This course explores the history of China’s Northeast (“Manchuria”) as a site for challenging the boundaries imposed by histories of the nation-state. The histories of Japan, the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia will be interwoven to examine the region’s transformation from sparsely populated Manchu homeland, to staging ground for Japanese imperialism, to scene of Mao Zedong’s triumph over the Nationalists in the Chinese Civil War of 1945-49.

Goals and Expectations: The purpose of this course is twofold. In addition to charting the history of China’s Northeast over three centuries, students are encouraged to develop an understanding of how history is written—from both ideological and practical standpoints. To this end, weekly readings combine primary and secondary source materials. Careful attention to argumentation and evidence will form the basis of weekly class discussion and critique. To advance understanding of how history is written in a practical sense, students will prepare a research paper (using both primary and secondary source materials) to be submitted at the end of the semester.

Required Texts: Required texts have been ordered in paperback at the Oberlin Bookstore (basement) and placed on reserve at Mudd Library.


All other readings are available on Blackboard.

Assessment: The course grade will be based on the following:

- Oral Presentation & Follow-up Paper (2): 15% each
- Final Paper: 35%
- Class participation: 35%

**Oral Presentations**: Students will make two presentations over the course of the semester on assigned readings. Additionally, on the day of the scheduled presentation, a 3-5 page paper summarizing the main themes of the reading and how they tie into the
general reading for the week will be due at the start of class. [No electronic copies, please.]

Each presentation should last no more than 10-15 minutes during which time the presenter should formulate two or three key questions about the general topic and common readings assigned for that week. Presenters for any given week are encouraged to meet with one another in advance of class time to discuss common themes with a view toward integrating such themes into class discussion.

**Final Paper:** Students will write a final research paper of between 15 and 20 pages. Assessment will be based on not only the final written product, but also the following components of the research and writing process:

- Oct. 13 (Tues.): Information Literacy Session hosted by Librarian Xi Chen, Mudd Library.
- November 24 (Tues.): Annotated bibliography due.
- December 14 (Mon.): Final paper due at 4 PM.

Class Participation and Attendance: Discussions are a central component of the course, and attendance is mandatory. Students are required to **complete the assigned readings and come prepared to discuss.** **The success of the course depends on the active involvement of each participant, and active involvement requires timely and thorough completion of all readings.** To assist students with identifying key themes from the readings, a list of study questions will be posted on Blackboard each Thursday in advance of the following week’s assignment.

**Film Screening:** Bernardo Bertolucci’s “The Last Emperor” will be screened on Monday, Nov. 9 at 7pm in Wilder 101. The film will be discussed in class in conjunction with the readings for the week.

**Writing Assistance:** Students are encouraged to attend the writing skills workshops offered in the basement of Mudd Library.

**Honor Code:** All students are expected to adhere to the Oberlin Honor Code on all written assignments.

**Office Hours:** Students are encouraged to come see the instructor with questions about any aspect of the course:

Monday 2:30 – 4pm and Wed. 11:30am -1pm
Rice Hall, Room 308
Phone: 5-6708
E-mail: Emer.ODwyer@oberlin.edu
PART I: FRAMEWORKS

Week 1, Sept. 1: Introduction
Maps, Timelines, and Course Overview

Week 2, Sept. 8: National History Recap; “Manchuria”


Week 3, Sept. 15: Transnational History and Imperialism
AHR Conversation “On Transnational History” (with the participation of C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed).
*AHR* 111, 5 (December 2006): 1441-64.


PART II: HISTORIES

Week 4, Sept. 22: (Qing China) Manchuria under the Manchus, 1600-1911

Presenters:


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**Week 5, Sept. 29 (Imperial and Soviet Russia)** *The Russian Far East*


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**Week 6, Oct. 6:** *Railway Imperialism and the South Manchurian Railway Company (Mantetsu)*


*Presenters:*


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*Week 7, Oct. 13: (Republic of China) Manchuria of the Warlords*


Presenters:


*Information Literacy Session, Mudd 113.

**Fall Recess**

**PART III: MILITARY CONQUEST AND WARTIME IMPERIALISM, 1931-45**

Week 8, Oct. 27: No Class. Individual Conferences to discuss research topics.

Week 9, Nov. 3: The Manchurian Incident: A Military Solution


**Primary Source:** Hergé (Remi Georges). The Adventures of Tintin: The Blue Lotus (1936).

**Presenters:**


High, Peter. *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years’ War, 1931-1945* (2003): chs 1, 7 (pp. 3-50; 265-85).

**Week 10, Nov. 10: Manchukuo**
Young, Louise. *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (1998).
- Required for everyone: Part I (Introduction: pp. 3-52).
- Group #1: Chs. 3-5 (pp. 55-240)
- Group #2: Chs. 6-9 (pp. 307-436)

*Reminder: Screening of “The Last Emperor” at 7pm on Monday, Nov. 9.*

**Week 11, Nov. 17: Manchukuo at War: Economic Consolidation and Continued Military Expansion**


**Primary Source:**

**PART IV: BEARING WITNESS**

**Week 12, Nov. 24: Writing Manchuria**

Primary Source:

Presenter:


Thanksgiving Recess

**PART V: POSTWAR AND CIVIL WAR**

Week 13, Dec. 1: *Decolonization, Chinese Civil War, and Korean War*

Week 14, Dec. 8: *Presentation of Individual Research Topics*
Students will present their research topics before seminar members and explain the question(s) guiding the research.