

HISTORY 370

5 credits

GODS AND DEMIGODS FROM YAO TO MAO: HISTORY OF CHINESE STATECRAFT

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Humanities 267

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HISTORY 370

HISTORY OF CHINESE STATECRAFT

THE COURSE:

The political and social aspects of China's long history are better documented than for any other civilization, including the ancient Greek and Mesopotamian cultures, and ancient Chinese political thought is deals with a more complex bureaucratic state than does the political philosophy of the Greeks or even the Romans. The Europeans have never really moved ahead of China in terms of the complexity of their stateforms, though they have become just about as bureaucratic as the Chinese over the last couple of centuries, often on the basis of quite self-conscious borrowings from the Chinese.

As a consequence, students of Chinese political and ruling class social history can all find grist for their mills in various aspects of the evolution of China's private and public economies. Historians of China can learn some good Public Choice political theory (derived from Austrian School of economic theory, which fueled the postwar German and post-Communist Czech "economic miracles") within which to frame their narratives. Students of political thought can use the history of China to test ideas they may have formulated in a European or North American context. This course is designed to serve all of these purposes.

TEXT:

The textbook for this course is the instructor's *Gods and Demigods From Yao To Mao: History of Chinese Statecraft* (version 1.4, Fall 1996). If you have a computer with access to the Web, you can download the fifty chapters of this text from the instructor's web site (<http://www.wvu.edu/~kaplan>). If not, you may order the text from the Independent Learning office by using the lavender book order form in this information packet.

COURSE FORMAT:

The written text plays the role of spoken lectures in a lecture course. The instructor is available for tutorial aid and individual discussion on campus in HU 267 every day from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, and by phone or e-mail at other times. Phone: 650-3448 (office; will take messages after several unanswered rings); or 734-3927 (most evenings until c. 10 pm). E-mail: kaplan@cc.wvu.edu.

EXAMINATIONS:

There are ten quizzes. To keep up momentum and not lose the reinforcement effect of fresh memory of preceding chapters on ones currently being read, it is recommended that Independent Study students prepare to take a quiz at least every week or so. Each quiz will cover five chapters (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and so on), and consists of only one question, drawn at random from the study questions appended to the texts of each chapter. The quizzes are "open note." You will need to schedule your quizzes in advance of when you wish to take them. ***Please

refer to the blue exam request form included in the introductory packet for instructions on scheduling exams.***

As an option, on-campus students may take quizzes during the instructor's office hours between Monday and Friday, or at other mutually agreeable times. You may do quizzes early — e.g. by doing two or more quizzes per week—but it is not recommended that you prepare for any fewer than one quiz per week.

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

In addition to the text, students taking this as a writing intensive course should read five monograph-length books (c. 200 pages) or ten articles from scholarly journals, or some combination of books and articles equivalent to five monographs (with two articles as the equivalent of one monograph). The non-writing intensive requirement is three monographs or six articles.

Your readings should focus on some one topic of interest to you falling within the parameters of the course, in either its historical or political theory dimensions. (Some students will be taking this course primarily because they are interested in China; others because they are curious about Public Choice political theory, and wish to see how it may be applied a series of concrete historical situations. Both types of students are free to pursue their primary interests in selecting their readings.)

Early on after signing up for the course, but in any case by the time the second text quiz is taken, a student should hand in a single-sheet annotated bibliography indicating the works you plan to read for your writing assignments. At the top of the sheet should appear a topic, stated as specifically as possible. Flipping pages in the course text and pausing to read a paragraph that captures your attention is a good way to pin down a suitable topic. The bibliographies at the end of the chapters are also legitimate sources of additional readings. The statement of a topic should be followed by a paragraph describing the topic in somewhat greater detail and an annotated bibliography of proposed readings. Annotations are not summaries but rather are indications of the basis for accepting a work's authority in dealing with a specific topic or topics. The items and annotations should be drawn from standard bibliographic sources (such as the bibliographies appended to each chapter of the text and the various specialized bibliographic works mentioned in the essay on library research comprising part A of the first chapter of the course text). The instructor will promptly return this sheet to the student, perhaps with further suggestions or substitute readings appended to it.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

These will comprise five successive reports (for writing intensive students) or three reports (for non-writing intensive students) composed after reading each monograph or pair of scholarly journal articles. These should be typed (if possible, word processed, and printed out in at least near letter quality mode), each report including reworked versions of its predecessors. Ideally, these should be submitted at two-week intervals.

Each report should include the following three elements: (1) a précis (i.e. summary of the original preserving the structure of its argument) of the work (and, from the second report on, a corrected version of each preceding précis, along with the original draft, for comparison purposes), (2) a critical comparison of the work with each preceding work read (except for the first report), and (3) a critical comparison of the work with relevant material from the appropriate chapter(s) of the text, or (if the text does not deal with this topic) with how (on the basis of your understanding of the text's general approach) the text likely would have handled this topic. You should not hesitate to correspond with the instructor on this last point.

The final report will in effect be a thoroughly revised bibliographic essay. As each new reading assignment widens and deepens your knowledge of the topic, you will find that you need to rewrite parts (2) and (3) substantially for each new draft. This should not alarm you. Such revision is of the essence of the scholarly writing experience.

Satisfactory completion of this course with five reading assignments as described above satisfied Western's writing intensive requirement. Please let the Independent Learning office know you intend to take the course "writing intensive *before* you begin the class.

GRADING:

For students taking the writing intensive option, your final grade will be based 50% on exams, 50% on writing assignments. Student not taking the writing intensive option will receive a final grade based 75% on quizzes, 25% on written assignments.

GETTING COURSE MATERIAL FROM THE WEB SITE:

The URL (electronic address) of the instructor's web site is <http://www.wvu.edu/~kaplan>. If you have difficulty getting through, as happens with some versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer, first go to <http://www.wvu.edu> and then add the `/~kaplan` after the `.edu` and hit the enter key.

The material for downloading to your computer employs a program called Adobe Acrobat. To read on screen or print out this material on your printer you need a special reader program. By clicking on the underlined cue **Download Free** at the beginning of the web site, you can download this reader program at no charge. Be sure to follow the on-screen instructions for installing the reader once it has been downloaded.

You can then download the chapters of the course text as you need them by clicking with the **right** mouse button the underlined chapter number (e.g. **Ch. 1**) and selecting (by clicking on it with the **left** mouse button) the appropriate option on the menu that pops up. (The wording of that option will vary on different browsers. On most versions of Netscape it is "Save this link as . . ."). You are invited by this menu to select a drive and (sub)directory on your computer for the file to be directed to. Then, open up the Adobe Reader, call up the file from the file menu, and either read or print out the file. It might be best to download each chapter just before you need it as they are updated on a frequent but irregular schedule.