History of East Asian Writing Systems
W4410x (Fall 2004)
Mondays 4:10-6, Kress Room, Starr Library (entrance on 200 Level)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4, 500A Kent Hall

This class is a survey of the history of writing systems in East Asia, ranging from the origins of writing in early China to contemporary issues of digitalization and electronic media. Topics will include the evolution of character-based writing in China and other parts of the region; the development of the Japanese kana scripts, the Vietnamese chu nôm system, and the Korean alphabet; ideologies of writing and their connections to state formation; premodern manuscript cultures; the rise of printing and its social and cultural impact; European images of East Asian writing; script reform and the modern nation-state; writing and aesthetics; and more. This intensive seminar is open to advanced undergraduates and graduate students; all course readings are in English, but graduate students will be required to make use of primary sources for their research papers.

Prerequisites, Requirements, and Evaluation

Some experience reading and writing a modern East Asian script is strongly preferred, as is at least one of following courses: Introduction to East Asian Civilization (China, Korea, or Japan; V2359, V2363, V2361) or Colloquium on Major Texts: East Asia (V3400). This class presumes a basic understanding of the outlines of East Asian history; students should be prepared to independently catch up on unclear points of historical and cultural background. Permission from the instructor is required to register. Evaluation for the course will be based on the following components:

1) Regular attendance in class and active participation in discussion, based on solid preparation of common assignments and advance reading of Courseworks postings by presenters.

2) In-class presentations based on selected readings, preceded by timely postings on Courseworks (by Sunday 4 PM at the latest). Such postings should provide an outline of what you will cover and a list of questions you would like your classmates to consider before coming to class; they may also include illustrations or excerpts from the reading(s) you are responsible for. Postings are not to exceed two pages in length, and your presentation cannot consist of reading from your posting.

3) A final research paper (15-20 pages for undergraduates, 20-30 pages for graduate students) pursuing a topic of interest to you, selected in consultation with the instructor.

Readings

Most of the readings will be made available on the "Lurie" seminar shelf in the reading room of the Starr East Asian library (directly opposite the circulation desk, in the corner by stairs on the south side of the room). Locations of readings found elsewhere are indicated in the schedule below (EAR=East Asian Reserves).

The following basic textbook can be found on the shelf, and ten copies have been ordered at Labyrinth Books (536 W 112th St., between Broadway and Amsterdam; 212-865-1588):

Florian Coulmas, Writing Systems of the World (Blackwell, 1989 [1991 reprint]): $28.95 (abbreviated as Coulmas in the schedule below)
The following book is highly recommended as a reference, and is also available on the seminar shelf. Owing to its exorbitant cost, copies have not been ordered at the bookstore, but several sections will be assigned over the course of the semester.


**Schedule**

**A note on the schedule of readings**

The lists of sources found below are selective bibliographies on each week's theme; **there is no expectation that students will read all of them each week, or even any week.** The common readings required for the entire class will usually be selected from most or all of the sources listed towards the top of each bibliography, while the readings that form the basis of in-class presentations will be selected from the remainder.

1) **13 Sept. Introductory Session**

2) **20 Sept. The World Origins of Writing**

Florian Coulmas, "Theoretical Perspectives" (1-54), "Sacred Characters: Theocratic Script of Egypt" (57-71), "From Word to Syllable I: Cuneiform Writing" (72-90), "What Writing Means for Linguistics" (267-73), in **Coulmas**

Martha J. Macri, "Maya and Other Mesoamerican Scripts," in **D&B**, 172-82


Florian Coulmas, "History of Writing," in *Writing Systems; An Introduction to their Linguistic Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 190-209


Nicholas Postgate et al., "The Evidence for Early Writing: Utilitarian or Ceremonial?" *Antiquity* 69 (1995), 459-480

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section on "Mesopotamian Cuneiform," in **D&B**, 33-72


Robert K. Ritner, "Egyptian Writing," in **D&B**, 73-87

Floyd Lounsbury, "The Ancient Writing of Middle America," in Senner, *The Origins of Writing*, 203-


Florian Coulmas, "Semitic Writing," "The Alphabet," and "Writing in India," in *Coulmas*, 137-201 (also consult relevant sections of D&B)

**3) 27 Sept. Writing in Early China**


Julie Lee Wei, *Correspondences Between the Chinese Calendar Signs and the Phoenician Alphabet* (Sino-Platonic Papers 94, 1999)


Mark Edward Lewis, "Introduction" (1-11), "Writing the State" (13-51), "The Political History of Writing" (195-240), "The Natural Philosophy of Writing" (241-286), and "Conclusion" (363-65), in *Writing and Authority in Early China* (State University of New York Press, 1999)


Victor Mair, "Modern Chinese Writing," in D&B, 200-208

**4) 4 Oct. Some Adaptations on the Chinese Periphery**

*Coulmas*, 110-117 (introductory material on Vietnamese and pre-*hangul* Korean writing)


John DeFrancis, Chapters 1 and 2 ("Chinese Colonialism," "Monarchical Independence"), and "Continuation of Sino-Vietnamese and Nom" (from Chapter 3), in *Colonialism and Language Policy in Viet Nam* (Mouton Publishers, 1977), 3-48


Anne E. Mclaren, "Women's Voices and Textuality: Chastity and Abduction in Chinese Nüshu Writing" *Modern China* 22:4 (October 1996), 382-416 (especially 382-397) (JSTOR)


William W. Chiang, "We Two Know the Script; We Have Become Good Friends": Linguistic and Social Aspects of the Women's Script Literacy in Southern Hunan, China (University Press of America, 1995)

