

WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN CHINESE HISTORY
History HIEA 137, Winter 2003

Prof. Marta Hanson

Office at H&SS # 3044, 822-0586

M, W, F 10-10:50 Center Hall 222

T.A. Laura Lei Zhang

email: mehanson@ucsd.edu

office hours: M, W 11-12, or appt.

T.A. email: leizhang@ucsd.edu

In this course, we will examine how changes in Chinese women's experiences, social positions, and roles are inseparable from transformations in Chinese society throughout history. We will approach this issue by examining the experiences of women in China of all classes and their changing roles in the family, society, and culture. Chronologically this course will cover women in Chinese society from the Song dynasty (960-1279) to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). We will also discuss Chinese constructions of gender, masculine and feminine, and gendered divisions of the Chinese home, labor, and reproduction.

Because this is an upper-division course, classes will consist of thematic lectures about the readings for each week (Mon. and Weds.) and structured discussions in which all students are expected to participate (Fri.). This course is design to introduce you to the major issues and debates concerning women and gender in Chinese history, rather than provide you with a strictly historical narrative of Chinese women's roles. Instead of a standard narrative in lectures or reading a textbook, the focus will be twofold: How do we know about Chinese women in the past and what primary sources must we rely on to uncover their experiences? What women do we know the most and the least about? How does knowledge of women's lives in Chinese history change our understanding of Chinese society and culture? How do historians synthesize primary sources to write a convincing historical narrative about women's lives? Moreover, how can you, as a student of Chinese history, evaluate for yourself the reliability, historical value, and relevance of books on women and the family in Chinese history? If you think you need more historical background, please read Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China*.

Required Books

Overview Song-Qing (1000-1800)

1. *Women and the Family in Chinese History*. Critical Asian Scholarship. Patricia Buckley Ebrey. Routledge, 2003.
2. *Technology of Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*. Francesca Bray. University of California Press, 1997.

For Ming (1368-1644)

3. *Dangerous Women: Warriors, Grannies, and Geishas of the Ming*. Victoria Cass. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

For Qing (1644-1911)

4. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in the Seventeenth Century*. Dorothy Ko. Stanford University Press, 1994.
5. *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*. Susan Mann. Stanford University Press, 1997.

The reader for this course is available at A Soft Reserves in the Old Student Center next to the Coop. All books and the reader are also available on reserve at Geisel library. The syllabus, lecture outlines, the best responses, and study guides will all be available on the e-reserves site for this course. The library has instructions for how to get proxy access from you room. Go to "course reserves" to the right of the library home page. Search by Hanson or HIEA137.

Your final grade will be based on the following:

4 responses, no more than 2 pages, double spaced	40 (10 each, give to Laura)
Mid-term	20
Final	40
Extra Credit: Participate in all 8 Discussions	10

For those taking the course P/NP, all writing assignments, the mid-term, and final are required to pass. If you prefer to do a research paper of 15-20 pages instead of the Mid-term and Final, please talk directly with me within the first two weeks of this course.

Goal of Assignments

The primary goal of the writing assignments, mid-term, and final in this course is to give you opportunities to evaluate secondary sources on Chinese history as an historian. History books are not straightforward and self-evident accounts of the past. Historians construct their narratives of the past. By using their critical faculties to judge the quality of sources, assess their reliability, and evaluate their typicality, historians determine the relative value of extant primary sources as evidence for their arguments. Historians cannot present a completely objective, unproblematic, and self-evident account of the past; rather their craft is to construct the most persuasive narrative possible based on the sources available to them.

Your primary task in the assignments for this course will be to evaluate how persuasive each of the required books is on Chinese women's lives. Use the following questions as a guideline: What assumptions did you have about Chinese culture before you read this book? What are his or her arguments and did they change your assumptions? What were the primary sources used? Do you trust the authors of these sources? How do you judge their reliability? How does the specific experience of the individual(s) in the primary source relate to a broader trend in society? How do we as historians generalize about Chinese history from the specific experiences of those who participated in that history? The four responses to the readings give you opportunities to judge for yourself how historians use primary sources from the past to construct a reliable version today of women's lives in Chinese history.

