

“Seeing Eurasia”
 ARC4930 (for undergraduates)
 ARC6793 (for graduates)
 Instructor: Dr. Hui Zou + guest speakers
 Course Assistant: Dr. Chang He

School of Architecture
 Fall 2025
 Rm: TBA
 T/ Periods 3-4 (9:35 am-11:30 am)
 R/ Period 3 (9:35 am-10:25 am)

Seeing Eurasia: Perceptions and Imaginations

3 credits, an interdisciplinary humanities course of architecture, art, literature, and cultural study on Eurasia, open to all majors

Introduction:

The 21st-century is a dynamic century of cultural exchange and inter-cultural understanding. Based on philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul Ricoeur’s cultural theories, the originality of a culture to which we belong depends on how we look at ourselves through others’ eyes. Eurasia is a cross-geographical as well as cross-cultural concept which links the West and the East and many regional cultures in between. Cultural identity is fundamentally related to how we perceive, contemplate, and imagine the cosmic world where human beings dwell meaningfully and sustainably. Cultural creativity is usually expressed through architecture, art, literature, economics, and applied technologies. How do we perceive and imagine Eurasia for its cultural identities and differences, and how will comparative cultural studies help define the common ground of poetical and ethical human dwelling and cultural exchanges? This elective course delves into the rich cultural, aesthetic, and philosophical traditions of East Asia. The course is designed to bridge the interdisciplinary academic focus on architecture, art, religion, and literature with a cross-cultural perspective, showcasing the ways these disciplines reflect and shape cultural identities, historical narratives, and societal values across Eurasia. By exploring the intersection of Asian and European traditions, the course aligns with UF’s commitment to fostering global awareness and interdisciplinary learning. It seeks to provide students with a deeper appreciation of Asian aesthetics and their enduring influence on cultural and intellectual history. Additionally, the course offers a platform to critically engage with the shared and distinct artistic and philosophical dimensions of Eurasian cultures, preparing students to understand and articulate the significance of Asia’s contributions to global heritage. The weekly lecture series will be given by invited UF, US domestic (Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, etc.), and international scholars (Japan, South Korea, and Canada). The lectures explore the aesthetic and cross-cultural connections between architecture, art, literature, and economics across Eurasia, revealing how they shape and reflect cultural identity, social values, and historical memory through the lenses of perception and imagination. The course will be graded based on class attendance, class assignments, and one final paper.

The course is composed of two parts: two-class-hour lectures on Tuesday and one-class-hour seminar on Thursday. The discussion in the seminar will be based on the Tuesday lecture and extended to some special topics in history. The lecture series include the following major categories:

(1) Architecture and Cultural Narratives

Examining the expression of architectural forms, structural techniques, and aesthetics in diverse cultural contexts, and exploring architectural structural and spatial concepts within the Asian

cultural traditions. Topics include architectural history, garden history, design practice, and aesthetic theories.

(2) Art and Aesthetic Expression

Analyzing the symbolic language and forms in artistic creations that represent Asian cultural values, reflecting their aesthetic ideals and ideologies. Topics cover various art forms, including paintings, music, and film.

(3) Technology and Economics

Exploring the intersection of political influences, economic conditions, and related cultural practices in shaping Eurasian communication. Topics include the role of technology and reactions in addressing socio-political and economic challenges within different cultural and historical contexts.

(4) Literature and Imagination

Investigating how literary works depict perceptions of East Asian culture through narrative and create spatial imaginaries that influence Eurasian cultural communication. Topics encompass philosophy, linguistics, Asian and European history, literature, and poetry.

The course will be graded based on class attendance, 4 class assignments (300 words/each), and one final paper (for undergraduate students, 1200 words; for graduate students, 1500 words). The paper assignment will be given in class.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

The course aims to deepen students' understanding of the cultural, religious, social and philosophical perspectives that influence architectural and artistic expressions in Eurasia. By analyzing key case studies and theoretical texts, the course seeks to highlight the historical significance and cultural impact of Asian traditions while fostering a nuanced appreciation of the interplay between perception and imagination in a cross-cultural context. The student will benefit most from the guest speakers' interdisciplinary lectures on forming cultural identities and artistic expressions in Eurasia. Such an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural understanding of rich cultural traditions in Eurasia will help students explore new cultural and aesthetic meanings of human dwelling, technology and economics from a comparative cultural perspective.

Class Regulations:

Constant preparation, attendance, participation and interest are expected. Keeping a quiet class environment is important for the success of the whole class. No eating food, use of cell phones (including the ringing of phones) or chattering will be tolerated in the classroom. In addition, you are expected to be in the classroom on time and remain in the classroom until the completion of the lecture. You are responsible for your own class attendance. Any absence excuse must be presented timely with a valid medical note. The dates of paper submissions are marked in the syllabus, and no late submission. All grades are final. The course does not offer any extra credit for a grade change.

Email and Office-Hour Policies:

Email communication should go through gatorlink accounts. Please specify which class you are in. Communication regarding class absence should be addressed to TA. Email and office hours can be used for succinct communication on issues relevant to the course but cannot be used as replacement for class attendance, which is crucial for learning and success in a lecture course.

Weekly Topics:Week 1

R (08/21)/ Dr. Hui Zou, course introduction

Week 2

T (08/26)/ Dr. Joon-Kon Chung (Eurasia Foundation, Japan), “A New Community beyond the Nation State”

R/ Seminar

Week 3

T (09/02)/ Dr. Hui Zou (UF), “Baroque Aesthetic of a Qing Imperial Garden”

R/ Seminar

Week 4

T (09/09)/ Dr. Alberto Perez-Gomez (McGill University, Canada), “Architectural Memories of Asia” (in zoom)

R/ Seminar: Chang He, Yanfeng Chen (UF), “Words to Forms: AI-Augmented Poetic Translation in Architectural Meanings.” **Class assignment 1 due.**

Week 5

T (09/16)/ Dr. Mario Poceski (UF), “Chan/Zen Buddhism: Literature, Doctrine, and Practice.”

R/ Seminar: Chang He, “Modern Zen Retreat Spaces.”

Week 6

T (09/23)/ Dr. Lanlan Kuang (UCF), “The Inner Chamber: Performative Sensuality in Selected *Literata* Writings.”

R/ Seminar

Week 7

T (09/30)/ Dr. Eugene Wang (Harvard University), “A Eurasian Diplomat in 6th-century China: What was his afterlife destination?”

R/ Seminar: : Chang He, Yanfeng Chen, “Painting and Poetry on Memory.” **Class assignment 2 due.**

Week 8

T (10/07)/ Dr. Huaiyu Chen (Arizona State University), “The Wisdom of Light: Contextualizing Art and Architecture of Stone Lamps in Asian Religions.”

R/ Seminar

Week 9

T (10/14)/ Dr. Myengsoo Seo (Hankyong National University, South Korea; UF visiting scholar), “Tradition and Modernity in Early Korean Modern Architecture.”

R/ Seminar: Seongim Moon (UF Ph.D. student), “Korean Modern Pop Culture.”

Week 10

T (10/21)/ Dr. Richard Wang (UF), “Daoism: The Unofficial High Religion of China”

R/ Seminar: Chang He, “Blandness: Literature, Architecture and Painting.” **Class assignment 3 due.**

Week 11

T (10/28)/ Dr. Yoji Sato (president of Eurasia Foundation, Japan), “Exploration of the Eternal Absolute Truth.”

R/ Seminar: Chang He, “Spiritual Space in Rustic Order.”

Week 12

T (11/04)/ Dr. Nancy Steinhardt (University of Pennsylvania), “Yuan-Dynasty Architecture and Beyond.”

