

## Course details (syllabus)

East Asian Lang & Cult 109 (Fall, 2011) — History of the Culture of Tea in China and Japan

Instructor: John R. Wallace

Meets: MWF, 11AM – Noon (confirm class location at Online Schedule of Classes)

Class Web sites:

Primary — Course Home Page (www)

Secondary — [bSpace](#) (www)

Basic (not comprehensive) list of activities: regular attendance, two in-class midterms, one comprehensive final

Grade weights:

Class participation ..... 0%\*

Midterms (average of midterms) ..... 60%

Final exam ..... 40%

\*See below, under the "Ungraded category".

### Special note

On this document, I highlight in yellow information that, from past experience, is particularly likely to influence the student's grade.

This syllabus contains critical information about course content, procedures, policies and grade calculations. It is designed to help you create a strategy to focus on the core content of the class, and to score well. I assume you have read it carefully. Please ask questions if there is something unclear.

Other information is accessed through the Course Home Page. Since I try not to duplicate information (to avoid inconsistencies), neither this syllabus nor the Course Home Pages provide a total picture of the class. They need to be used in combination.

More details, if you are curious: The syllabus has "stable" information that helps the student get a sense for course content and how the class is run — course description, materials to purchase, policies, start points (such as where to find my office hours), grade categories, grade weights, and so on. The Course Home Page and its links provide a) more fluid information (such as the schedule, which usually gains details as the course goes on), b) items that I think students might access frequently and/or quickly such as deadlines, assignment details, grading rubrics and such, and c) things that are better presented in an online environment (interactive material, hyperlinks, graphics, etc.).

### Communicating with each other

#### How to reach me

Office hours: Once announced, the details can be found through the Course Home Page.

Details on how to reach me are on the Course Home Page.

#### This class uses two Web sites for announcements, schedules and materials access

Because of their different capabilities, this class uses a primary and secondary Web site. Below is a table explaining what material is where.

PRIMARY	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
<b>Announcements Page</b>	<b>Course Home Page</b>	<b>(materials that require restricted access)</b>
—www.sonic.net—	—www.sonic.net—	—bSpace—
announcements	sidebar: class policies, syllabus, assignment & test information, grade calculation statements, links to other Web site, etc.	course materials (texts, vocab glosses, sound files, powerpoints, etc.)
links to Home Page	main window: class schedule (topics, assignments, general	unofficial grade postings
		misc interactive forums (sometimes)

Off-campus individuals following my class via podcasts, please email me. I might have created a shadow bSpace site for you (that has course materials not subject to copyright limitations). Please include in your subject line this keyword "podcast" because I often cannot respond quickly to these requests and within a few days your email might go missing in my in-box.

## ***Class announcements (Announcements Page)***

### **Where to look for announcements?**

In the days and weeks before class begins, I might contact the class using the message tool on bSpace. These emails will go to enrolled and waitlisted students. At some point I "hand-off" announcements to my Announcements Page Web site page, with a class-wide email that says so. Students now need to navigate to that site to read announcements. There will be no emails except under special circumstances. After class stops meeting but until grades are submitted, I continue to use the Announcements Page. Sometime shortly after I submit grades, I will make an announcement that "hands off" back to bSpace all announcements, should there be any (which is unlikely).

### **Announcements Page Web Site**

- ◆ The Announcements Page is designed to load quickly on smartphones, and includes a direct link to the Course Home Page–Outline.
- ◆ Remember to refresh your browser to insure you are seeing the newest version of the page.
- ◆ Please check the Announcements Page frequently beginning a few days before the start of the course until I announce that I have submitted final grades.
- ◆ The classroom is NOT the primary source of information for this class even for very important announcements. The Announcements Page is the official source. I tend not to like to take up class time with announcements.
- ◆ I definitely expect a student to have read an announcement within 48 hours of its posting. There can be a serious downside if you do not do this. There is no "second chance" policy.
- ◆ I will not introduce changes in what needs to be done for a class in the 24 hours prior to the class.

