



IDX G9 History S
Study Guide Issue Semester 1 Final Exam
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3.5 Qin and Han dynasty

Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.)

- Shi Huangdi's Unification
 - Conquered warring states to unify China; titled first emperor
 - Used Legalism (based on Hanfeizi's idea: human nature is evil, strict laws + harsh punishments needed)
 - Abolished feudalism; divided China into 36 military districts run by loyal officials
- Key Actions & Achievements
 - Standardized weights, measures, currency, and Chinese writing
 - Built/connect the Great Wall (hundreds of thousands of laborers worked on it; many died)
 - Repaired roads/canals; standardized cart axle width for transportation

- Collapse
 - Harsh policies (high taxes, forced labor, book burning) led to revolts.
 - Qin fell in 206 B.C.; Gao Zu founded the Han dynasty

Han dynasty(202B.C.-A.D.220)

- Early Han Reforms
 - Han Gao Zu lowered taxes, eased legalist policies, and appointed Confucian scholars as advisors.
 - Emperor Wudi strengthened the empire:
 - Set up an imperial university for Confucian studies
 - Imposed a monopoly on iron and salt to boost government income.
 - Pursued expansionism: expanded China's borders into Manchuria, Korea, Vietnam, Tibet, and Central Asia.
- Silk Road
 - Zhang Qian's exploration led to the creation of the Silk Road
 - Linked China to the Roman Empire/Middle East; trade silk, spices, glass, furs, etc.
 - Spread Chinese culture and goods westward, and new foods into China
- Civil Service System
 - Han emperors created a system where scholar-officials were hired by merit
 - Based on Confucian teachings; candidates studied the Five Classics

- Sui dynasty later formalized civil service exams; systems lasted until 1912
- Han Golden Age Achievements
 - Astronomers improved calendars/timekeeping; invented a seismograph for earthquakes
 - Wang Chong challenged superstitious beliefs
 - Physicians used acupuncture, herbal remedies, and anesthetics
 - Cai Lun invented paper-making from wood pulp
 - Created the rudder, iron stirrups, fishing reels and suspension bridges
- Collapse
 - Court intrigues, warlords, and peasant revolts weakened the empire.
 - Warlords overthrew the last Han emperor in A.D. 220; China split into kingdoms
- Buddhism in China
 - Mahayana Buddhism arrived in China by A.D. 100
 - Initially clashed with Chinese family loyalty traditions but grew popular for promising escape from suffering and eternal happiness
 - By A.D. 400, it spread across China; Buddhist monasteries became centers of learning/arts, blending Confucian/Daoist traditions

12.1 Tang and Song dynasty

The Tang Dynasty

- After the Han Dynasty collapse in 220, China was divided for~400 years. The Sui Dynasty reunified north and south, but the Tang restored China's glory
- Tang Taizong (Li Shimin): A revered emperor; brilliant general, reformer, and calligrapher expanded the empire into Central Asia, forcing Vietnam, Tibet, and Korea to become tributary states
- Government & Economy
 - Restored the Han's uniform governance, expanded the civil service system (based on Confucian philosophy) and set up schools for exam preparation
 - Land reform: Broke up large estates and redistributed land to peasants, strengthening central government and increasing tax revenue.
 - