

Old Dominion University: Department of History
HIST 695: Dynasties: Family and Power in World History
Spring 2019: Mondays, 7:10–9:50 PM

Instructor: Nicholas Abbott

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Course Description:

How have particular families amassed and perpetuated cultural, economic, and political power over multiple generations? Why was dynastic rule a pervasive form of governance for much of human history? How did different ruling dynasties use kinship, marriage, intimacy, service, and enslavement to define the limits of family? How did dynastic political cultures vary over time and in different parts of the world? How have modern forms of capitalism and statehood shaped—and been shaped by—ideas and practices of dynastic power?

These are some of the questions this seminar addresses through an examination of different case studies from across the globe and throughout human history. Over the course of the term, we will read premodern and modern theorists of dynasticism and recent scholarship exploring a range of representative historical dynasties. Topics will include, among others: origins and theories of dynastic rule and dynastic legitimacy; gendered and generational divisions of power within ruling dynasties; marriage, concubinage, and succession practices; service and enslavement; the relationship of ruling dynasties to “the state”; modern monarchies; and business and commercial dynasties.

Course Objectives:

- To investigate dynasties as social, political, economic and cultural phenomena and to explore similarities and differences in dynastic organizations and practices in various historical contexts
- To analyze premodern and modern theories of dynasties and dynasticism
- To build research and writing skills through the comparative study of different historical dynasties

Required Readings:

- Jeroen Duindam: *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) [**Electronic copy available**]

- Munis Faruqui, *Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) [**Electronic copy available**]
- Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)
- Jane Hathaway, *The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem: From African Slave to Power-Broker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) [**Electronic copy available**]
- Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)
- Emily Osborn, *Our New Husbands Are Here: Households, Gender, and Politics in a West African State from the Slave Trade to Colonial Rule* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011) [**Electronic copy available**]
- Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)
- David Landes, *Dynasties: Fortunes and Misfortunes of the World's Greatest Business Families* (New York: Penguin, 2007)

Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard

Course Requirements:

Successful completion of this course requires regularly attending weekly class sessions, participating actively in discussions, submitting required analysis worksheets, giving individual presentations and leading discussion on assigned weeks, meeting semi-weekly deadlines for completion of the final paper, and earning a passing grade on the final paper.

Grade Distribution:

Attendance and Participation	30%
Analysis Worksheets	10% (5 at 2% each)
Presentations and Leading Discussion	15% (3 at 5% each)
Research Presentation	5%
Final Paper	40%

Attendance and Participation

To receive full credit for attendance and participation, students must attend all weekly sessions, having read all assigned readings carefully and completely, and participate actively in class discussion. Active participation is especially critical for seminars like this that are driven by conversation and collective engagement with texts and ideas. Active participation, however, does not mean having the “right

answers” or making insightful comments about each and every work. Rather, it means being attentive and engaged in classroom conversation, responsive to instructor and peer comments, and generally willing to ask and answer questions, seek clarification, share ideas, etc.

Students will be permitted ONE unexcused absence. Every additional absence will result in the deduction of one letter grade from the final grade.

Presentations and Leading Discussion

At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned a number by the instructor corresponding to the schedule below. Each student will be responsible for giving two short presentations of approximately 15–20 minutes, one on a theorist of dynasticism (Week 4) and the other on one of the assigned books.

The presentation on the selected theorist should give a brief overview of who the author was, what time he/she lived, and where the selection fits into his/her larger body of work, followed by a brief summary of the arguments about dynastic rule he/she makes in the selection.

The book presentation should give a brief overview of the book’s:

- Central argument(s) (What is the author trying to convince the reader of?)
- Organization (What does each chapter discuss? How does each chapter advance the book’s argument?) AND
- Evidence (What kinds of primary sources does the author use? How does the author interpret those sources to develop the argument?)

Each student will also help the instructor lead the discussion of the assigned book by formulating a list of open-ended discussion questions and posing them to the group.

Possible questions might include:

- What did the class like or dislike about the book?
- How effectively did the author make his/her argument? Use or present his/her evidence?
- How does this week’s book affect how we understand or think about previous works discussed in class?
- How might this week’s author might respond to other works discussed in class? How might other authors previously discussed respond to this week’s book?
- What contributions does the book make to the study of dynasticism in its particular context or to the study of dynasties more generally?

- What new questions does the book raise? What new areas of research does it open up?

Student discussion leaders should modify these sample questions with relevant specifics, devise questions of their own, and be ready to formulate additional questions in response to points raised by class discussion as the conversation develops.

Analysis Worksheets

Students are responsible for completing analysis worksheets for five of the assigned books per the class schedule below. Electronic worksheets will be made available on Blackboard and will ask students to answer the following questions about the assigned book:

- What central argument(s) does the book make? (50–100 words)
- How is the book organized? What topic(s) does each chapter address and how does each chapter build the book's larger arguments? (150–250 words)
- What kinds of evidence does the author use and how is that evidence interpreted? Does the author use any theories or interpretive/analytic methods from other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, political science, literary studies, gender studies, etc.? If so, what are they? (150–200 words)
- Is the author in conversation with other scholars in the field? Whose work is the author building upon? Whose work is the author critiquing?
- What does the author think the book's main contributions are to the study of their particular topic? What does the author state or suggest are the implications of the book for other areas of study? (150–200)

Final Paper and Research Presentations

Each student is responsible for selecting a pair of historical dynasties (e.g., the Stuarts and the Safavids; the Rothschilds and the Birlas; or the Roosevelts and the Nehru-Gandhis); identifying (at minimum) 5–6 relevant scholarly books and 2–3 appropriate primary sources for each dynasty; and (using those sources) writing a 15–20-page essay that compares the two dynasties in terms of one of the themes discussed in class (e.g., marriage and reproduction; succession; service and enslavement; gendered and generational power; modernization, etc.) or a theme of the student's own choosing. In comparing the two dynasties, the essay should not simply enumerate similarities and differences but should present, and be organized around, an original argument formulated by the student.

Essays should be:

- Footnoted and formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style
- Double-spaced and written in 12-point Times New Roman font or a near equivalent
- Stapled in the upper left-hand corner

Essays are due in class, in hardcopy, on Monday, April 29. Late essays will receive a deduction of one letter grade for each day they are submitted after the due date. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER FRIDAY, MAY 3.**

In addition to the strength of their analysis, essays will be evaluated for organization, clarity, and an absence of spelling, grammatical, and typographic errors. **Proofread accordingly.**

Prior to the essay's final due date, students will also complete a series of benchmark assignments:

- **Prospectus:** A one-page description of the two dynasties to be compared and the theme used to compare them. The prospectus should also provide a rationale for why those two dynasties might be meaningfully compared; why the theme is relevant to those two dynasties; and what might be learned from the comparison. **(Due: Feb. 11)**
- **Bibliography:** List of the primary and secondary sources to be consulted. **(Due: March 4)**
- **Draft introduction and detailed outline:** 1–2 page introduction that gives a clear statement of the paper's argument, followed by an outline of the remainder of the paper that indicates how the student will substantiate their argument and the evidence that will be used for each point. **(Due: April 1)**

Finally, students will give 20–25 minute presentations of their work on April 29.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failure of the course. The ODU catalogue defines plagiarism as follows:

“A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she produces someone else's work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks.

Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group's work and participates in none of the group's activities, but attempts to take credit for the work group."

If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, please see me BEFORE submitting dubious work. **When in doubt, indicate language that is not your own with quotation marks and cite ALL sources used in your work.**

Accessibility: If you have a disability that will affect your access to and/or participation in any aspect of this class, please provide me with an accommodation letter from the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) so that any and all necessary arrangements can be made. The OEA is located at 1021 Student Success Center and can be contacted at (757) 683-4655 and <http://www.odu.edu/educationalaccessibility/>. Additionally, if you have any other concerns about your participation or performance in the class, please feel free to discuss them with me.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (1/14): Course Introduction

Week 2 (1/21): No Class (MLK, Jr. Holiday)

Week 3 (1/28): What are dynasties?

-Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power*

Week 4 (2/4): Why dynasties? Theories of dynasticism

-Selections from the Confucian classics (3–8, 17–30, 253–86)

-Aristotle, *The Politics* (xi-xxxvii, 83–91, 119–27, 139–52)

-Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddima* (vii–xiv, 123–54, 242–56)

-Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha* (1–43; 53–86)

-John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (vii–xxix, 7–78)

-Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (I: xxxiii–xl, II: 1006–69)

(All students present)

Week 5 (2/11): Reproduction and succession, I

-Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards*

(Student 1 presents, Student 2 leads)

Due: Research paper prospectus; analysis worksheet (Students 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Week 6 (2/18): Reproduction and succession, II

-Munis Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*
(Student 3 presents, Student 4 leads)

Due: Analysis worksheet (Students 1, 2, 5 & 6)

Week 7 (2/25): The harem: gender, generation, and power

-Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*
(Student 5 presents, Student 6 leads)

Due: Revised prospectus; analysis worksheet (Students 1, 2, 3 & 4)

Week 8 (3/4): The harem: service and enslavement

-Jane Hathaway, *The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem*
(Student 2 presents, Student 1 leads)

Due: Bibliography; analysis worksheet (3, 4, 5 & 6)

Week 9 (3/11): Spring Break (No class)

Week 10 (3/18): Research and writing day (No class)

Week 11 (3/25): Dynasties and/as the state, I

-Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors*
(Student 4 presents, Student 3 leads)

Due: Analysis worksheet (Students 1, 2, 5 & 6)

Week 12 (4/1): Research and writing day (No Class)

Due: Draft introductions and detailed outlines

Week 13 (4/8): Dynasties and/as the state, II

-Emily Osborn, *Our New Husbands Are Here*
(Student 6 presents, Student 5 leads)

Due: Analysis worksheet (Students 1, 2, 3 & 4)

Week 14 (4/15): Modernizing dynasties

-Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*

Due: Analysis worksheet (All students)

Week 15 (4/22): Dynastic business

-David Landes, *Dynasties*

Week 16 (4/29): Research symposium

Due: Final papers, research presentations