“Jung said that, confronted with a totally alien culture, the European intellectual may take one of two courses. He may reject his own tradition and attempt to assimilate with the alien culture. Or he may reject the alien culture and close himself up in the traditions of the West, to which he is accustomed by birth and breeding .... Jung said that attempting to find a middle road among these complexities is one of the major tasks facing the contemporary Western intellectual.”


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**COURSE INTRODUCTION AND SYLLABUS**

**Meeting Time/Place:** Monday and Wednesday, 2:45-4:05 P.M., ES 245  
**Instructor:** Prof. Jim Hargett (何瞻); Office: HU 254C, 442-4233  
E-mail: James.Hargett@gmail.com  
**Office Hours:** M and W, 2:00-2:45 PM (or by appointment)  
**Recommended text:** Colin, Mackerras, *Western Images of China* (revised edition). Relevant sections from this book are available on the university library’s Electronic Reserves (or “ERES”) system, so you do NOT have to buy a copy of this book.

**Course Description and Introduction:** The main concern of this course is the Western “discovery” and occasional “rediscovery” of China from the late thirteenth century to the present. The basic premise of the class is this: Westerners—defined here as Americans and Europeans—have always “seen” China through a uniquely Western perspective. In other words, our own cultural background to a large extent “programs” how we see China and all things Chinese. Our goal in this class is to isolate, discuss, and define the most persistent images of China in the West and how these images have developed and changed over time. The sources we use will vary. For instance, we will consider written records left by some famous Western visitors to China, including Marco Polo and the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, as well as the film version (1939) of Pearl Buck’s novel *The Good Earth*. We will also look at some films/videos that feature various stereotypes of China and its people, as well as some documentaries that will change the way you see and think about China. This approach—that is, looking *comparatively* at Western images of China as they have developed over the last seven centuries—will allow you to observe and better understand the origins and implications of Western stereotypes of non-Western cultures, especially China.

The course is organized as follows: Students will first complete a reading assignment, such as a chapter in Mackerras’ *Western Images of China*, or observe a video presentation, such as the CBS documentary *Misunderstanding China*. Class meetings will be devoted to (1) presentation of background information related to the reading assignment or film; and (2) active, open discussion of specific topics and questions related to the readings.

By examining “China Through Western Eyes” you will have an opportunity to explore the actual sources of understanding (or misunderstanding) between two very different cultures. Our
discussions and written assignments will attempt to reveal how and why these perceptions (or misperceptions) affect understanding between China and the West. It is hoped that, after completing this course, students will look at themselves in relation to non-Western cultures with a keener, critical eye—one that will look beyond stereotypes and distortions for truth and understanding.

**Prerequisites:** None. This is a survey course open to anyone.

**Grading:** Your final grade will be determined by (1) your attendance, your preparation, and your contributions to class discussions (33.3%); (2) your grade on the mid-term exam (33.3%); and (3) your grade on the final exam (33.3%).

**Attendance and Makeups:** Students are expected to attend all classes. Makeup exams will be given only if the absence was due to a documented medical or personal emergency, which is confirmed in writing (to me) by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Do not call or email me after an exam and tell me you were too sick to take the test!

**Academic Integrity:** The discovery of any cheating on an exam will result in (1) immediate expulsion from the course with a failing grade; and (2) a report to appropriate SUNY officials. Appeals may be made through appropriate channels.

**How to do well in this course:** (1) carefully read and prepare the reading assignments before class; (2) attend class regularly and take detailed notes; (3) actively participate in classroom discussions (this means raise your hand and participate!); and (4) always bring to class a copy of your notes on the assigned readings.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS (EAC 150)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 28 Aug</td>
<td>Introductory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 30 Aug</td>
<td>Film: <em>China: Dynasties of Power</em> (available on-line at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m1jSrO_s-o">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m1jSrO_s-o</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 4 Sept</td>
<td>No class (Labor Day)</td>
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<td>W 13 Sept</td>
<td>Class discussion of Kuralt’s documentary; Edward Said and “Orientalism.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 20 Sept</td>
<td>No class (Rosh Hashanah).</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 25 Sept</td>
<td>Lecture and discussion of the Song dynasty (960-1279) and the “Qing Ming Scroll.”</td>
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W 27 Sept: Read Chapter 5 (“From Peking to Amoy”) in *The Travels of Marco Polo* (available on ERES). Lecture and discussion on the Yuan dynasty and Marco Polo’s account of his visit to China; also read: *Western Images of China*, 24-38 (“Jesuit Missionaries and the Philosophers”). Lecture and discussion of Jesuit activities in China, focusing on the missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610).


W 18 Oct: No class (I need to be out of town).

M 23 Oct: Discussion of *The Good Earth*  
Midterm examination.

W 25 Oct: 

M 30 Oct: Documentary: Arthur Dong’s *Hollywood Chinese* 
W  1 Nov: Discussion of *Hollywood Chinese*

M  6 Nov: Movie: *China Blue* (2005)

W  8 Nov: Discussion of *China Blue*


W 15 Nov: Discussion of *Last Train Home*

M 20 Nov: Assignment to be announced later.

W 22 Nov: No class (Thanksgiving)

M 27 Nov: Movie: *China’s Lost Girls*

W 29 Nov: Discussion of *China’s Lost Girls*

M  4 Dec: Movie: *Up the Yangtze* (2007)

W  6 Dec: Discussion

M 11 Dec: Assignment to be announced.

Final Examination: Thursday Dec. 14th 10:30am – 12:30pm. ES 245