



This is an abridged sample syllabus. Information is subject to change. Full syllabus will be distributed to registered students when term begins.

ASIA_V 300 - Writing and Culture in East Asia

Bruce Rusk

In this class we will explore the functions of writing in East Asia—loosely defined, of those places that have used Chinese characters and scripts related to them. Since the invention of Chinese characters over 3,000 years ago, writing has played a prominent role in politics, religion, the arts, science and scholarship in East Asia, yet its form and meaning have never been fixed and have often been the object of contention. Writing has affected the lives of people in East Asia throughout recorded history— even those, the majority until the twentieth century, who could not read or write. Nearly every aspect of East Asian civilization is in some way connected to the issue of writing, but we will focus on three recurring topics: The origins of writing and its adaptation to new settings, The links between writing and power, both human and divine, The art and craft of reading and writing.

Mode of Delivery: In Person

Sample Readings

Robinson, Writing and Script Ch. 1

Lee, Sources of Korean Tradition, “Early Chosŏn”

Yu Li, The Chinese Writing System in Asia, Ch. 19

Assignments

Participation|15

Reading Responses and Writing Assignments|10 and 25

Quizzes|5

Midterm Exam|15

Portfolio|5

Final Exam (take-home essay)|25