## ***Class sessions schedule & content, deadlines (Course Home Page)***

### **Course Home Page Web Site**

- ◆ DO NOT download the Course Home Page:  
If you are curious why: The schedule, including deadlines on the schedule, often changes as the class progresses. Mostly I am detailing topics or subtopics that I covered in a session — useful for prepping for exams — but I also might provide web links discovered and such. I have basic material prepared ahead of time, but I often discover new things as I prep for a specific session and these become part of the schedule, so you can find them on your own later.
- ◆ I add details to these pages as we go through the term. I might add assignments or other required activities. I might add "thoughts" that help you know what to focus on when taking notes for a session, or add these thoughts after the session, to help you know what to study for exams. I might add information about multimedia presented. I might add details to topics to help organize notes for exams or I might change ◇ to ♦ to indicate what might be on or off the exam.

## ***Course materials (bSpace)***

All materials for this class that is not listed for purchase are provided as digital files, usually via bSpace. Please respect copyright laws.

## ***General policies***

On the sidebar of the Home Page are links to my policies about my efforts to be green in class operation (including an invitation to contact me if my policy is hindering your learning experience), multitasking & laptop use in the classroom, and an extensive expression of my views on academic honesty. Please read them—some of the information there affects your grade.

## ***A note on academic honesty***

I am very attentive to issues about plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. **My boundaries are distinct and stricter than you might generally think is common practice.** My penalties include failing students on assignment and reporting them officially to the University. Unfortunately, nearly every semester I have penalize students for academic dishonesty. Please look over my full statement on these issues. Access it through the Home Page sidebar by clicking on "Policies > Academic Honesty".

## ***Accommodation for students with disabilities***

If you need accommodations for any physical, psychological, or learning disability or if you want me to have emergency medical information, please contact me by email, speak to me after class, or arrange office hours.

## ***Course content & goals***

### ***Using tea as a way of analyzing cultural formations and culture formation***

This class is about the cultures of two countries — China and Japan — and the relationship of tea to certain cultural practices in those countries. Broadly stated, we begin with the early tea origin myths of China, but become more earnest in our analysis with Tang and Song dynasties. While we cover briefly Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties our focus swings towards Japan in the second half of the class where we look at tea practices in the Kamakura, Muromachi and early Edo periods. This is primarily a history of culture class and we spend little time with tea related issues later than the 18th century. (The final paper or project, however, is open topic.) I do make some overview and summary statements about tea in Korea.

We read early Chinese cosmology, Chinese poetry, track the impact of Buddhism on the diffusion and advancement of various cultural practices, look at interpretations in painting traditions of what tea means, consider the relationship between technological advances in ceramics with how tea was valued, explore the two different times tea was introduced to Japan and what happened to tea when it was thus introduced, consider the relationship between political power centers, Japanese tea masters and tea-related *objet d'art*, and analyze how the poetics developed within the linked-verse tradition of Japan found expression in tea house & garden architecture.

Tea has a long and complex history in both China and Japan. It has been part of philosophical, religious, and literary discourse, and had influence on, as well as been influenced by arts, architecture, and social practices. Comparing its role in this way in these two countries illuminates interesting *similarities and differences* between them. Further, studying how tea arrived to Japan from China and the different way it was embraced in that country provides an opportunity to consider how these two countries *interact* with one another at a particular level. Finally, there is an interesting tension between the ordinariness of brewing and drinking tea with the arts and philosophy that have been attached to it. This class looks at *idea crossovers* such as how philosophy has created contexts for thinking about tea (Tang China) and how poetics helped form tea-related social practice (Muromachi Japan), among other things.

Said briefly, understanding the many turns in the development of tea culture in China and Japan from the three perspectives outlined above (a **content comparative approach** while keeping also in mind the **interaction** between the two countries and while exploring **how ideas crossed over** between tea and many cultural practices) ...

