Instructor: Patricia Ebrey  
Office hours: Wednesday 9:30 to 11:30, Smith 112A  
Email: ebrey@u.washington.edu

This course on Chinese women’s history takes three distinct approaches to deepening our understanding of women’s lives in the past. To think about the ways basic features of Chinese society and culture provided the context in which women fashioned their lives, we look at gender ideology and the family system. To evaluate the degree to which women’s situations changed over time, we look at two periods, the Song dynasty and the early Qing dynasty. To consider how the availability of different types of sources shapes what the historian is able to say about women’s lives, we take the case of fiction as a source for understanding women’s history and look at one important eighteenth century novel.

**Readings:** a packet of articles plus 4 books to be purchased:


**Course requirements:**

1. Reading all assignments before the session and active participation in the discussion, both online and in class. (20%)
2. A 3-page critical review of a listed article, summarized for the class at the appropriate time and turned in that day. (20%)
3. A 4-page critical review of a book on women in Chinese history summarized for the class at the appropriate time and turned in that day. (20%)
4. An 8-10 page critical essay examining a theme or element in the *Story of the Stone* in light of issues raised by authors we have read. Due on 3/6 (last day of class)

**Online discussion:** Everyone should post a one or two paragraph reaction to each of the readings by 9 PM the day before they are discussed. See the class website:  
**Week 1 1/9 **Introduction Select articles and books to review

**Week 2 1/16 **Putting Women into History: Approaches


**Part 1: Continuities and Broad Cultural Orientations**

**Week 3 1/23: Gender in Chinese Culture: Yin-Yang, gods and ghosts, masculine and feminine**

*Inner Quarters,* 21-44


**Article reviews:**


Book Reviews:


Schafer, Edward H. 1973. The Divine Woman:

Week 4 1/30 Confucian Paradigms and the Patrilineal Family System


Inner Quarters, 45-60, 82-98, 114-130, 152-234.

Article Reviews:


Hsiung, Ping-chen. 1994. “Constructed Emotions: The Bonds Between Mothers and Sons in Late Imperial China,” Late Imperial China 15.1:87-177.


Book Reviews:


Week 5  No class

Part II: Women in Historical Change: Two Moments

Week 6  2/13  The Song Dynasty

Inner Quarters,1-6, 61-81, 99-113, 131-51, 250-71

Book Reviews:


**Article reviews:**


**Week 7 2/20 The Early Qing**

Susan Mann, *Precious Records*

**Article reviews:**


Rowe, William T. 1992. “Women and the Family in Mid-Qing Social Thought: The Case of Ch’en Hung-mou,” *Late Imperial China*


Ellen Widmer, 1992. “Xiaoqing’s Literary Legacy and the Place of the Woman Writer in Late Imperial China.” *Late Imperial China* 13.1:111-55.


**Book Reviews:**

Part III. Sources for the Study of Women’s Lives: Fiction

Week 8 2/27: Women and Gender in the Dream of the Red Chamber, I

Volume 1 of The Story of the Stone

Book reviews:


Article reviews:


**Week 9 3/6 Dream of the Red Chamber, II**

Volume 2 of *The Story of the Stone*.

Paper Due