDF on Canvas)

22nd Mar: Sen no Rikyu and the wabi-cha tradition

Division between first/second half of semester for the purpose of response papers.

24th Mar: Break – time for preparation of film and paper

Hiroshi Teshigahara, *Rikyu*, 1989.

Mitsutoshi Tanaka, *Ask this of Rikyu*, 2013.

29th Mar: Discussion of the two films

Comparative Paper Due

31st Mar: Robert Fortune and Indian tea

Gardella, Robert, "Introduction", *Harvesting Mountains: Fujian and the China Tea Trade, 1757-1937*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 1-20, 177-181. (PDF on Canvas)

Cook, Walter F., "The Study of Retail Prices in Boston and Vicinity", *Publications of the American Statistical Association*, Vol. 2, No. 11/12 (Sep. - Dec., 1890), pp. 116-119 (PDF on Canvas)

5th Apr: Ching Ming Festival NO CLASS

7th Apr: Evaluating tea as a science

Mair, ch. 14

Besky, Sarah, *Tasting Qualities: The Past and Future of Tea* (Links to an external site.), Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. Chapter 1.

12th Apr: Gender and Tea

Corbett, Rebecca, "A Handbook for Elite Women's Tea in the Eighteenth Century," in *Cultivating Femininity: Women and Tea Culture in Edo and Meiji Japan*. (Links to an external site.)

19th Apr: Tea trade in the 19th century

Melrose, William, *William Melrose in China, 1845-1855* (Links to an external site.), Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1973, xlvi-lxix, 34-85.

21st Apr: Lipton and its magic

26th Apr: Gongfucha and the reinvention of Chinese tea

Hobsbawn, Eric, et al., "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 1-15. (PDF on Canvas)

Zhang, Lawrence. "A Foreign Infusion: The Forgotten Legacy of Japanese Chado on Modern Chinese Tea Arts." *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* 16:1, Spring 2016, pp. 53-62. DOI: 10.1525/gfc.2016.16.1.53 (PDF on Canvas)

28th Apr: Gongfucha demonstration

3rd May: Science and technology in the tea industry

Besky, *Tasting Qualities*, (Links to an external site.) ch. 4.

5th May: Seeking authenticity and tradition

Surak, Kristin. "From Selling Tea to Selling Japaneseness: Symbolic Power and the Nationalization of Cultural Practices." *European Journal of Sociology* 52:2, August 2011, pp. 175-208. (PDF on Canvas)

10th May: Tea drinking in the 21st century

Zhang Jinghong. *Pu'er Tea: Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013. Introduction.