

HH1002 Asia-Pacific in Global History: Pre-1800

Academic Year: 2026-2027, S1

AU: 3 AU

Course Type: Lecture and Tutorial

Lecturer: Dr. Alasdair Chi alasdair.chi@ntu.edu.sg

Locations and Timeslots

- Lecture: **LT29 (South Spine, SS2-B1-16)**, Fridays 1230-1420
- Tutorial Group 1: **TR+92 (South Spine, SS2-01-13)**, 1430-1520
- Tutorial Groups 2, 3, 4: **LHS-TR+29 (The Hive, LHS-B2-06)**
 - (Group 2) 1530-1620; (Group 3) 1630-1720; (Group 4) 1730-1820

Learning Outcomes

This course is intended to introduce students to the ancient complex societies which emerged in the Asia-Pacific region, notably in India and China, and to encourage students to understand the origins of these societies in the context of other early civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and their development in a uniquely Asian context. The goals are to learn and develop the following:

- Understanding of the role geography played in the emergence of complex societies in South and East Asia vis-à-vis notable case studies in the Near East (Mesopotamia and Egypt).
- Understanding of historical processes at work across a wide range of pre-colonial Asian cultural contexts anchored in South, East, and Southeast Asian societies.
- Skills in interpreting primary source materials from pre-colonial South, East, and Southeast Asia, including palaeontology and archaeology.
- Skills in using secondary scholarly materials to develop evidence-based, well-reasoned arguments about the relationship of these primary materials to broader historical trends.
- Historical empathy for a wide range of social groups in Asia up till 1800.

Course Aims and Content

In *Asia-Pacific in Global History: Pre-1800*, students embark on a journey through time to revisit numerous events, historical personages, and civilizations and societies, some of which are only represented by dilapidated architectural remains. This course begins its narrative in prehistory and investigates how the earliest complex societies developed in Asia-Pacific regions, such as the Indus Valley and Yellow River region of China. The story spans hundreds of millennia from the earliest known appearance of human fossil remains through the development of societies in Asia and the Pacific up 1800, when the continent could be said to have been integrated into a single global system.

Course materials begin with scholarly accounts of family life, state-formation, sexuality, economics, and religion from contexts as wide mainland Southeast Asian polities, the Chinese “Golden Ages” in the Tang and Song dynasties, and the Korean kingdoms, and those concerning international events such as the 14th-century plague throughout Asia and Europe from historical, archaeological and anthropological perspectives. You will also be exposed to literature from these realms to vividly bring their inhabitants to life. These texts will include ancient epics, Confucian texts on the state and family, and the political intrigues within the courts of Ayudhya as encapsulated in the seminal *Kāmasūtra*, alongside popular stories in Chinese folklore.

Format

This class is taught in lecture and tutorial form, with one 1-hour lecture and one 1-hour tutorial per week where students will be expected to participate in guided class discussions. Students should ensure they have completed the required weekly readings as this forms the basis of the tutorial discussion. These tutorial readings will usually be made available via NTULearn, or links provided in the portal.

Office Hours

I am a part-time lecturer but will be free after class most times and will be on campus on Friday as well. Just send me an email and we can plan a time around our schedules as I may be seeing multiple students. Give me one day to respond.

Student Assessment

The assessment for this course comprises of the following elements:

- **Participation (In-Class):** 10%, Continuous
- **Weekly Online Submissions:** 10%, Continuous
- **Midterm Essay (Primary Source Assignment):** 25%, Week 7
- **Research Essay proposal:** 15%, Week 12-13
- **Research Essay:** 40% After Week 13

Class Participation (10%): In addition to this, in-class group discussion will be an important means by which you will learn from your peers and build important skills during tutorials, including constructing convincing arguments; analysing primary and secondary sources; and verbal communication. As such, your contribution to the discussion in class will be assessed. It is not enough to merely turn up to class; rather, you will be assessed on the extent to which you participate in and contribute to the class discussion.

