

HISTORY OF EAST ASIAN MARTIAL ARTS

HIST 319/ASIAN 391

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Cornell University — Fall 2006

(First offered as an ExEAS course at Columbia University in Spring 2004.)

Exploration of the social, political, and cultural contexts of martial arts practice, and historical dynamics behind their transmission, transformation, and spread. Examination of the emergence of martial artists as popular figures, and martial arts as distinct sets of practices in China and Japan. Study of the modern re-invention of these practices, and of their transmission to other parts of the world. Investigation of a local martial arts school, and of the question, “What is East Asian about East Asian martial arts in Ithaca?”

Requirements

Attendance and Participation

25%

Students should come to class prepared to discuss and ask questions about the readings assigned for that week. Preparation includes thinking about the study questions on the syllabus. I may call on you to summarize the main points of a particular reading, or to give your thoughts on a study question. While reading, take notes on and make sure that you understand the Key Terms (to be posted on WebCT). Students can miss up to three unexcused classes without penalty, but are responsible for getting class notes and for thinking about the material discussed in class.

Short Essays (8)

40%

2-4 pages. See syllabus for due dates. Topics will be posted on WebCT. In cases of illness or unforeseen emergencies, contact me as soon as possible to arrange makeup.

Field Trip & Field Trip Essay

10%

I will organize and lead at least two trips to local martial arts schools. You may also visit a school on your own; you will need to discuss and clear this with me if you do so. You should take thorough notes based on observations during the field trip. In class we will discuss the types of things that you might want to look for and the types of questions you might want to ask. Essay: 3-5 pages. Due one week after field trip, to be based on field trip observations, connecting these to the larger issues of the course.

Final Essay

25%

10-12 pages.

All essays should be submitted in hard copy, 12 point type, double spaced, one-inch margins, and with footnotes with proper citation formats. Limited extensions will be granted if requested in advance. Late papers will be docked 1/3 grade/day.

All classroom behavior should be characterized by civility, attentiveness, and respect. All coursework should be performed with integrity. Plagiarism or cheating will result in an F and will be reported to the dean. I expect you to know what plagiarism and cheating are, and how to avoid them. See <<http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>> and <<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>> for more information.

Books Available on Reserve and at the Book Store

- Hurst, G. Cameron, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan: Swordsmanship and Archery*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
- Wile, Douglas, *T'ai-chi's Ancestors: The Making of an Internal Martial Art*, (New York: Sweet Ch'i Press, 1999).
- Wile, Douglas, *Lost T'ai-chi Classics from the Late Ch'ing Dynasty*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).
- Leon Hunt, *Kung Fu Cult Masters: From Bruce Lee to Crouching Tiger*, (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2003).
- [OPTIONAL: Takuan Sôhō, *The Unfettered Mind: Writings of the Zen Master to the Sword Master*, trans. William Scott Wilson, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986).]

Guide to Readings Bullets

- Available on Reserve and at Book Store
- Available online (WebCT, ERESERVE, EBOOK, EJOURNAL)

Week I: Orientations

What is a martial art? What is East Asian about martial arts?

Why do the instructors and students in Thomas Green's martial arts school consider its history important? In what ways do they connect history to their practice and to their views of themselves and the school? In what ways and why do they change the emphases of the histories that they tell?

By heading one of his sections "The System's History: One Construction," Green treats the historical account given there not as a record of historical facts whose veracity needs to be checked, but as something else. (See Key Terms on WebCT.) What does he mean by "construction"? Why is the historical veracity of the facts in the historical construction not so relevant to Green?

Readings (read for Wednesday):

- Thomas A. Green, "Historical Narrative in the Martial Arts: A Case Study," in Tad Tuleja, ed., *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America*, (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1997), pp. 156-174. **WebCT**

Classes:

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| 1. What is a Martial Art? What is East Asia? | August 28 |
| 2. Narrative and the Martial Arts | August 30 |

Week II: Martial Heroes in Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Fiction

What are the different types of martial characters portrayed in these works of fiction? What types of martial skills do they possess? What values do they exemplify or invert?