R/ Seminar: Trinh T. Minh-ha (UC Berkeley), documentary film “What About China?” (Part 1)

Week 13

T (11/11)/ (Veterans Day, no class)

R/ Seminar: Trinh T. Minh-ha (UC Berkeley), documentary film “What About China?” (Part 2)

Week 14

T (11/18)/ Dr. Youn-OK Kang (Myongji University, South Korea), “Origins of East Asian Languages”

R/ Seminar. **Class assignment 4 due.**

Week 15

(Thanksgiving break, no class)

Week 16

T (12/02)/ (No class, writing the paper)

Final paper due 12/05, Friday on Canvas.

Week 17

(Grading)

List of Lecture Speakers:

Dr. Huaiyu Chen, Associate Professor of East Asian Religions and Philosophies, Arizona State University.

Dr. Joon-Kon Chung, Professor of Political Science, Eurasia Foundation (Tokyo) + Meiji University (Japan).

Dr. Youn-OK Kang, Professor of East Asian Linguistics, Myongji University (South Korea) + Eurasia Foundation (Tokyo).

Dr. Lanlan Kuang, Associate Professor of East Asian Music and Cultures, University of Central Florida.

Dr. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, Emeritus Professor of Architecture, McGill University (Canada).

Dr. Mario Poceski, Professor of Buddhist Studies, UF.

Dr. Yoji Sato, Economist, President of Eurasia Foundation (Tokyo).

Dr. Myengsoo Seo, Associate Professor of Architecture, Hankyong National University (South Korea) + UF visiting scholar.

Dr. Nancy Steinhardt, Professor of East Asian Classical Architecture, University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Eugene Wang, Professor of East Asian Art History, Harvard University.

Dr. Richard Wang, Professor of East Asian Religions and Literature, UF.

Dr. Hui Zou, Professor of Architecture, UF.

Recommended Scholarly Sources:

Huaiyu Chen, *Animals and Plants in Chinese Religions and Science* (2023).

Joon-Kon Chung, *Contemplating Regional Integration in Asia* (2017).

Youn-OK Kang, *History of the Chinese Grammar Development* (2020).

Lanlan Kuang, *Staging Tianxia: Dunhuang Expressive Arts and China's New Cosmopolitan Heritage* (2024).

Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *An Alliterative Lexicon of Architectural Memories*, 2 vols. (2024).

Yoji Sato, public lecture “The World Will Become One in the Near Future” (2025) and other lectures available online.

Mario Pocesi, *East and Inner Asian Buddhism* (2014).

Myengsoo Seo, “Rethinking the conflicts and continuities between tradition and modernity in early Korean modern architecture focused on two architects: Gilryong Park and Dongjin Park,” *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, v. 21, n. 5 (2022).

Nancy Steinhardt, *Yuan: Chinese Architecture in a Mongol Empire* (2023).

Trinh T. Minh-ha, documentary film “What About China?” (to be shown in class); video “Trinh T. Minh-ha Q&A” about this film at

<https://youtu.be/IOdWN61kIL8?si=wnciijKm5JZNC11N>

Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (2005).

Richard Wang, *Lineages Embedded in Temple Networks: Daoism and Local Society in Ming China* (2022).

Hui Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing and Early Modern Chinese Culture* (2011).

Grading:

1) Weekly class attendance: 60%

2) 4 class assignments: 20%

3) Final paper: 20%

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Numeric Grade	100-95	94-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	0
Quality Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0

Class assignments and the final papers will be graded by Dr. Chang He and the School of Architecture arranged graduate graders. Once a grade is announced, it remains as the final. Academic integrity will be highly maintained, and no plagiarism is tolerated.

You can find the university grading policy at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Office Hours: Tue, 12:50 pm-2:45 pm; Thu, 10:40 pm-12:35 pm (appointment required)

Contact: Please use email for in-time contact.

Instructor: Dr. Hui Zou, Office: AH134, Email: h Zhou@ufl.edu, Phone: 352-294-1470

Course Assistant: Dr. Chang He (Postdoc Associate), Email: hechang@ufl.edu

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

UF Policies:

UF Academic Policies and Campus Resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>

University Policy on Academic Misconduct: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy:

<http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>.

Canvas Help:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Other Resources: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course, please visit

<http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints>.

The online course evaluation process: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com/>
 - a. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>