Weekly Online Submissions (10%): Each week, you are to submit online a maximum 300-word response to the week's readings. You will submit this response 2 days before the class to give other students the opportunity to read through your argument. You will discuss these one-page analyses of the readings in small discussion groups in tutorial. In these discussions with other students, you will come together to formulate evidence-based, well-reasoned arguments for your interpretations of the primary sources of that week.

Midterm Primary Source Assignment and Essay Questions (25%): You will submit a 1500-word essay (due in Week 7). The role of the student will be to analyse primary sources with support from and secondary sources to conceptualize and explain the reasons for the historical process outlined in the argument.

- **Primary source analysis** is a key skill that is required for historical research. In this short essay, you will practice analyzing the ideas about the development of societies in Asia as expressed in historical primary sources. You are required to answer all questions concerning **ONE** primary source from the history of Asia before 1800. Evaluate your chosen primary source to address its significance within Asian history and its treatment in secondary literature.

Research Essay Proposal (15%): Developing a research question is a key skill required for historical research. As such, in your major essay, you will be required to develop your own research project and write your own essay question. This assignment will prepare you for your major essay assignment by giving you the chance to receive feedback on your project. The assignment has two sections:

Section A: Research proposal (maximum 300 words)

You will write a proposal for the research essay containing the following elements:

1. Statement of the essay question (this is not the same as an essay topic or subject area and needs to take the form of a *question*).
2. Summary of background research conducted to date, noting: i) the key issues in the secondary source literature; ii) the available primary sources for the topic.
3. The theoretical approach or approaches you will take in the essay.

Section B: Annotated bibliography (maximum 500 words, not counting citations)

This section takes the form of an annotated bibliography, that is, a list of sources with an annotation following each source explaining why the source is relevant to your essay. The purpose of the annotated bibliography is to help you prioritize your time by reading the most relevant sources and to demonstrate the extent of your research thus far. The annotated bibliography should include **6** sources, at least **1** of which should be a primary source not already in the course materials. An annotation of 50 words should be included following each referenced source.

This annotation should not only state what the source is about but also explain why it is relevant to your research. The sources should be properly referenced in the Chicago style outlined in the course style guide. 3-10% will be deducted for incorrect referencing style. The citations themselves do not count towards the word limit of 500 words.

You are expected to have read all of the sources referenced (at least in part). It will be quite obvious from the annotations if you haven't read much of the sources you include. You will present essay outlines and annotated bibliographies for your Final Assignment in Week 12 or 13 and be evaluated for your ability to clearly explain your reasoning and choose sources which are relevant for your research question.

Research Essay (40%): You will be examined on the historical processes at work throughout pre-colonial Asia but the focus will be on case studies in India, China, and Southeast Asia. The final assignment (2000 words) will test your understanding of how to interpret key primary sources based on leading scholarship. You will present a clear research question and hypothesis, review the scholarly literature on the topic, collect and synthesize the data, and state a clear conclusion.

The essay question you have developed should appear at the beginning of the first page of the essay. Please use the Chicago referencing style (outlined in the Course Style Guide.) 3-10% will be deducted for incorrect referencing style. This will be due after Week 13.

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Bibliography and Citation Style

All citations are to be rendered in footnotes and accompanied with a complete bibliography rendered in the Chicago 16th or 17th Manual of Style. Poor citations will be marked down according to rubrics. Familiarise yourself with the difference between a footnote citation and bibliographic entry.

Plagiarism

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values. As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty.

You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

GAI Usage

Use of General Artificial Intelligence (GAI) is permitted in the following situations:

- i. *Ideation*: Students may generative AI tools to help **generate and develop ideas for unsupervised (e.g., take-home) assignments**. No digital paper trail is required for this.
- ii. *Editing*: Students may use AI tools for **editing the final version of unsupervised (e.g., take-home) assignments** for style and clarity. While AI-edited text may be submitted for assignments, **it remains forbidden to use AI to write essays from first principle**, and all use of AI must be cited with a digital paper trail (*see below*).

