

IHSS 6001: RESEARCH SEMINAR ON EAST ASIAN CULTURE

Dr. Ghassan Moazzin (gmoazzin@hku.hk)

Dr. Izumi Nakayama (nakayama@hku.hk)

Overview:

This course involves intensive reading, discussion, and writing exercises aimed at assisting HKIHS first-year graduate students with their individualized methodological and theoretical training and to broaden and deepen their understanding of how their research interests relate to other disciplinary and thematic fields. Compiling and mastering a substantial reading list will be a central feature, and a state-of-the-field essay will be submitted at the end of the term. All students will read and discuss their classmates' essays.

This schedule is subject to change, contingent on public health regulations.

Dates of Meetings (Tuesdays, 3-5pm in Room 201)

01 September: Introduction.

08 September: Response papers and discussion of *A Companion to Chinese History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017). [PDF download available via Moodle.](#)

22 September: Response papers and discussion of *A Companion to Chinese History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017).

29 September: Lecture

06 October: Response papers and discussion of *A Companion to Chinese History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017).

13 October: Lecture

20 October : First essay presentation and discussion.

10 November: Second essay presentation and discussion.

24 November: state-of-the-field essay presentation and discussion.

ASSESSMENT

Attendance & Participation	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Students are expected to attend the designated meetings. Active, thoughtful participation in all aspects of the course are important. Unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. All students are required to read each other's work and be prepared to comment and discuss.➤ HKIHSS RPG students are required to attend all Institute talks, lectures, seminars, and conferences.	
Response papers	30%
First essay	20%
Second essay	20%
State-of-the-field essay	20%

ASSIGNMENTS

Response papers: Each student will write a concise essay to answer the questions posed for the readings assigned from *A Companion to Chinese History*.

- **First response paper:** Read the Introduction and Part I “States of the Field.”
 - **Questions:** Explain how the scholarly inquiry of Chinese history developed in different regions and time periods, and what impact (if any) “domestic” historical, political, and/or academic approaches and concerns may have had on them. Identify both commonalities and particularities in the types of questions that have shaped the study of Chinese history in the times and spaces covered by the readings.
 - **Due:** via Moodle TBA.
- **Second response paper:** Read Part II “Chronologies.”
 - **Questions:** Explain how each author in this section approaches the concept of periodizing Chinese history. What are the different factors involved in each case of temporal categorization, and how are these temporal frameworks significant and/or productive, if at all?
 - **Due:** via Moodle TBA.
- **Third response paper:** Read Part III “Themes and Approaches.”
 - **Questions:** Choose at least six topics (do not choose topics directly related to your research project). Explain how the major research questions addressed by these thematic and intellectual approaches further enhance our understanding of Chinese history. Identify gaps and issues that are missing or glossed over in these discussions, and how they might offer new insight and understanding of China’s past.

- **Due:** via Moodle TBA.

First Essay: Each student will write an essay of scholarly criticism assessing and comparing key themes, issues based on the readings assigned below.

The selection below for the First Essay was for Spring 2020. The theme for Fall 2020 will be on gender and medicine, and the relevant articles and questions will be announced at a later date.

Great Divergence:

Kenneth Pomeranz, "Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization: Europe, China, and the Global Conjuncture," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 425–46.

Robert Brenner and Christopher Isett. "England's Divergence from China's Yangzi Delta: Property Relations, Microeconomics, and Patterns of Development." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): 609-62.

Loren Brandt, Debin Ma, and Thomas G. Rawski. 2014. "From Divergence to Convergence: Reevaluating the History behind China's Economic Boom." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 52 (1): 45-123.

Address the following questions: 1) What major issues did the authors set out to address? 2) How to the three articles differ in their evaluation of the factors behind the “Great Divergence”? 3) What evidence do the three authors use to make their argument? 4) In your view, which of the three articles is most convincing and why?

Style guide:

- Essay: 10-15 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 Font, regular margins, paginated (with full citations and bibliography—these are not included in page count). Historians must use Chicago style.
- **Due** via Moodle on 21 March 5pm.

Second Essay: Each student will write an essay of scholarly criticism assessing and comparing key themes, issues based on the readings assigned below.

Global History:

C. A. Bayly (2004) *The Birth of the Modern World*, pp. 1-85 and 451-487.

David Washbrook, “Problems in Global History” in Maxine Berg, ed., *Writing the History of the Global: Challenges for the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21-32.

Matthew Mosca, “The Qing Empire in the Fabric of Global History,” in James Belich et al., *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 108-123.

Address the following questions: 1) What major issues did the authors set out to address? 2) What are the main arguments of the book/article, and how did it make its case? 3) What

do you think are the opportunities and problems of using the perspective of global/world history for historical writing in general and for writing about Chinese history in particular?

Style guide:

- Essay: 10-15 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 Font, regular margins, paginated (with full citations and bibliography—these are not included in page count). Historians must use Chicago style.
- **Due** via Moodle TBA.

State-of-the-field essay: Each student will write a state-of-the-field essay, based on a reading list created in discussion with their primary supervisor, exploring the major questions and methodological issues of their research field, and expand on their own approach to their work. Address the following questions: 1) what major issue did the author set out to address? 2) What was the source base for the evidence? 3) What are the main arguments of the book/article, and how did it make its case? 4) How does it contribute to, advance, engage with, or develop a new vantage point on a particular debate/field/subfield? 5) How do you situate your own work?

Do not write a book review. Rather, selectively pursue a particular theme/subtheme, point of contention or argument that you consider significant and interesting by demonstrating familiarity with the arguments and main contents of the works.

- Essay: 10-15 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 Font, regular margins, paginated (with full citations and bibliography—these are not included in page count).
- **Due** via Moodle on TBA.

NOTES: All assignments are due by the specified date and time. Unless there is a documented campus-wide power or internet outage, technological problems will not excuse you from the deadline. No late submissions will be accepted.

Plagiarism: If you copy other people's work without proper acknowledgement, you will fail this course. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

copying/summarizing/extracting information and ideas from books, journals, newspapers, websites (incl. Wikipedia), and other printed and electronic sources without acknowledging the source of information. Papers must be uploaded to Turnitin.com by the due date. Instructions will follow.