

Commerce and Culture in Late Imperial China

ASIAN 467/667, Spring 2007

Bruce Rusk

- △ 375 Rockefeller Hall
- M 1-2, T 11-12, & by app't.
- ✉ br79@cornell.edu
- ☎ 255.0289



This seminar is an exploration of a major topic in the study of Late Imperial China: connections between commercial, economic activity and the world of culture.

This relationship has been an explicit or implicit theme in much scholarship in China, Japan, and the West, in a range of fields including anthropology, literary studies, art history, religious studies, economic history and philosophy. We will read a variety of works, mostly recent secondary materials, to understand how these issues have been defined, analyzed, and incorporated into various programs of study.

All readings are in English, some in translation from other languages, though the use of materials in other languages for research and as supplementary reading is encouraged. The following textbooks are available for purchase at the Cornell Store, as well as on reserve at the Kroch Asian library:

- Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*
- James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China*
- Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, 2nd edition
- William Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796-1889*

The following book is available for **optional** purchase, but also available online in an electronic edition (Cornell-restricted access, ebrary reader required):

- Kenneth Pomeranz, [*The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*](#)

Course requirements

Attendance at weekly readings, prepared to discuss the assigned readings, is required. Class meetings may also involve student presentations, and discussion of class material on the Blackboard discussion forum is also encouraged. Writing requirements are as follows:

- Three short (3–5 page) response essays based on a previous week’s readings and discussion, **due in class the week after that set of readings is discussed**. These essays will be returned with feedback and can be rewritten any number of times for further feedback; only the last version submitted will count toward the final grade.
- For graduate students (667) one book review is due in class on **March 28th**. The review should be of a recent book (published in the past decade) not read in class, though reviews of a book of which we read a small portion are acceptable. It should be modeled on the reviews (of *other* books!) in major journals in a relevant field. Like the response essays, it may be rewritten any number of times.
- A single major paper (15–20 pages for undergraduates/467, typically longer for graduate students/667), based on independent research, is due Friday, May 11th. The topic and format are to be decided in consultation with the instructor. Alternative formats, including a set of shorter papers, are also possible but should be agreed upon with the instructor by the end of the sixth week of class.

Posting of essays and reviews on the Blackboard forum is encouraged.

All written work must be original and plagiarism will be taken seriously; please review Cornell’s Code of Academic Integrity at www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/main.html.

Grading

The final grade will be based on the following factors:

Participation (in-class and online)	30%
Response essays and reviews	20%
Final paper	50%

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
1 1/24	Introduction	
2 1/31	Fixed, fast frozen relations?	<p>Max Weber, <i>The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism</i>, tr. Hans H. Gerth (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1951), 84–104.</p> <p>Joseph Needham and Ray Huang [Huang Renyu], “The Nature of Chinese Society: A Technical Interpretation,” in Needham, <i>Science and Civilisation in China</i> Vol. 7, Pt. II, 43–66.</p> <p>Wu Chengming et al., <i>Chinese Capitalism, 1522–1840</i> (New York: St. Martin’s, 2000). Read the two introductions (by editors and authors), one or two body chapters of your choice, and pp. 375–410.</p> <p>Timothy Brook, “Capitalism and the Writing of Modern History in China,” from Brook and Gregory Blue, eds., <i>China and Historical Capitalism: Genealogies of Sinological Knowledge</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 110–157.</p>
3 2/7	Tasting the city	<p>Shiba Yoshinobu, “Ningpo and its Hinterland,” in G.W. Skinner, ed., <i>The City in Late Imperial China</i> (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 391–440.</p> <p>Valerie Hansen, “The Mystery of the Qingming Scroll and its Subject: The Case against Kaifeng” <i>Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies</i> 26 (1996): 183–200.</p> <p>Tsao Hsingyuan, “Unraveling the mystery of the handscroll ‘Qingming Shanghe tu’” <i>Journal of Song-Yuan Studies</i> 33 (2003): 155–179.</p> <p>Stephen West, “Playing with Food: Performance, Food, and the Aesthetics of Artificiality in the Sung and Yüan” <i>Harvard</i></p>

		<i>Journal of Asiatic Studies</i> 57/1 (1997): 67–106.
4 2/14	Mass production: Ceramics	Lothar Ledderose, <i>Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art</i> , 1–7, 75–101 Read at least two sources (articles, books in whole or part) on ceramics, including at least one on Jingdezhen. A partial list is available on the Blackboard page. If you read other languages (Chinese, Japanese, French, Dutch, etc.), consider a reading in another language along with one in English.
5 2/21	Mass Production: Worry	Brook, <i>Confusions of Pleasure</i> , “preface” and 1–152 Clunas, <i>Superfluous Things</i> , 1–90
6 2/28	Mass Production: Letters	Lucille Chia, “ <i>Mashaben</i> : Commercial Publishing in Jianyang from the Song to the Ming,” Richard von Glahn and Paul Smith, eds., <i>The Song–Yuan–Ming Transition in Chinese History</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 284–328. Joseph McDermott, “The Ascendance of the Imprint in China,” in Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., <i>Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) Shang Wei, “ <i>Jin Ping Mei</i> and Late Ming Print Culture” in Judith Zeitlin and Lydia Liu, eds., <i>Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 187–238.
7 3/7	Cultures of Commerce	Brook, <i>Confusions of Pleasure</i> , 153–237 John Lufrano, <i>Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China</i> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Chs. 1–3, 5. Ebrary version available. Richard von Glahn, “The Enchantment of Wealth: The God

		Wutong in the Social History of Jiangnan ” <i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i> 51/2 (Dec. 1991): 651–714.
8 3/14	Museum Visit Meet in Johnson Art Museum	Read at least two sources (articles, books in whole or part) on a particular art form, industry or handicraft in the late imperial period.
Spring Break		
9 3/28	Collecting and Ordering Book Review Due	Li Wai-ye, “The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility” <i>T'oung Pao</i> 81 (1995): 269–302. Judith Zeitlin, “The Petrified Heart: Obsession in Chinese Literature, Art, and Medicine” <i>Late Imperial China</i> 12/1 (1991): 1–26. Clunas, <i>Superfluous Things</i> 91–173
10 4/4	You Say <i>Who</i> Had a Revolution?	Pomeranz, The Great Divergence
11 4/11	The Price of Art	James Cahill, <i>The Painter's Practice</i> Joseph McDermott, “The Art of Making a Living in Sixteenth Century China” <i>Kaikodo Journal</i> 5 (1997): 63–81.
12 4/18	The Age of Silver	Brook, <i>Confusions of Pleasure</i> , 238–262. William Atwell, “Ming China and the Emerging World Economy, c. 1470–1650,” in <i>Cambridge History of China</i> Vol. 7, Part II, 376–416. A. Giraldez and D. Flynn, “Money and Growth without Development: The Case of Ming China,” in A.J. Latham and Heita Kawakatsu, eds., <i>Asian-Pacific Dynamism, 1550–2000</i> (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). “Eurocentrism, Sinocentrism and World History: A Symposium” (Wong, Goldstone, Duchesne, and Shahid Alam),

		<i>Science & Society</i> 67/2 (Summer 2003): 173–217.
13 4/25	The City Revisited	William Rowe, <i>Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889</i>
14 5/2	World Systems	Joseph McDermott, “Chinese Lenses and Chinese Art” <i>Kaikodo Journal</i> XIX (2001): 9–29. Jonathan Hay, “The Diachronics of Early Qing Visual and Material Culture” in Lynn Struve, ed., <i>The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 303–334. Lydia Liu, “Robinson Crusoe’s Earthenware Pot,” <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 25/4 (1999): 728–757.