Students must preserve a **digital paper trail** showing the way the GAI assistant was used. This should be a Word document specifying the particular GAI assistant used and include the prompts given to the GAI assistant and the GAI output, or outputs if several are generated. Undeclared use of GAI assistance will be marked down in the same terms as failure to declare sources and ideas via citations.

On the Digital Paper Trail

Students are required, besides submitting the final work in the NTULearn facility, to also submit the paper trail as a Word document or documents, in a section following the bibliography for this purpose under NTULearn. For assignments where the submission is non-digital, the students can create a photo journal or a blog to document the journey and submit the pdf of this instead.

This digital paper trail must be maintained for later reference, at least until the end of the Academic Year following the semester in which the relevant assignment is submitted. This is to preserve the potential evidence in case there is a later complaint or suspicion relating to academic integrity violations regarding that submission, or for further investigation by the school or other schools or the university when other academic integrity matters are raised regarding the same student, and it is deemed desirable to cross-check conduct in earlier courses.

The student must sign and submit with the assignment/project write-up a declaration regarding such use. In addition, the student must provide footnote or in-text references in the submission indicating any text paraphrase or significant fact or idea that originated with the GAI assistant.

See example below:

Reference list entry example (with a shareable link generated by the AI tool)

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Aug 7 version) [Large language model].

<https://chat.openai.com/share/46ce4720-19bd-4c21-84f0-7a69ec4af03d>

Reading List

Texts subject to changes.

Core text (three editions):

- Murphey, Rhoads. *A History of Asia*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2014. 7th edition.
- [Murphey, Rhoads. *A History of Asia*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2009. 6th edition.]
- [Murphey, Rhoads. *A History of Asia*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005. 5th edition.]

The latest edition of the core textbook can be purchased at the university bookstore.

Lectures

- **Week 1:** Bellwood, Peter. *First Migrants: Ancient Migration in Global Perspective*. Malden, Oxford, and West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2013. Chapter 2: Making Inferences about Prehistoric Migration; Chapter 6: The First Farmers and Their Offspring [Additional Reading]
- **Week 2:** Murphey, Chapter 1 [Review]
- **Week 3:** Liu, L., & Chen, X. Domestication of plants and animals. In *The Archaeology of China: From the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age (Cambridge World Archaeology)*, pp.75-122. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139015301.004
- **Week 4:** Bellwood, Peter. Austronesian Prehistory in Southeast Asia: Homeland, Expansion and Transformation in *Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, pp.103-118. Australia: ANU Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jbjx1.8>
- **Week 5:** Ali, Daud (2002). "Anxieties of Attachment: The Dynamics of Courtship in Medieval India," *Modern Asian Studies* 36(1): 103-139.
- **Week 5:** Roy, Kumkum (1992). "The King's Household: Structure/Space in the Sastric Tradition," *Economic and Political Weekly* 27(43/44): 55-60.
- **Week 6 (also tutorial reading):** Chang, K. C. *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, Harvard University Press, 2012
- **Week 7 (and additional reading):** Benjamin, C. *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE–250 CE* (New Approaches to Asian History). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. doi:10.1017/9781316335567
- **Week 8:** Wade, G (2009). "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900-1300 CE", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, 2: 221-65
- **Week 8 and Week 9:** Andaya, B. and Andaya, L. *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, Chapter 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- **Week 9:** Gordon, Stewart. *When Asia was the World*, "Introduction" and "Xuanzang". London, Yale, 2008.
- **Week 9:** Thapar, Romila. *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, Chapter 9. London: Penguin, 2003.
- **Week 9 Additional Reading and Week 10:** Tambiah, S. *World Conqueror & World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, Chapters 5 and 7 [Chapter 6: Additional]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- **Week 11:** Andaya, B. and Andaya, L. *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, Chapter 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Tutorials