Readings:

- John Christopher Hamm, “The Tradition of Martial Arts Fiction,” *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), pp. 11-19. **WebCT**
- “Shi Jin the Nine-Dragoned,” Ebrey, Patricia, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2nd. ed., (New York: The Free Press, 1993), pp. 226-237. **WebCT**
- “from *The Romance of the Gods (Feng-shen yan-yi): Ne-zha and His Father*,” in Stephen Owen, ed., trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*, (New York: Norton, 1996), pp. 771-806. **WebCT**
- Victoria Cass, “Warriors and Mystics,” *Dangerous Women: Warriors, Grannies, and Geishas of the Ming*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 65-85. **WebCT**
- Paize Keulemans, “Listening to the *Renao* of the Martial-Arts Scene: Onomatopoeia and Storyteller’s Voice in the Nineteenth-Century Vernacular Novel Series *The Three Knights*,” manuscript. **WebCT**

Classes:

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| 3. Bandit Heroes | September 4 |
| 4. Immortals, Gods, and Women | September 6 |

Week III: Samurai Legends

What are the roles of the samurai characters in *Tale of the Heike*? What types of martial arts skills do they possess? What values do they exemplify? In what ways does this change between the Warring States Period (*Tale of Heike*) and the Edo (Chushingura)? In what ways do the values exemplified (or inverted) by martial heroes in Japanese Warring States and Edo fiction compare or contrast to those of Ming fiction?

Readings:

- *The Tale of the Heike*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 1-11, 17-19 (for reference), 358-400, [optional: 401-425]. **WebCT**
- “The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account, With Arguments,” in Hiroaki Sato, ed., *Legends of the Samurai*, (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1995), pp. 304-338. **WebCT**

Classes:

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| 5. Samurai in War | September 11 |
| 6. Duels and Honor
Short Essay #1 due | September 13 |

Week IV: The Social Background of “Pugilists”/“Boxers” in Late Imperial China

What are the various social backgrounds of people who practiced and wrote about martial arts in sixteenth to nineteenth century China? What sorts of arts did they practice? How does this compare to the martial heroes of Ming fiction? In what ways might different social backgrounds affect approaches to martial arts practice?

Readings:

- Wile, *T'ai-chi's Ancestors*, pp. 1-35.
- Background for the Esherick reading: “Boxer Rebellion,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, (Chicago: Britannica Online, 1994-), <<http://search.eb.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu:2048/eb/article-9016047?query=%22boxer%20rebellion%22&ct=eb>>.
- Joseph Esherick, “Sects, Boxers, and Popular Culture,” “The Spirit Boxers,” *Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 38-67, [for ch. 8 (pp. 206-240), you may skim the rest if time is short, but definitely read]: 216-222, 230-240. **WebCT**
- David Ownby, “Approximations of Chinese Bandits: Perverse Rebels, Romantic Heroes, or Frustrated Bachelors?” in *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 226-250. **WebCT**

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| 7. <i>Wen</i> (Civil), <i>Wu</i> (Martial), and Polity | September 18 |
| 8. <i>Wen</i> , <i>Wu</i> , and Social Class | September 20 |

Week V: The Social Background of Samurai in Warring States Japan

How did samurai emerge as a distinct social group? How did their social roles and position change through time? In what ways did these changes affect their martial practice? Consider the ways in which the social backgrounds of Japanese samurai contrast with that of Chinese “pugilists” or “boxers.”

Readings:

- G. Cameron Hurst, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan*, pp. 1-52, 103-124.

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| 9. The Rise of the Samurai | September 25 |
| 10. The Rise of the Sword
Short Essay #2 due | September 27 |

Week VI: Lineage, Transmission, and Legitimacy

What models for martial arts lineages do we find in China and in Japan? In what ways are they different? How do principles and practices of kinship translate to martial arts lineages? In what ways do lineages shape transmission (learning) of martial arts? In what ways do they shape legitimacy of transmission?

- Jeff Takacs, “A Case of Contagious Legitimacy: Kinship, Ritual and Manipulation in Chinese Martial Arts Societies,” *Modern Asian Studies* 37.4 (2003):885-917. **EJOURNAL**
- Robert J. Smith, “Transmitting Tradition by the Rules: An Anthropological Interpretation of the *iemoto* System,” in John Singleton, ed., *Learning in Likely Places: Varieties of Apprenticeship in Japan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 23-34. **WebCT**
- Bill Haase, “Learning to be an Apprentice,” in Singleton, ed., *Learning in Likely Places*, pp. 107-121. **WebCT**

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| 11. The Social Construction of Kinship | October 2 |
| 12. Lineage and Transmission
Short Essay #3 due | October 4 |

Week VII: Buddhism and the Martial Arts — China

In general, Buddhism prohibits the taking of any sentient life. How, then, did Buddhism come to have a role in East Asian martial arts? What was this role in the specific contexts described by these different readings?

Many of the secondary readings for this week and next discuss the development of mythologies about relationships between Buddhism and martial arts. What accounts for this development?

