Calendars, Almanacs, and Popular Culture in East Asia
History 150
Autumn 2010
Tuesday, Thursday 2:00-4:00

Robert André LaFleur
Office Hours
MI 111
Tuesday 4:00-5:30
363-2005
Thursday 4:00-5:30
lafleur@beloit.edu
...or by appointment

Required Books
Hong Kong Almanac (Chinese text)
Taiwan Almanac (Chinese text)
Shanghai Almanac (Chinese text)
Japanese Calendar (Japanese text)
Old Farmer’s Almanac (English text)

Booth, Martin. Golden Boy
Dalby, Liza. East Wind Melts the Ice
Doré, Henri. Researches into Chinese Superstitions.
Williams, C.A.S. Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs
Ho Peng Yoke. Li, Qi and Shu: An Introduction to Science and Civilization in China
Feng Menglong. Stories Old and New
Fabian, Stephen. Patterns in the Sky: An Introduction to Ethnoastronomy
LaFleur, Robert André. China: Global Studies
McNaughton, William. Reading and Writing Chinese.
Schafer, Edward. Pacing the Void: T’ang Approaches to the Stars
Tun Li-chen. Annual Customs and Festivals in Peking.
Watson, James and Rubie. Village Life in Hong Kong.

Hacker, Diana. A Pocket Style Manual. (Required in all history courses)
Moleskine® notebook for Chinese characters

This semester, in addition to looking generally at the rich popular religious and cultural traditions in early modern and modern East Asia, we will study a Chinese folk classic—the Almanac or Book of the Calendar [Li Shu]. One of the most fascinating works of Chinese thought, the Almanac is also one of those that is least accessible to Westerners. It is filled with a rich array of texts covering etiquette, physiognomy, divination, astrology, geomancy, and the lunar calendar itself. It has been published annually for the past millennium and has had an enormous impact on the lives of both China’s elite and common people during that period.

Called by one scholar “the last great major Classic (yet) to be translated,” the Almanac has been relatively neglected by Chinese and Western scholars in comparison with the so-called “scholarly” classics, such as those of Confucius and Mencius, or Laozi and Zhuangzi. Yet Chinese bookstores throughout North America, Europe, and Asia carry large stocks of the book, especially in the weeks directly preceding the lunar New Year.

In spite of its wide distribution and the familiarity the vast majority of Chinese have had with the text, however, it is something of a mystery to most of those who own it:
...it would be a mistake to think that [the Almanac] is understood fully by ordinary Chinese...For most Chinese it is a closed book, opened for them by specialists when the need arises, such as for marriage, funerals, travel, opening new premises, choosing a house, and so on. However, there are few homes which do not have a copy of the Almanac, for it is more than just a complicated book with a useful calendar. It is a force, a charm, a talisman of great power. It is also so much a part of virtually every Chinese person’s background and home life that to be without this year’s Almanac would be like forgetting to get dressed.¹

In addition to our study of the Chinese Almanac, we will look broadly at works from China’s major religious traditions and their popular forms over the last millennium. Ultimately, this will lead us to a better understanding of Chinese intellectual and cultural history than we might be able to gain from more “canonical” works. We will round out our studies with comparisons to other East Asian calendars, as well as several Western models.

Coursework
Students will do about fifty pages of writing during the semester, broken up into segments that will allow them to develop their thinking and writing skills as they build toward the final project, due at the end of the term. There will be separate handouts for each of these assignments.

• **Weekly Abstracts.** Most weeks of the term, you will have a one-page abstract due that will serve as an assessment of what you have learned during the week. These will be explained carefully in class.

• **A 2,000-word biographical essay.** Due halfway through the term, this assignment will allow you to try out research ideas and anticipate some of the challenges of addressing the final letter’s “audience.”

• **Late-term Exam.** There will be a three-hour exam on key items in our readings and class discussions that will take place a few weeks before the end of the term. This exam will be an opportunity for you to review course materials and prepare yourselves to write your final letter assignment.

• **A 5,000-word letter.** Written to an intelligent reader without much knowledge of Chinese and Japanese culture, the letter will explain for her/him the Chinese Almanac and the customs and traditions that surround it. We will talk a great deal about the letter and response paper throughout the term, and strategies for writing them effectively.

