HIEA 128: HISTORY OF MATERIAL CULTURE IN CHINA

Fall Quarter, 2009

Time: Tu Th, 2:00-3:20
Place: Peterson 103
Professor: Suzanne Cahill
Office: HSS 3040
Phone: (858) 534-8105
Office Hours: Th 10AM - noon
E-mail: secjbm34@aol.com or by appointment

Introduction

This course introduces the history of material culture in China. We will begin with definitions of material culture, then look at its importance in the context of Chinese history and culture. One underlying assumption is that things change over time in response to historical forces. Another is that objects reflect people’s beliefs and values and that we can use them to analyze these beliefs and values. We will study various types of things (houses, works of art, clothing, religious artifacts and paraphernalia) as well as ways of making and using things. Our approach is interdisciplinary: that is, we use ideas and materials from several academic disciplines in order to examine material culture in China as thoroughly as we can. Disciplines include history, architecture, design, technology, archaeology, religious studies, anthropology, sociology, and critical gender studies. We read both primary and secondary sources, and view art and film as well as texts.

Requirements

There are no prerequisites. Each student should come to class with the reading for that day finished, participate in discussions, and complete all assignments. You must complete all required assignments to pass the class. There are four. First, each student will bring something connected to material culture in China to share with the class (10% of your grade). We will schedule this to take place at the beginning of class throughout the quarter. Second, there will be an in-class midterm exam consisting of essays and identifications (30%). Third, a project or paper (10 pages) is due on the last day of classes (30%). Suitable projects include small research topics, site visits, fieldwork, fiction, drama, art, structural or production analysis. You must clear your topic with me by the sixth week. You may do projects together. The fourth and last assignment will be a take-home final exam consisting of essays covering material from after the midterm (30%).
**Required Texts:** listed in the order of use  
Texts are available at the University Book Store.  
They are also available on reserve at Geisel Library.

Ronald Knapp, *China’s Living Houses*, University of Hawai’i Press, 1999  
ISBN: 0-8248-2079-7  
Dorothy Ko, *Every Step A Lotus*, Berkeley, University of California, 2001  
ISBN: 0-520-23284  
ISBN 0691009570  
Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, Honolulu, University of Hawai’i, 2004  
ISBN: 0-8248-1888

**Recommended text**  
ISBN 0520054628, 9780520054622

**TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**  
Assignments are due on day they are listed; books are listed by the author’s surname.

**Week Zero**

Sept. 24  
I. **INTRODUCTION**  
Aims, Issues, Definitions, Requirements  
Assignment: Buy your books; first reading assignment due Tuesday

**Week One**

Sept. 29  
A. **The House Reflects Hopes and Desires**  
Reading: Knapp, Chapters 1 through 5
Oct. 1  B.  The House Reflects Fears
Reading:  Knapp, Chapters 6 through 9
Video:  Chinese Shamans

Week Two

III.  GENDER AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN CHINA

Oct. 6  A.  Introduction:  Cultural Constructions of Gender
B.  The Case of Bound Feet
Reading:  Ko, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Oct. 8  C.  Women’s Bodies, Women’s Work, Women’s Virtues:  Shoe as Text
Reading:  Ko, Chapters 3 through 5

Week Three

IV.  CHINESE SCIENCE:  DISCOVERY, INVENTION, AND TECHNOLOGY

Oct. 13  A.  Farming, Astronomy, and Engineering
Video:  The Genius That Was China
Reading:  Temple, Parts One through Three

Oct. 15  B.  Industrial Technology, Medicine, Math, and Magnetism
Reading:  Temple, Parts Four Through Seven

Week Four

Oct. 20  C.  Physical Sciences, Transportation, Sound, and War
Reading:  Temple, Parts Eight through Eleven

Oct. 22  MIDTERM
Week Five

V. HOW CHINESE THINGS WERE MADE

Oct. 27  A. Modular Construction: Writing, Bronze, and the Terra Cotta Army  
Reading: Leddrose, Introduction, Chapters 1 through 3