Readings:

- Stephen F. Teiser, “Buddhism” section in “Introduction: The Spirits of Chinese Religion,” *Religions of China in Practice*, ed., Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 13-20. **WebCT**
- William Powell, “Martial Arts,” *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed., Robert E. Buswell, Jr., Vol. 2, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003), pp. 514-518. **EBOOK**
- Meir Shahar, “Epigraphy, Buddhist Historiography, and Fighting Monks: The Case of Shaolin Monastery,” *Asia Major* 3rd Series (2002), XIII.2:15-36. **WebCT**
- Meir Shahar, “Ming-Period Evidence of Shaolin Martial Practice,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (Dec. 2001), 61.2:359-415. **WebCT**
- Hunt, “Burning Paradise: The Myth of the Shaolin Temple,” *Kung Fu Cult Masters*, pp. 48-75.

Classes:

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| FALL BREAK — NO CLASSES | October 9 |
| 13. History and Myth | October 11 |

Week VIII: Buddhism and Martial Arts — Japan

To what extent was there a connection between Buddhism and martial arts in Japan, and what was it? What led to the overemphasis of this connection? Otake Risuke, a modern representative of the Katori Shinto lineage, includes Esoteric Buddhist elements in his teachings. How do these practices relate to Katori Shinto Ryu practice? What does this suggest for martial artists' particular interests in Esoteric Buddhism?

Readings:

- Steven Heine, "Zen," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Vol. 14., 2nd ed., (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), pp. 9943-9951. **EBOOK**
 - [Optional: Takuan Sôhō, *The Unfettered Mind: Writings of the Zen Master to the Sword Master*, trans. William Scott Wilson, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986), pp. 12-92.]
- Sharf, Robert H. "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, 107–60. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. **WebCT**
- Willam M. Bodiford, "Zen and Japanese Swordsmanship Reconsidered," in *Budo Perspectives*, Alexander Bennett, ed., (Auckland, New Zealand: Kendo World Publications, 2005), pp. 69-104. **WebCT**
- [For background on Esoteric Buddhism in Japan]: Ryûichi Abe, "Shingon Buddhism, Japan," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed., Robert E. Buswell, Jr., Vol. 2, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003), pp. 764-766. **EBOOK**
- OTAKE Risuke, "Esoteric Buddhism and Japanese Swordsmanship," *The Deity and the Sword: Katori Shinto Ryu*, trans. Donn F. Draeger, et. al., (Tokyo: Minato Research & Publishing, 1978), pp. 14-22. **WebCT**

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| 14. Zen | October 16 |
| 15. Esoteric Buddhism in Japanese martial arts
Short Essay #4 due | October 18 |

Week IX: Peacetime Warriors, Wartime Literati

What were the roles of the Samurai during the centuries of the Edo, when they were not at war? How did this affect the practice and transmission of martial arts? In what ways did the contexts of martial arts practice change in nineteenth century China? What were the historical conditions that provoked these changes?

Readings:

- Japan: Hurst, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan*, pp. 53-100, 125-143.
- China: Wile, *T'ai-chi's Ancestors*, pp. 37-81, [82-188].
- China: Wile, "Social and Historical Background of T'ai-chi Ch'üan in the Nineteenth Century," *Lost T'ai-chi Classics from the Late Ch'ing Dynasty*, pp. 3-30.

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| 16. Warrior-Bureaucrats | October 23 |
| 17. Literati-Martial Artists
Short Essay #5 due | October 25 |

Week X: Modernity and the Invention of Traditions — Japan

What is “the invention of traditions”? How is this related to modernity and nationalism? In what ways did samurai re-invent themselves and the martial arts after the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate? In what ways is this different from the re-invention of the samurai in earlier periods, such as in the transition from the Warring States to peacetime Edo?

Readings:

- Hurst, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan*, pp. 147-196.
- Inoue Shun, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanô Jigorô and Kôdôkan Judo,” in Stephen Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 163-173. **WebCT**

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| 18. National Myth and Samurai Survival | October 30 |
| 19. Modern Martial Arts: Kendo and Judo | November 1 |

Week XI: Modernity and the Invention of Traditions — China

What were the particular conditions in China that shaped the re-invention of martial arts traditions? Is it different from the types of myth-making we saw in earlier weeks, for example with the Shaolin Temple? Is it different from the reinvention of martial arts in Japan?