- .. informs students of important and enduring aspects of both cultures,
- .. provides an opportunity to discuss the role of religion and art in social practice (and vice versa),
- .. provides a forum for cultural comparison, and,
- .. provides an example of the relationship between the two countries as well as Japanese methods of importing and naturalizing another country's social practice.

### ***Tea basics***

That being said, it seems to me to be too much of an ivory tower approach if, at the end of such a class, the student did not know the basics of the tea plant itself—its name, where it grows, and how crafting of the leaves gives us the many types of tea that we drink. So the first few sessions of the class are devoted to covering these basics.

### ***Balanced approach***

**It is my explicit goal that all students consider both China and Japan with equal care and curiosity.** For many this will mean working

outside their comfort zone sometimes. This class, at its core, is designed to generate within the student and among students a dialogic energy with Chinese and Japanese religio-philosophical stances, aesthetics, and social practices.

## Course prerequisites

This class has no prerequisites.

## Course materials

Materials for this class will be provided as files on bSpace. Please use these materials for class only and respect copyright law.

## Grades

### *General comments*

- ◆ Students are always welcome to discuss with me concerns about grades. Using “gradeissue” as a keyword in the email subject line insures that I will notice your email and also that I will review the email before final grades are determined.
- ◆ “Curved,” when used by me below or in class, means that while I start off with standard cutoffs for letter grades (listed below in this syllabus as “Start point in defining cutoffs ...”), I often adjust these for particular tests or quizzes. The intent is not to create a “bell” curve, but rather to make a grading profile for a particular evaluated event that takes into account the difficulty of the event, how well I think students should be able to perform, and how students have actually performed.
- ◆ **Some grades are reported to bSpace**, though in some cases this report is several sessions after the grade is determined. I try to keep bSpace more or less current but it is NOT the official grade book record and when I have discussed a grade with a student and changed it, these changes are almost never uploaded to bSpace. (It is not time efficient for me to upload grades on an individual basis.)
- ◆ **All grades in all categories are either originally in or converted to a 12-pt scale where A = 12, A- = 11 and so on.** (See the charts at the end of this document.) This is also the way grades are communicated. To tell a student that s/he made a 12 on an assignment is to say that s/he received an “A”. Test grades might initially have a raw and/or percent score but this is curved and given a letter grade and it is the letter grade, not the raw score or percent that counts towards the final grade.
- ◆ **Leaving early or arriving late because of midterms in other classes: I do not consider this a valid reason for missing part of the class.** I do have sympathy with a student’s desire to arrive early to a test room or when a test runs overtime. However, this explanation is so frequently abused that it is difficult to sort out those who legitimately need to do this and those who do not. Therefore, please email me ahead of time if possible and perhaps we can work something out.
- ◆ **Travel plans:** Students often schedule travel plans very close to class sessions. **I do not consider missed flights, delayed or cancelled flights or inexpensive tickets to be excusable reasons for absences.** I take our class sessions very seriously and hope you will, too.
- ◆ **I consider the final exam period a firm date.** Please do not ask to take an exam early because you have travel or moving plans.
- ◆ **I basically never give incompletes in a class.**

### *About “grade categories” & the “evaluated events” in them*

By “evaluated events” I mean anything in the class that is scored for a grade. This includes class participation (for some classes), quizzes, tests, papers, and so on. I first group evaluated events under various categories, then weigh category grades to determine a final course grade. I often curve evaluated events. I sometimes adjust a student’s category grade when warranted.

Since nearly all adjustments are done at the level of events, a student who calculates his or her category grades based on those events can estimate a final course grade since category grade weights are stated at the beginning of the term. I do reserve the right, however, to make adjustments to a student’s category grade on a last minute basis.

### *“Grade categories” & “evaluated exercises” for this class*

#### **Ungraded Category—Class preparation and participation:**

- ◆ Preparation and participation are not officially measured in this class, and they do not contribute to any mathematical calculations of the course grade. However, I watch my students carefully and do have a fairly good to excellent sense

(depending on the student) as to how engaged they are in the material and what is going on inside the classroom. Late arrival, multitasking, listening to me but not other students—all distinctly influence how I evaluate a student's participation. **If I see a student multitasking even once I conclude that there are many other times I have not noticed and that the student's attention is split.** See my policy statement as to why this is a considerable concern to me. The quality of the final short presentation is also considered under this category.

- ◆ The quality of preparation and participation has an ineffable influence on the grade. Much of my grading for this class has to do with trying to reconstruct how well you understand something. Good preparation and attentive participation suggest that you are engaging the materials actively. These are definitely a factor as I consider the course grade. They are also definitely a factor as I try to determine the course "A+"s, should there be any.

#### Category—Midterm tests:

- ◆ *General Description (further details on the Home Page):* There are two in-class, closed-book, non-cumulative midterm tests.
- ◆ *This category's goal:* To master the basic fundamental information and others' analyses related to tea culture in China and Japan.
- ◆ *Calculating the midterm category grade:* The two tests are averaged equally.

#### Category—Final exam:

- ◆ *General Description (further details on the Home Page):* This class has a final, open-book (no laptops), comprehensive essay exam.
- ◆ *This category's goal:* This exam give students the opportunity to make an analytic statement about a pre-determined aspect of tea that is relevant to the cultural history of tea in both China and Japan.
- ◆ *Calculating the final exam category grade:* The grade on the final exam is the category grade.
- ◆ In some cases the student might be able to substitute a final paper for the final exam. Please contact me.

#### Category—Extra Credit

*Typical extra credit (on tests and such)*

*Major Extra Credit (additional, substantial assignments)*

*General Extra Credit (little things that you do)*

I use three types of extra credit in my classes.

- ◆ The first is a type you are used to encountering—on assignments and tests where students are given the opportunity to answer more challenging questions or include information beyond the usual expectations of the assignment. This type of extra credit adjusts the grade on a test or assignment, usually mathematically. By the way, I calculate such extra credit after I curve an assignment (if I curve an assignment) so that wide success on extra credit questions does not affect the grading curve of the assignment. (In other words, students participating successfully in extra credit questions do not have a negative effect on students who do not answer such questions.)
- ◆ The second is also a type you sometimes see, I think: opportunities to submit additional assignments. When such opportunities require substantial additional work, I call they become "Major Extra Credit". **Completing Major Extra Credit in good or excellent form will change your final grade roundup border from n.5 to around n.3 or n.4.** (Whereas in a usual scenario you must have a course final grade of  $\geq 11.5$  to round up to a 12—an "A" for the class—under this scenario, your graded is rounded up to an "A" from a lower roundup border, somewhere in the n.3 to n.4 range.) Completing Major Extra Credit mechanically, as if only done for the course grade, will not change your final grade roundup borders. It is a qualitative judgment by me.
- ◆ The third type of extra credit is something more ineffable and you probably have not had this as an explicit grade category in your classes although it does work behind the scenes in some classes. These are little things that you do that indicate an enthusiasm for the class, or more than the usual attentiveness to assignments, or acts that help the teaching environment. This might be web links you find that are of special value, or an extended comment you send by email about something that interested you, or finding an error in my Web site or other instructions. I acknowledge these things with an email that includes the keyword "extracredit". This type of extra credit is only valuable if, one the whole, you seem to be participating very well in the class. It cannot replace assignments. Indeed, it might work against you if I conclude that you are only interested in your grade and believe the extra credit can substitute for work on the regular assignments. This is an opportunity to show enthusiasm and share ideas and help others, not polish your grade although,

indirectly, it does have that effect sometimes.

In the gradebook, there are two columns directly next to the final grade box:

- ◆ One of these reports your level of extra credit activity. This is calculated by searching my emails that have the "extracredit" keyword. It is generally something like "strong" "moderate" "weak" "none". In other words it is not a point value, but a qualitative judgment by me, considering the spirit you did the extra credit, the difficulty of the assignment, whether you stood out from others on that particular extra credit opportunity, and so on.
- ◆ The other of these columns contains special grade issues (illness, etc). This is created by searching my emails for the keyword "gradeissue" at the end of the term.