- **Week 2:** Liu, L., & Chen, X. (2012). Foragers and collectors in the Pleistocene-Holocene transition (24,000–9000 cal. BP). In *The Archaeology of China: From the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age (Cambridge World Archaeology)*, pp.42-74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139015301.004
- **Week 2:** Barnes, G. L. (2015). Early Holocene Subsistence Patterns: (10,000–5000 years ago = 8000–3000 BC). In *Archaeology of East Asia: The Rise of Civilization in China, Korea and Japan*, pp. 96–125. Oxbow Books. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt19893vd.11>
- **Week 3:** Yuan Jing, Rowan Flad, and Luo Yunbing (2008). Meat Acquisition Patterns in the Neolithic Yangzi River Valley, China. *Antiquity* 82: 351-366
- **Week 3:** O'Connor (2015). Rethinking the Neolithic in Island Southeast Asia, with Particular Reference to the Archaeology of Timor-Leste and Sulawesi, *Archipel*, 90: 15-47.
- **Week 4:** Frenez, Dennys. (2023) Indus Valley: Early Commercial Connections with Central and Western Asia. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.595>.
- **Week 4:** Higham, Charles. (2011) “The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia: New Insight on Social Change from Ban Non Wat.” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 21 (3): 365–89. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0959774311000424>.
- **Week 4:** Zhen-Tao, Xu, F. R. Stephenson, and Jiang Yao-Tiao. "Astronomy on oracle bone inscriptions." *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society*, Vol. 36, p. 397 36 (1995): 397.
- **Week 5:** Shamasastri, R. *Kautilya's Arthashastra (translated in English)*. Sri Raghuvir Printing Press, Mysore, 1956
- **Week 5:** Burton, Richard. *The Vatsayayana Kama Sutra*. Project Gutenberg, 1883.
- **Week 6:** Legge, Richard. *Sacred Books of the East, volume 28, part 4: The Li Ki*. Ctext.org, 1885.
- **Week 6:** *Xunzi*. Ctext.org, 2026.
- **Week 7:** Christian, D (2000). Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History. *J World Hist* 11(1):1–26.
- **Week 7 (also tutorial reading):** Taylor, K.W. “The Early Kingdoms”, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp.137-82.
- **Week 8:** Zhang, Cong Ellen (2018). *Record of the Listener: Selected Stories from Hong Mai's Yijian Zhi*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- **Week 9:** Xuanzang and Li Rongxi. *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*. Moraga, California: BDK Society, 2017.
- **Week 10:** Polo, M., Yule, H., Cordier, H. *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition*. United Kingdom: Dover Publications, 1993.
- **Week 10:** Zhou Daguan. *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People*. Translated by Harris, P. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2007.
- **Week 11:** Ma Huan, *Ying-yai Sheng-lan, The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores* [1433]. Translated by Mills, J, 1970.

Timetable for HH3033 Buddhism: A Social and Intellectual History

Week / Session	Topics / Themes	Readings	Activities / Deadlines
1	Course Introduction and Overview; Prehistoric Migrations	Murphey , <i>A History of Asia</i> : Chapter 1 Bellwood, Chapter 6 <u>Additional Readings</u> Bellwood, Chapter 2	No tutorial
2	Humans at the End of the Last Ice Age	Murphey , Chapter 1 [Review] <u>Tutorial Readings</u> Liu and Chen (pp.42-74) Barnes (pp.96-125)	Tutorial
3	Human Evolution and the Neolithic Transition	Liu and Chen (pp.75-122) <u>Tutorial Readings</u> Yuan et al. O'Connor	Tutorial
4	The Emergence of Complex Societies in South, East and Southeast Asia	Murphey , Chapter 1 [Review] Murphey - Chapter 5 (pp.108-129): 7th edition [Chapters 4 (p.66-87) and 5 (p.83-110): 6th and 5th editions] - Chapter 7 (pp.133-149) [all editions] Bellwood, Chapter 5 <u>Tutorial Readings</u> Frenez (2023) Higham (2011) Xu et al, (1995)	Tutorial
5	The Early Indian State	Murphey , Chapter 4 Ali, "Anxieties of Attachment," (pp.103-139) Roy, "King's Household" (pp.55-60) <u>Additional Reading</u> Tambiah, Chapter 5 <u>Tutorial Readings</u> <i>Arthaśāstra</i> (selections) <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> (selections)	Tutorial