Conceptual basis of weekly writing assignments

You should use the following questions as the basis for all your writing assignments:

- 1-author's argument, perspective, and bias: What is the author's lens?
- 2-evidence and sources used (1ary and 2ary): What did the author have available as sources for seeing into Chinese culture and society?
- 3-main contribution to Chinese history: What does the author show us that changes our understanding of Chinese culture and society?
- 4-shortcomings and limitations: What do we not see of Chinese culture and society either because of the author's approach or because of the lack of primary sources?

If there are any problems, you are responsible for informing the T.A. as well as me. Use the writing handouts as guidelines for improving the quality of your writing for the responses. It is also recommended that you use the writing resources at OASIS and in your colleges should you have further questions about writing.

If you are thinking of asking for a recommendation, you must inform me in advance and make an effort to make yourself known to me. I will do my best to make the material interesting to you, answer your questions, and assist you in achieving greater clarity in your own thought and writing. You are expected to write your best quality work for all assignments, participate actively in class discussions, and contribute to the success of the course.

WEEK 1	The Place of Women in Modern China
Mar.31 M	Introduction to the Course: Start “Small Happiness”
Apr. 2 W	Finish “Small Happiness”
Apr. 4 F	Discussion 1: Changes in Women’s Lives in Contemporary China What do interviews and the journal <i>Rural Women</i> tell us about their lives today?
Readings:	See Reader: “Economic Liberalization and New Problems for Women,” and “Village Voices, Urban Activists: Women, Violence, and Gender Inequality in Rural China.”
WEEK 2	Gender and Women during the Song Dynasty
Apr. 7 M	Dowries: Shifts in Marriage Finance from the Tang to the Song (ch. 3)
Apr. 9 W	Women, Money, and Class during the Song (ch. 1)
Apr. 11 F	Discussion 2: Concubines in Song China (ch. 2) Guidelines: How were the lives of concubines and co-wives different from primary wives. What other kind of women were in the Chinese family? How do we know about these women’s lives when we can no longer interview them?
Readings:	1. <i>Women and the Family</i> , chs. 1-3, pp. 10-88. (Ch. 4 optional) 2. Selections from <i>Family, Kinship, Gender</i> #15, 17, 38, 55, 56
WEEK 3	Family and Kinship during the Song Dynasty
Apr. 14 M	Origins of Descent Groups (ch. 5)
Apr. 16 W	Surnames and Han Chinese Identity (ch. 7)
Apr. 18 F	Discussion 3: Palace Women (ch. 8) First response due in class on Friday, April 18 Guidelines: How do we know about women and the family during the Song? What are the connections between women and money? What sources of power did women have in a system in which they were bought and sold?
Readings:	1. <i>Women and the Family</i> , chs. 5, 7, 8, pp. 107-193. (Ch. 6 optional) 2. Selections from <i>Family, Kinship, Gender</i> #29, 36, 37, 54
WEEK 4	Technologies of Gender: Women’s Space and Work
Apr. 21 M	Engendering Space (chs. 1-3)
Apr. 23 W	Engendering Work (chs. 4-6)
Apr. 25 F	Discussion 4: Women at Home Guidelines: How were social space, the domestic sphere, and work gendered in late imperial China? What does the fictional account #3 tell us about these gendered divisions in Chinese society during the Ming dynasty?
Readings:	1. <i>Technology and Gender</i> , Part One, “Building a Tradition.” 2. <i>Technology and Gender</i> , Part Two, “Women’s Work.” 3. “The Pearl-Shirt Reencountered”
WEEK 5	Technologies of Gender: Women’s Reproduction and Motherhood
Apr. 28 M	The Female Body in Chinese Medicine (ch. 7)
Apr. 30 W	Reproduction and Reproductive Hierarchies (ch. 8-9)
May. 2 F	Discussion 5: Women and Medicine Second response due in class Friday, May 2. Guidelines: How was the female body understood in Chinese medicine? How were women involved in their own health care and in delivering medical care within the family? What do we learn about women, reproduction, and the family structure through the lens of medicine? Use Bray, Cullen, and selections from the novel “The Plum in the Golden Vase” to support your arguments.
Readings:	1. <i>Technology and Gender</i> , Part Three, “Meanings of Motherhood.” 2. Cullen article and selections from <i>Jin Ping Mei</i> related to medicine.