These two boxes are considered when determining the final grade.

**I usually give one or two "A+"s in a course.** Extra credit is usually necessary to qualify being considered, and the content and quality of the extra credit is definitely a factor in choosing among students who are on the short list. I do not assign "A+"s strictly based on the highest final grade score.

### **How grade category scores are weighted for final course grade**

Class participation .....	0%*
Midterms (average of all midterms) .....	60%
Final exam .....	40%

\*See above, under the appropriate categories.

\*\*If, through some error, this weight distribution does not match the table given towards the top of this document, the table there is the official distribution.

### **Summary of expectations to be considered for an "A+" in this course**

It is likely that I will submit to the University one or two "A+"s for this course. Who might be thus graded will be determined based on his or her class participation, test scores, final paper score and content, and presentation. To be considered for an "A+" the student will need to be near the top of the class in terms of test and paper scores but it is not a mathematical decision. The quality of the presentation, the content of the paper, and the nature of participation are also considered.

### **Equivalents of 12-pt grades to letter grades**

When a 12-pt grade is reported on bSpace or appears on an evaluated exercise, the letter grade equivalent to that number is as below:

13 / A+	10 / B+	7 / C+	4 / D+
12 / A	9 / B	6 / C	3 / D
11 / A-	8 / B-	5 / C-	2 / D-
			0 / F

### **Initial cutoff points used to determine a letter grade for the midterms**

test percentage score	letter grade used for grade calculations	test percentage score	letter grade used for grade calculations	test percentage score	letter grade used for grade calculations	test percentage score	letter grade used for grade calculations
When given score must be at least 100% or higher	A+	≥ 86.5	B+	≥ 76.5	C+	≥ 66.5	D+
≥ 94.5	A	≥ 82.5	B	≥ 72.5	C	≥ 62.5	D
≥ 89.5	A-	≥ 79.5	B-	≥ 69.5	C-	≥ 55	D-
						< 55	F

### **Conversion of 12-pt grade course average to letter grades for the final course grade**

At the end of the term, the 12-pt scores for each grade category are calculated together, according to weight, for the final grade. That mathematical result is then rounded to the nearest letter grade step. In other words, an 11.50 is rounded up to 12 while an

11.49 is rounded down to 11, and so on. The student can calculate possible scenarios by using the excel sheet provided on the Homepage. Below are the cutoffs for each course letter grade.

Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 12pt average	letter grade reported to the university
When given, highest 1 or 2 class averages	A+	≥ 9.5	B+	≥ 6.5	C+	≥ 3.5	D+
≥ 11.5	A	≥ 8.5	B	≥ 5.5	C	≥ 2.5	D
≥ 10.5	A-	≥ 7.5	B-	≥ 4.5	C-	≥ 2	D-
						< 2	F

## Suggestions for getting the most out of this class, and scoring well

On-time arrival helps me conclude that you are engaged in the course, as does **avoiding all multi-tasking**, keeping up with the reading assignments and asking good questions.

**Pay equal attention to things Chinese and Japanese.**

Take good lecture notes that record **not just factual information but the analysis I offer**. A system of managing notes is probably helpful since this is a details-rich course and most of those details are delivered as lectures, not through the reading (which is generally more in a supporting role, or as context to explore the analysis offered in the lectures).

This class works from a basic model of showing the consistency of certain subtle themes within a wide variety of cultural practices. If you do not embrace the variety you cannot complete the picture. So, an open mind towards all types of topics and of course towards both China and Japan is your best way to position yourself to do well on the tests that ask you to master details and produce your own analysis using them.

There is quite a bit of reading. Embrace it. In particular do not shirk the difficult, abstract readings on Japanese poetics.

Study for the exams. They will be difficult.