This is a course on the history of women and gender in East Asia, including China, Japan, and Korea, the Asian countries influenced by Chinese civilization and Confucian thought. This course explores the beliefs and rules regarding women and gender that these cultures share, but even more, the varieties among these cultures in terms of class and region; marriage practices; the family and household; women in the arts; women’s war and colonial experiences; women and education; and women in the economic sphere. We will also consider the theoretical and historiographical debates surrounding “women” and women’s history, especially relating to the subjects of women and gender in East Asian Studies.

We will discuss what aspects of East Asian women’s roles and lives have improved or vanished over the last century and from recent globalization trends, and why have some “traditional” aspects remained? How have East Asian women worked to become autonomous persons and how have they constructed their modern nations?


Course Goals / Objectives

The course goals are first, to provide students with an overall understanding of selected issues in the history of women in China, Korea, and Japan; second, for students to gain overall familiarity with the major theoretical and historiographical debates surrounding women’s history and gender studies, especially relating to East Asian women, and third, to provide students with a solid historical perspective that enables them to better analyze contemporary society and their own lives. In tandem with current developments in women's history and gender studies, we will explore crucial variables such as class, region, ethnicity, and age, etc. that have affected women's and men's lives everywhere.

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

• Analyze a variety of primary and secondary sources on East Asian women.
• Examine and interpret competing points of view in the secondary literature on different aspects of East Asian women and gain a deeper understanding of the contested nature of historical interpretation.
• Construct arguments and advance arguments on the interlinked relationships East Asian women have with class, gender norms, social and political institutions, nation, and ethnicity.
• Recognize stereotypical thinking about and representation of East Asian women, and understand the complex connections between the past and the present.

Required Text(s)/Resources

All book selections and videos will be available on Sakai. One or two copies of the books should be available in the library. The professor will work with the Duke and Duke Kunshan University library staff members to ensure that the reading materials and videos are available in the library as well as on the Sakai site. Students will not be required to purchase books.

Recommended Text(s)/Resources

See above

Additional Materials (optional)

Students should have laptop computers.

Course Requirements / Key Evidences

Sakai forum leadership: 25%
Class attendance, individual participation: 20%
Three Response Papers: 30% (10% each) Each paper should be 750 words.
Group Final Project: 25% The grade of your final project includes one grade on written documentation
including an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary resources, and one grade on the final project in the form of a documentary, podcast, website, play, etc.

Class discussions will be based on Sakai readings and short videos.

Technology Considerations, if applicable

Sakai support and ability to show videos in classroom

Assessment Information / Grading Procedures

Detailed rubrics will be provided and explained so that students know how their performance will be evaluated and how points will be assigned. Particular attention will be paid to the expectations for in-class discussions. EFL students will receive advice on strategies for reading, writing, and speaking in English from the professor in this class and also from the EFL professors at DKU. The emphasis in the readings will not be on quantity of material but on the care taken and insight received through the readings.

Diversity and Intercultural Learning (see Principles of DKU Liberal Arts Education)

This course will be of interest to students of various backgrounds. Each may come with her or his personal interests and objectives but the course fosters extensive exchanges among these students to help them understand gender issues in East Asia. Guidance on group work and class participation will be provided for students not accustomed to an open discussion style of pedagogy. All aspects of the experience, from classroom discussions to group presentations, will be accomplished with attention to intercultural sensitivity and awareness of global cultural diversity.

The instructor has taught in Taiwan and in China (including at Duke Kunshan University) for over ten years and has also taught History courses on the Duke campus.

Course Policies and Guidelines

• We have much information to cover in this course and I expect that each student will complete the weekly readings and attend every class. I will take attendance in each class. Each student can take three (3) absences. No copying from any other person, or from any book or article, whether in print or electronic form, unless you clearly and properly cite your sources. I will punish cheating and plagiarism severely: at minimum, a grade of zero for the assignments/tests; if serious enough, you may fail the whole course and/or face academic misconduct charges.

See below for further details:

• Course Policies
Instructors’ expectations for all assignments and activities will be made as explicitly as possible, given the likelihood of a wide range of background conventions and habits among the students. The Duke Kunshan University Community Standard will be discussed and adhered to.

• **Academic Integrity**
  Each student is bound by the academic honesty standard of the Duke Kunshan University. Its Community Standard states: “Duke Kunshan University is a community composed of individuals of diverse cultures and backgrounds. We are dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Members of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and non-academic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity.” Violations of the DKU academic honesty standard will not be tolerated. Cheating, lying, falsification, or plagiarism in any practice will be considered as an inexcusable behavior and will result in zero points for the activity.

• **Attendance**
  Students are responsible for all the information presented in class. As indicated above, class attendance and participation are important components of the grade. All students are expected to participate and evaluate colleagues during class time.

• **Make-up work**
  Students are allowed to make up work only if missed as a result of illness or other unanticipated circumstances warranting a medical excuse, consistent with DKU policy. You must notify the instructor in advance if you will miss an exam or project deadline. Documentation from a healthcare provider is required upon your return to class. Project extensions requested for medical reasons must be negotiated at the time of illness.

• **Appropriate or inappropriate use of cell phone, laptop, or other technology during class**
  Students are allowed to use their laptops, iPads, and smart phones to access course-related web materials during class.

**Tentative Course Outline or Schedule**

Selections will be assigned from the books listed below. All materials will be available on the course Sakai site. The emphasis with the readings will not be on quantity of material but rather on how well students understand the material and can discuss their insights. Expectations for reading and understanding the material will be the same for Duke Kunshan University students as for Duke students, especially after the first week as the EFL students adapt to the rhythm and contents of the course.

**Week One: Course Introduction; Debates on Gender Roles in Traditional China**

*Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Dorothy Ko (Berkeley, 2003).
“Girlhood,” from A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China, by Ping-chen Hsiung, (Stanford U Press, 2007)


Cinderella’s Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding, by Dorothy Ko (Berkeley, 2005)

**Week Two: Chinese Women and the Economy before WWII**


Selections from Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China, by Francesca Bray, (U Cal Press, 1997)

**Week Three: Women in Heian and Tokugawa Japan**

Women in Asia, pp. 178-181; Women in World History, pp. 182-87; Recreating Japanese Women, pp. 42-70


**Week Four: Women in Traditional Korea; Korean Women during Japanese colonial rule**

Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945, ed. by Yung-chung Kim, (Seoul: Ewha Woman’s University, 1977).


**Week Five: Women in 20th Century Japan**


Vera C. Mackie, Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labor and Activism 1900-1937. (Berkeley, 1997).


Gender, Nation, and State in Modern Japan, eds Germer, Mackie, and Wohr, 2014.
Week Six: Women in 20th Century China


Week Seven: Lives of Women in East Asia Today: A Comparison


Kaori Okano, Young Women in Japan: Transitions to Adulthood, 2009.

Sandy To, China’s Leftover Women: Late Marriage among professional women and its consequences, 2015.


Chen Yachen, New Modern Chinese Women and Gender Politics: The Centennial of the end of the Qing Dynasty, Routledge, 2014.

Bibliography (optional)

12 February 2016 version for Robisheaux committee and History Department