### Evaluation
- Abstracts 25%
- Biographical Essay 20%
- Late-Term Exam 25%
- Final Letter 30%

*Daily attendance and class participation are expected; more than two absences during the semester will affect your grade. Late assignments will be penalized.*

Week I (August 24, 26)
LaFleur, China: Global Studies, xv-xix, 1-66, 163-219
Preface
Geography
History
Society
  Religion and Thought
  Social Classes and Ethnicity
  Women and Marriage
Education
Williams, Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs, 33-59 (A)
Agriculture
Ancestral Worship
Astrology
Astronomy
McNaughton, Reading and Writing Chinese: 12-36
  Introduction
  Characters 1-29

Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 27th

Week II (August 31, September 2)
LaFleur, “Chinese Almanacs” in The Grove Encyclopedia of Chinese Art
LaFleur, “Calendars and Almanacs” in xxx
LaFleur, China: Global Studies, 221-345; 425-430
Culture
  Chinese Language
  Social Relationships and Etiquette
  Literature
  Chinese Art
  Music in China
  Food
  Leisure and Sports
  Popular Culture and Traditional Beliefs
  Appendix: Chinese Festivals and National Holidays
Williams, Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs, 60-125 (BC)
  Bat
  Bell
  Birth
  Books
  Charms
  Coins
  Colours
  Compass
  Cycle of Sixty
McNaughton, Reading and Writing Chinese: 37-50
  Characters 30-99

Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 5th
**Week III (September 7, 9)**

Palmer, *T'ung Shu*, 9-40
- Preface
- Introduction

Smith, *Chinese Almanacs*
- The Relationship Between Calendars and Almanacs
- Qing Dynasty Almanacs
- Chinese Almanacs and Mainland Politics
- Almanacs in Present-day Hong Kong and Taiwan
- Conclusion

Tan, *Customs and Festivals in Peking*
- First Month
- Second Month
- Third Month
- Fourth Month
- Fifth Month
- Sixth Month
- Seventh Month
- Eighth Month
- Ninth Month
- Tenth Month
- Eleventh Month
- Twelfth Month

Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 126-159 (D)
- Da Yu
- Death
- Diaper Patterns
- Door Gods
- Dragon

McNaughton, *Reading and Writing Chinese*: 51-70
- Characters 100-199

*Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 10*

**Week IV (September 14, 16)**

Lowe, *The Adventures of Wu*: 7-239
- Introduction
- Foreword
- Introducing the Wu Family
- A Son is Born
- The Third Day Bath
- The Full Month Celebration
- The Visit to the Grandparents
- The First Year Passes
- A Doctor is Consulted
- Little Bald Head Goes to School
- The Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon
- Ancestor Worship
- A Popular Fair
- Summer Pastimes
- First Steps to Knowledge
- A Fishing Expedition
- Little Bald Head Goes to School
- The Miao Fengshan Pilgrimage
- Chinese Nursery Rhymes
- Famous Flowers of Peking
- Three Picturesque Temples
- Amusements in Season
Home Gardens
Games for Children
The Dragon Boat Festival
The Temple Outside Hata Men
Teashop Storytellers

Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 160-183 (E)
  Eight Diagrams
  Eight Immortals
  Eight Treasures
  Eight Lohan
  Elixir of Life

McNaughton, *Reading and Writing Chinese*: 71-90
Characters 200-299

*Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 17*

**Week V (September 21, 23)**
Lowe, *The Adventures of Wu*: 1-227 (Part 2)
  Water Plants and Dragons
  The Ways of Peking Pigeons
  The Importance of Friendship
  The Coming of Autumn
  The Mid-Autumn Festival
  In Search of a Pekingese
  Yellow Wine and White Wine
  Hunting in Ancient China
  The Festival of Double Yang
  Old Mr. Wu Becomes Ill
  Death Procedures
  Funeral Ceremonies
  The Funeral is Held
  Skates, Chess, and Porridge
  Preparing for the New Year
  The Lunar New Year
  Visiting the Temples
  The Chang Tien-erh Fair
  The Betrothal of Young Wu
  Young Wu is Married

Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 184-210 (F)
  Fan
  Feng Shui
  Five Elements
  Flowers
  Four Heavenly Kings
  Fu Yi

McNaughton, *Reading and Writing Chinese*: 91-110
Characters 500-599

*Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 26*

**Week VI (September 28, 30)**
Ho, *Li, Qi, and Shu*
  Part One Fundamental Concepts
  *Li 理, Qi 氣, and Shu 數*
  The Concepts of *Yin 陰* and *Yang 陽* and *Wuxing 五行*
  *Wuxing* and Their Mutual Relationships
  Some Applications of Numbers and *Wuxing*
  The System of the *Yijing*
The Binary System and the Xiantian 先天 and Houtian 後天 Orders

Part Two Chinese Mathematics
Early Chinese Mathematics
Mathematics in the Han Period
Mathematics Between the Second and Fifth Centuries

Part Three Chinese Astronomy
The Beginning of Chinese Astronomy
Chinese Astronomy from the Spring-and-Autumn Period to the Han Dynasty
The Cosmological Schools
Stars and Constellations in Chinese Astrology
Chinese Astronomical Records
Calendrical Science
Yixing and Astronomy in Tang China
The Heyday of Chinese Astronomy

Part Four Chinese Alchemy
Magic and Early Ideas of Immortality
The Golden Age of Chinese Alchemy
Elixir Poisoning
Alchemy in Medieval China
Alchemy and the Literati in Song China
Laboratory Equipment
The Final Curtain of Chinese Alchemy

Williams, Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs, 211-257 (GHIJKL)

God of Longevity
God of the Kitchen
God of Wealth
Jade
Kuan Yin
Lute

McNaughton, Reading and Writing Chinese: 111-130
Characters 400-499

Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 1st

Week VII (October 5, 7)
Fabian, Patterns in the Sky
Getting to Know the Sky: The Basics
The Sun
The Moon
The Stars
The Planets
Other Celestial Phenomena
Ethnoastronomical Fieldwork
Ethnoastronomy in the Context of Human Life
Williams, Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs, 258-295 (MNO)
Marriage
Medicine
Mirrors
Moon
Musical Instruments
Numbers

McNaughton, Reading and Writing Chinese: 131-150
Characters 500-599

Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 8th

Week VIII—Spring Break
**Week IX (October 19, 21)**

*Booth, Golden Boy*
- Port Out
- The Fragrant Harbor
- Sei Hoi Jau Dim
- Three Lives on the Edge
- Firecrackers, Funerals, and Flames
- Dens, Ducks, and Dives
- Living on Clouds
- Ida, Su Yin, the Light of Tin Hau and the Wrath of Yen Lo
- Hiking to Buddha, Swimming with Colonel Noma
- Mong Kok Revisited
- ‘Homeward’ Bound

*McNaughton, Reading and Writing Chinese*: 151-170
Characters 600-699

Biographical Essay Due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 25th

**Week X (October 26, 28)**

*Chinese Almanac*, 1-15 [Sections 1-10]
*Palmer, T’ung Shu*: 45-93 [Sections 1-10, plus “charms”]

*Schafer, Pacing the Void*
- Introduction
- The T’ang Astronomers
- Cosmogony
- The Sky
- The Stars
- Astrology
- Embodied Stars
- The Sun
- The Moon
- The Planets
- Astral Cults
- Flight Beyond the World
- A Potpourri of Images

*Williams, Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 296-325 (P)
- Painting
- Pan Gu
- Peach
- Phoenix
- Pu Xian

*McNaughton, Reading and Writing Chinese*: 171-190
Characters 700-799

Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 29th

**Week XI (November 2, 4)**

*Chinese Almanac*: 16-30 [Sections 12-21]
*Palmer, T’ung Shu*: 94-118 [Sections 11-20]