### 5) 11 Oct. Writing in Early Japan


David Lurie, "Writing and Reading Intertwined: Widespread Inscription in the 7th Century," in *The Origins of Writing in Early Japan* (Columbia University PhD. Dissertation, 2001), 176-245

Tomiko Yoda, "Women and the Emergence of Heian Kana Writing," in *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Duke University Press,

6) 18 Oct. The Korean Alphabet

Ross King, "Korean Writing," D&B 218-227
Young-Mee Cho, et al., "Han'gul and Pronunciation," in Integrated Korean 1 (University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 16-33
Harald Haarman, "The Emergence of the Korean Script as a Symbol of Korean Identity," in Joshua Fishman, ed., The Earliest Stage of Language Planning: The "First Congress" Phenomenon (Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), 143-157

Gari Ledyard, The Korean Language Reform of 1446 (see week 4), 58-330
Young-Key Kim-Renaud The Korean Alphabet: Its History and Structure (University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), especially: Ki-Moon Lee, "The Inventor of the Korean Alphabet" (11-30) and Gari Ledyard, "The International Linguistic Background of the Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People" (31-87)


7) 25 Oct. Print Culture in East Asia

Lothar Ledderose, "The Word in Print," in Ten Thousand Things (see Week 3)
Dennis Twitchett, Printing and Publishing in Medieval China (Frederic C.Beil, 1983)
David J. Marcou, "Korea: The Cradle of Moveable Metal Type," Korean Culture 13:1 (1992), 4-7
Ra Kyung-jun, "Early Print Culture in Korea," Korean Culture 20:2 (1999), 12-21


Chinese Graphic Arts Net, The Glory of Chinese Printing

Won-Yong Kim, Early Movable Type in Korea (Publication of the National Museum of Korea, Series A Vol. I; Eul-Yu Publishing, 1954)


Im T'aesam, "The Origin and Development of Korean Metal-Type Printing," in Kokatsujibon to bunko (Kankoku shoseki senta, 1989), 153-201


8) 8 Nov. Arts of Writing: Calligraphy and Beyond

Albertine Guar, "Calligraphy—A Corporate Logo?" in Literacy and the Politics of Writing (Intellect Books, 2000), 126-140


Lothar Ledderose, Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy (Princeton University Press, 1979), 3-44

Frederick W. Mote and Hung-lam Chu, Calligraphy and the East Asian Book (Shambala Publications, 1989)

Leon Long-yien Chang and Peter Miller, Four Thousand Years of Chinese Calligraphy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) FINE ARTS ND1040 C36

Yoshiaki Shimizu and John Rosenfeld, Masters of Japanese Calligraphy: 8th-19th Century (Asia Society Galleries & Japan House Gallery, 1984) FINE ARTS ND1051 Sh62


9) 15 Nov. **European Images of East Asian Writing**

Ernest Fenollosa (edited by Ezra Pound), *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (copyrighted 1936; undated mid-1960s City Lights paperback edition)


10) 22 Nov. **Writing Reform and the Modern Nation-state**

Florian Coulmas, "Writing Reform: Conditions and Implications," in *Coulmas*, 241-263

Wm. C. Hannas, *Asia's Orthographic Dilemma* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997), especially "Critique of Character-Based Writing" (99-204) and "Forces for Change" (205-300)
Nanette Gottlieb and Ping Chen, eds., *Language Planning and Language Policy: East Asian Perspectives* (Curzon Press, 2001), especially Ping Chen, "Functions of Phonetic Writing in Chinese" (75-94), Jae Jung Song, "North and South Korea: Language Policies of Divergence and
Convergence" (129-157), and Joseph Lo Bianco, "Viet Nam: Quoc Ngu, Colonialism and Language Policy" (159-206)


Florian Coulmas, "Writing and Literacy in China," in Coulmas and Konrad Ehlich, eds., Writing in Focus (Mouton Publishers, 1983), 239-253


J. Marshall Unger, Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan: Reading Between the Lines (Oxford University Press, 1996)


11) 29 Nov. Electronic Media and Digitalization of East Asian Scripts

Peter Daniels, "Analog and Digital Writing" D&B 883-892


Nanette Gottlieb and Mark McLelland, "The Internet in Japan," in Gottlieb and McLelland, eds., Japanese Cybercultures (Routledge, 2003), 1-16

Ken Lunde, "CJKV Information Processing Overview," in CJKV information processing (Sebastopol, CA : O'Reilly, 1999), 1-26


Kida Jun'ichiro, "Wapro: The Interface Between the Japanese Language and the Computer" and "The Encyclopedia: How Technology Has Transformed the Organization of Knowledge" parts 5

Archived articles from 1998-1999 issues of *The Book & The Computer* (numerous articles about Japan and the P.R.C., with a few on Taiwan and South Korea; www.honco.net/archive/index.html [accessed 2 Sept. 2004])

"Online Symposium: Book Culture at the Crossroads" (archived articles from 2002-2004 dealing with Chinese, Korean, and Japanese print and electronic media; www.honco.net/os/list.html [accessed 2 Sept. 2004])

12) **6 Dec. East Asian Writing: Overviews, Theories, and Taxonomies**


John Mountford, “A Functional Classification” (D&B, 627-32)


Roy Harris, "Ideographic Hallucinations," in *Rethinking Writing* (Indiana University Press, 2000), 138-161.


13) **13 Dec. Student Presentations of Research Projects**

Research Papers Due Wednesday 22 December