Oct. 29  B. Modular Construction: Factory Art, Roofs, and Printing  
Reading: Ledderose, Chapters 4 through 6  
PAPER OR PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

Week Six

Nov. 3  C. Modular Construction: Hell and the Question of Creativity  
Reading: Ledderose, Chapters 7 and 8

VI. RELIGION AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN CHINA

Nov. 5  A. Buddhism  
Reading: Kieschnick, Introduction and Chapter One

Week Seven

Nov. 10  B. Symbolism and Merit  
Reading: Keischnick, Chapters Two and Three

Nov. 12  C. Accidents and Monks’ Influence  
Reading: Finish Kieschnick

Week Eight

VII. STATUS, ANXIETY, AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN MING CHINA

Nov. 17  A. Books and Ideas About Things  
Reading: Clunas, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2
Nov. 19  
**B. Words about Things and the Use of Antiques**
Reading: Clunas, Chapters 3 and 4

**Week Nine**

Nov. 24  
**C. Things for Sale and as Causes of Anxiety**
Reading: Clunas, Chapters 5 and 6 and Conclusion

**Week Ten**

Dec. 1  
**VIII. MATERIAL CULTURE IN CHINESE MOVIES**

Dec. 3  
Student Presentations, Questions, Odds and Ends

**PROJECT OR PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**

Final Exam handed out at end of class

**March 17**  
**FINAL EXAM DUE** at 2:30 PM in Prof Cahill’s office, HSS 3040
PAPER OR PROJECT

You may choose almost anything that fits within the subject matter of our course. You may do a group project. Some possible types of paper or project include:

1. Research paper with a narrow focus
2. Fieldwork, survey, or site report
3. Art history paper
4. Art project, installation, or model
5. Drama or music
6. Fiction or poetry
7. Fake primary sources such as letters, journals, instructions: historical documents of any kind
8. Game/game analysis
9. Literature or film criticism
10. Class presentation or demonstration

The paper or project will be judged on topic, research, effort, analysis, and the quality of the final product. Prof Cahill must approve your topic. At least three academic sources are required. Wikipedia is not an academic source, although you may use it to lead you to appropriate sources. You may use DVD or other new media for your final product. Make sure that you use equipment and formats compatible with Professor Cahill’s. CHECK! If you write a paper, it should be about 10 pages long (double-spaced). A group paper or project would need to be proportionately longer. You may use any standard format for footnotes and bibliography. Papers and projects may not be submitted by e-mail. (You are turning them in on the last day of classes; the chance for loss or bad transmission is too great.)
DYNASTIES AND THEIR DATES

B.C.E.

Xia ca. 2100-1600
Shang ca. 1600-1028
Zhou ca. 1027-256
Western Zhou ca. 1027-771
Eastern Zhou ca. 770-256
Spring and Autumn 722-468
Warring States 403-221
Qin 221-207
Han 206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.
Former Han 206 B.C.E-8 C.E.

C.E.

Xin 9-25
Latter Han 25-220
Three Kingdoms 220-265
Wei 220-265
Shu 221-263
Wu 222-280
Jin 265-420
Western Jin 265-317
Eastern Jin 317-420
Six Dynasties 420-589
SOUTHERN
Liu Song 420-479
Southern Qi 470-502
Southern Liang 502-557
Southern Chen 557-589
NORTHERN
Northern Wei 386-534
Eastern Wei 534-550
Western Wei 535-577
Northern Qi 550-577
Northern Zhou 557-581
Sui 581-618
Tang 618-907
  Zhou 690-705
Five Dynasties 907-960
  Liao 916-1125
Song 960-1279
  Northern Song 960-1126
  Southern Song 1127-1279
Jin (Jurchen) 1115-1234
Yuan (Mongols) 1260-1368
Ming 1368-1644
Qing 1644-1911
Republic (Taiwan) 1911-
People’s Republic 1949-