6	Birth Pangs of the Early Chinese State	Murphey, Chapter 5 [Review] Chang “Shamanism and Politics” (pp.44-55), and “Art as the Path to Authority” (pp.56-80) Puett: “Ritual Disjunctions” (p.218-229) <u>Tutorial Readings</u> <i>Liji (Book of Rites)</i> selections <i>Xunzi</i>, Chapter 19 <u>Additional Reading</u> Puett: “The Haunted World of Humanity,” (pp.95-116)	Tutorial Midterm Assignment Set
7	The Beginnings of the Silk Roads	Murphey, Chapters 7 and 8 <i>[all editions]</i> Benjamin Chapter 4 Gordon, “Introduction” and “Xuanzang” <u>Additional Reading</u> Christian Benjamin Chapter 5-6 <u>Tutorial Readings</u> Xuanzang’s Travels	Midterm Assignment Due (Friday of Recess Week)
8	China’s Medieval Empires and Cosmopolis	Murphey, Chapters 8 <i>[Recap]</i> and 11 Andaya and Andaya, Chapter 2 <i>[eBook]</i> Wade Taylor, “The Early Kingdoms” (pp.137-182) <u>Tutorial Reading</u> Hong Mai in Cong, <i>Record of the Listener</i>	Tutorial

9	The Medieval Indian Court	Andaya and Andaya, Chapter 2 [eBook] Thapar, <i>Early India</i>, chapter 9 <u>Additional Reading</u> Tambiah, Chapter 5 [Recap] <u>Tutorial Readings</u> <i>Kāmasūtra</i> (KS), • Introduction (p.xxxix-xlv) • Chapter 1 • Chapter 3 <i>Arthaśāstra</i> (selections)	Tutorial
10	The Pax Mongolica and the Medieval Tantric State	Murphey, Chapter 8 [Recap] Tambiah, Chapter 5 [Recap] Tambiah, Chapter 7 <u>Additional Reading</u> Tambiah, Chapter 6 <u>Tutorial Readings</u> Marco Polo's Travels Zhou Daguan on Zhenla	Tutorial
11	Early Modern Asia	Murphey, Chapters 10-12 Andaya and Andaya, Chapter 3 [eBook] <u>Tutorial Readings</u> Ma Huan	Consultation Sessions for Research Essay Outlines
12	The “New Old World” and the coming of colonialism	Murphey , Chapter 13	Research Essay Outline Presentations
13	Course Overview		Consultation Sessions for Essays

Declaration on Academic Honesty*

Academic year and semester: AY2026-2027 Semester 1

What is academic dishonesty?

All members of the NTU community are responsible for upholding the values of academic integrity in all academic undertakings (including, but not limited to, written and oral assignments, presentations, course work, quizzes and exams). Students should not cheat, plagiarise, or attempt to pass off another's work as their own. This includes, but is not limited to, the writing or ideas of another person, without acknowledging or appropriately crediting the source from which the writing or ideas are taken. NTU takes a serious view of any form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other forms of academic dishonesty are considered serious offences for which penalties will be imposed.

Declaration

By signing this form, you declare that you have read and understood NTU's Policy on Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/ForEveryone/Pages/NTUAcademicIntegrityPolicy.aspx>) and that all graded and non-graded assignments you have turned in are your/your group's own work and will not involve any plagiarism or collusion. Reliance on other people's work, when allowed, will be appropriately referenced. You are responsible for knowing the appropriate form of referencing used for this course. Quotation marks will be used around materials written verbatim from other sources; citations will clearly indicate paraphrasing of other sources. You will not submit any work for this course that was (in whole or part) graded work for another course, or will be.

You must print, sign, and return the lower section of this form to the Lecturer by Week Two.

No participation credit will be given until this is returned.

*Adapted from 'Academic Honesty Declaration' for HS7003.

Declaration on Academic Honesty

Course code: HH1002

Name (as registered):

Matriculation number:

Signature & date