WEEK 6	Dangerous Women: Fictional Accounts of Female Deviance
May 5 M	Geishas, Grannies, Warriors, and Recluses
May 7 W	Discussion 6: Female Strategies of Resistance, Focus on “The Cloud-Scraper”
May 9 F	No Class
Readings:	1. <i>Dangerous Women</i> , chs. 1-3, 1-64, the Great Ming, Geishas, and Grannies. 2. <i>Dangerous Women</i> , chs. 4-7, 65-124, Warriors, Mystics, Predators, etc. 3. Li Yu, “The Cloud-Scraper”
WEEK 7	Teachers of the Inner Chambers: 17 th -century Writings on Women
May 12 M	Mid-Term: Ideal Women in the Song and Dangerous Women of the Ming Open book and notes mid-term. Prepare as well as you would any other exam.
May 14 W	Social and Private Histories of Women (chs. 1-2)
May 16 F	Womanhood (chs. 3-4)
Readings:	1. <i>Teachers of the Inner Chambers</i> , Part I & II, chs. 1-4, pp. 1-178. 2. Selections from the <i>Peony Pavilion</i> .
WEEK 8	Teachers of the Inner Chambers: 17 th -century Women’s Culture
May 19 M	Domestic, Social, and Public Communities (chs. 5-6)
May 21 W	Transitory Communities (ch. 7)
May 23 F	Discussion 7: Writing Women Third response to readings due in class Friday, May 23 Guidelines: Using either the <i>Peony Pavilion</i> or “The Couple Bound in Life and Death” (or both) to illustrate Ko’s arguments about ideals of womanhood in writings by men about women. Does the emergence of writings by women in the 17 th century reinforce or change these ideals? What has changed for women?
Readings:	1. <i>Teachers of the Inner Chambers</i> , Part III, chs. 5-7, 179-296. 2. “The Couple Bound in Life and Death”
WEEK 9	Precious Records: 18 th -century Writings on Women
May 26 M	Memorial Day holiday
May 28 W	Gender and the Life Course of Women (ch. 2-3)
May 30 F	Writing and Entertaining Women (chs. 4-5)
Readings:	1. <i>Precious Records</i> , by Susan Mann, chs. 1-5, 1-142. 2. Selections from <i>Women Poets of China</i>
WEEK 10	Precious Records: 18 th -century Women’s Lives
June 2 M	Discussion 8: The Multiple Dimensions of Women’s Lives Fourth response to readings due in class Friday, June 6 Guidelines: According to Susan Mann, what were the major changes that transformed views of women and changed their lives over the course of the long eighteenth century? What do we learn from the poetry of women of the same time about the complexity of their lives? Use the selections of poetry to support your arguments. Do you have a favorite poem? Why?
June 4 W	Working and Pious Women (chs. 6-7)
June 6 F	Gender Relations Through Space and Time (ch. 8)
Readings:	1. <i>Precious Records</i> , by Susan Mann, chs. 6-8, 143-226.
WEEK 11	FINALS WEEK
June 10 Tues	Open Book Final Exam. 8-11 am. Center Hall 222. Guidelines for the Final Exam will be handed out during Week 10. If you chose to write a research paper, it is also due by noon on this day.