Readings:

- Andrew D. Morris, “From Martial Arts to National Skills: The Construction of a Modern Indigenous Physical Culture, 1912-1937,” *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 185-230. **WebCT**
- John Christopher Hamm, “Introduction: The Literary and Historical Contexts of New School Martial Arts Fiction,” *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), pp. 1-11, 19-31. **WebCT**

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| 20. “Invented Traditions” and Modernity | November 6 |
| 21. National Skills in Republican China
Short Essay #6 due | November 8 |

Week XII: Globalization

Globalization is usually thought of in terms of the spread of European and American culture to other countries. In East Asian martial arts, of course, we see different flows. In what ways have processes of modernization and globalization changed the ways in which games or sports are practiced and organized, and the ways in which they are associated with ethnicity, nationality or class? Do we see similar dynamics in the martial arts? Are East Asian martial arts still “East Asian” when they are practiced outside of East Asia? What has motivated people outside East Asia to practice martial arts? What has motivated people from East Asia to teach martial arts in other countries, to people whom they would not consider “East Asian”?

Readings:

- Henning Eichberg, “A Revolution of Body Culture? Traditional Games on the Way from Modernisation to ‘Postmodernity,’” *Body Cultures: Essays on Sport, Space, and Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 128-148. **WebCT**
- Geoffrey Wingard, “Sport, Industrialism, and The Japanese “Gentle Way: Judo in Late Victorian England,” *Journal of Asian Martial Arts* (2003) 12.2:16-25. **WebCT**
- Elijah Siegler, “The Consumption of Chinese Traditions in Contemporary Euro-American Society,” in James Miller, ed., *Chinese Religions in Contemporary Societies*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Press, 2006), pp. 11.1-21. **WebCT**
- Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), pp. ix-xii, 126-149. **WebCT**
- Hunt, “Transnational Dragons and ‘Asian Weapons’: Kung Fu and the Hong Kong Diaspora,” *Kung Fu Cult Masters*, pp. 157-183.
- Elijah Siegler, “Experiencing the ‘Healing Tao’: Practicing Popular Daoism in the U.S., Thailand, and China,” paper presented at “Between Eternity and Modernity: Daoism and its Reinventions in the 20th Century,” Harvard University, June 15, 2006. **WebCT**
 - John J. Donohue, “Wave People: The Martial Arts and the American Imagination,” in David E. Jones, ed., *Combat, Ritual, and Performance: Anthropology of the Martial Arts*, pp. 65-80. **WebCT**
 - Bill Brown, “Global Bodies/Postnationalities: Charles Johnson’s Consumer Culture,” *Representations* (Spring 1997), 58:24-48. **EJOURNAL**

Classes:

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| 22. Nation, Colonialism, Diaspora, and Identity | November 13 |
| 23. The Global and the Local
Short Essay #7 due | November 15 |



Movie Night: “Seven Samurai”

Week XIII: Japanese “Period” Film

What different types of martial arts figures are portrayed in Japanese cinema? What values do they exemplify? How do these compare to the earlier fiction that we read and discussed?

Readings:

- David Desser, “Toward a Structural Analysis of the Postwar Samurai Film,” in Arthur Nalletti, Jr. and David Desser, eds., *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 145-64. **WebCT**
- Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, “Seven Samurai,” *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 205-245. **WebCT**

Classes:

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| 24. “Period” Film | November 20 |
| 25. Kurosawa | November 22 |



Movie Night: “Chinese Connection”

Week XIV: Chinese Martial Arts Film and Video Games

What different types of martial arts figures are portrayed in Chinese cinema? What values do they exemplify? How do these compare to the earlier fiction that we read and discussed? In what ways have the medium of film and technical advances shaped imaginations of martial arts? What are the various ways in which authenticity is constructed in the context of film? [Readings on gender to be split.]

Readings:

- ZHANG Zhen, “The Anarchic Body Language of the Martial Arts Film,” *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema, 1896-1937*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) pp. 199-243. **WebCT**
- Hunt, *Kung Fu Cult Masters*, pp. 1-47, 185-202.
 - Hunt, “The Lady is the Boss? Hidden Dragons and ‘Deadly China Dolls,’” *Kung Fu Cult Masters*, pp. 117-139.
- Yvonne Tasker, “Fists of Fury: Discourses of Race and Masculinity in the Martial Arts Cinema,” in Harry Stecopoulos and Michael Uebel, eds., *Race and the Subject of Masculinities*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 315-336. **WebCT**

Classes:

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| 26. <i>Wuxia</i> and Kung Fu Film; Gender | November 27 |
| 27. Gender and Film
Short Essay #8 due | November 29 |