*Feng, Stories Old and New*
1. Jiang Xiungge Reencounters His Pearl Shirt
2. Censor Chen Ingeniously Solves the Case of the Gold Hairpins and Brooches
3. Han the Fifth Sells Her Charms in New Bridge Town
4. Ruan San Redeems His Debt in Leisurely Clouds Nunnery
5. Penniless Ma Zhou Meets His Opportunity through a Woman Selling Pancakes
6. Lord Ge Gives Away Pearl Maiden
7. Yang Jiao’ai Lays Down His Life for the Sake of Friendship
8. Wu Bao’an Abandons His Family to Ransom His Friend
9. Duke Pei of Jin Returns a Concubine to Her Rightful Husband
10. Magistrate Teng Settles the Case of Inheritance with Ghostly Cleverness
14. Chen Xiyi Rejects Four Appointments from the Imperial Court
16. The Chicken-and-Millet Dinner for Fan Juqing, Friend in Life and Death
23. Zhang Shunmei Finds a Fair Lady during the Lantern Festival
27. Jin Yunu Beats the Heartless Man
32. Humu Di Intones Poems and Visits the Netherworld
35. The Monk with a Note Cleverly Tricks Huangfu’s Wife
36. Song the Fourth Greatly Torments Tightwad Zhang
39. Wang Xinzhi Dies to Save the Entire Family

Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 324-366 (QRS)
Queen of Heaven
Seals
Secret Societies
Shakyamuni Buddha
Sun
Sword

McNaughton, *Reading and Writing Chinese*: 191-210
Characters 800-899

*Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 5th*

*Week XII (November 9, 11)*

*Chinese Almanac*: 31-62 [Sections 21-29]
Palmer, *T’ung Shu*: 119-149 [Sections 21-29]

Doré, *Researches Into Chinese Superstitions*, 1-154
Birth and Childhood
Betrothal and Marriage
Death and Burial

Fortune-Telling, Divination, and Omens
  Fortune-Telling
  Physiognomy
  Divination According to the Method of King Wen
  Selecting Fortunate or Lucky Days
Fortune-Telling, Divination, and Omens (con’t)
  Consulting Chopsticks Placed in a Bowl of Water
  Good or Evil Omens
  Divining Fortune on the Finger Joints

Vain Observances
  Things Prescribed and Prohibited by the Imperial Calendar
  Geomancy
  The Household Altar
  Worshipping the “Five Characters”
  Forwarding Dues to Heaven
  Superstitious Prints
  The Magic Inscription
  Superstitious Characters
  Slabs for Warding Off Bad Luck

Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 367-392 (TU)
Taiji
Ten Celestial Stems
Three Pure Ones
Twelve Ornaments
Twelve Terrestrial Branches
McNaughton, *Reading and Writing Chinese*: 211-230
Characters 900-999

*Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 12th*

**Week XIII (November 16, 18)**

*Chinese Almanac*: 65-158 [Sections 30-42]
Palmer, *T’ung Shu*: 150-170 [Sections 30-39]

Watson, *Village Life in Hong Kong*
1. Fieldwork in the Hong Kong New Territories
3. Agnates and Outsiders: Adoption in a Chinese Lineage
5. From the Common Pot: Feasting with Equals in Chinese Society
8. Wives, Concubines, and Maids: Servitude and Kinship…
9. The Named and the Nameless: Gender and Person…
13. Fighting With Operas: Processionals Politics, and…Violence
15. Of Flesh and Bones: The Management of Death Pollution…
16. Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society…
19. Living Ghosts: Long-Haired Destitutes in…Hong Kong

Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, 395-436 (VWXY)
Water
Wheel of the Law
Written Characters
Xi Wangmu
Yin and Yang

McNaughton, *Reading and Writing Chinese*: 231-245
Characters 1000-1062

*Weekly Abstract Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 19th*

**Week XIV (November 23)**

*Late-term Exam on November 23rd*

**Week XV (November 30, December 2)**

*Chinese Almanac*: 159-225 [Sections 45-50]

Dalby, *East Wind Melts the Ice*
Spring
Summer
Fall
Winter

**Week XVI (December 7)**

*Presentations and Review*

*Final Letters Due on Wednesday, December 8th at 5:00 p.m.*

*All Late Work Due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 8th by 5:00 p.m.*

*No exceptions (see my late assignment policy).*