

Denis Vovchenko, East Asia to 1800, Multi-Lesson Curriculum Plan

East Asia in the Age of “Feudalism”

Rationale: The module is part of Hist 3823 History of Asia - an upper-level undergraduate college history course taught online asynchronously over a 16-week period. Students are typically history and social studies majors who have already taken introductory level courses introducing them to basic trends in European and world history (Western civilization and world history surveys).

Skill and Contents Objectives:

Course level objective: To understand the enduring social, political, and cultural patterns of Asian societies.

Module level learning objective: To explain the patterns of Asian “feudalism” in comparative perspective in writing and in interaction with classmates.

Discussion instructions. Each is 3% of the overall grade.

When posting on the discussion board, students should **FIRST** create a thread to provide their own response to the question (worth 60 points) and then to make two **DIFFERENT** comments on the responses of two classmates (worth 20 points each). *Responses should use standard formal English, be substantive, demonstrating evidence of content mastery – use and cite specific examples from all readings and audiovisuals assigned for that day to support your position (page numbers to cite your evidence from the textbook and minute marks to cite your evidence from the assigned videos) - for example – (page 30) or (45:13 min). Examples from the readings are worth more than those from the videos and images. Instead of throwing a bunch of quotes from the textbook, paraphrase that info in your own words. Feedback to your classmates should be meaningful too, consisting of more than, "Ya, I think so, too!" or "You're wrong!" If you agree or disagree with them, explain why and add something **new** for them to consider. You can also ask a **RELATED** question that will promote further discussion, remind of the points made in the assigned materials, share a link that you found interesting and is **pertinent** to the issue being discussed, etc. *However, please remember always to be courteous and respectful, especially when addressing classmates that may hold views that are contrary to your own. Failure to do so will cost you credit for the discussion post.**

Lesson 1 The Spread of World Religions in Early “Medieval” Eurasia

Discussion 1

Course level objective: To understand the enduring social, political, and cultural patterns of Asian societies.

Module level learning objective: To explain the patterns of Asian “feudalism” in comparative perspective.

Materials on Blackboard:

- Donald W. Mitchell & Sarah H. Jacoby, “Japanese Experiences of Buddhism” in *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*. 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 309-346
- Dimitri Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 272-290.

Discussion 1 question:

Compare the transfer of Buddhism to Japan and the spread of Christianity in post-Roman Eastern Europe.

Lesson 2 Politics under “Feudalism”: Local vs. Central Power Dynamics

Discussion 1

Course level objective: To understand the enduring social, political, and cultural patterns of Asian societies.

Module level learning objective: To explain the patterns of Asian “feudalism” in comparative perspective.

Materials on Blackboard:

- G. Cameron Hurst III, “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Personalities in the Founding of the Koryo Dynasty,” *Korean Studies Forum*, 7 (Summer-Fall 1981): 1-23
- Roger Collins, “The County of Castile, c. 860-1037”, ch. 9 in *Caliphs & Kings: Spain, 796-1031* (New York: Wiley & Blackwell, 2012), 238-256

Discussion 2 question:

“Feudalism” is a hotly debated concept with some historians calling to ditch it altogether. However, others see a lot of value in its continued use. Everyone will probably agree that under “feudalism” centralized royal government is weaker than local powerholders who claim near sovereignty and assert wide-ranging lordship rights over local peasants and townsmen. Let’s compare the transition of power in “medieval” Korea and Spain. As usual, be sure to use and cite all assigned materials (pages and video minute markers).

Lesson 3 Women Writers in Medieval Eurasia

Discussion 3

Course level learning objective: To understand the enduring social, political, and cultural patterns of Asian societies.

Module level learning objective: To explain the patterns of Asian “feudalism” in comparative perspective.

Materials on Blackboard

- “Opening,” “Hateful Things,” “Elegant Things,” and “Adorable Things,” *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon*, tr. Ivan Morris (New York: Columbia University Press 2004)

Christine de Pizan. *The Book of the City of Ladies*, tr. Rosalind Brown-Grant (New York: Penguin, 2000), 238-239, 201-212

Discussion 3 question: Compare the aspirations of Sei Shonagon and Christine de Pizan. Who is more “conservative”?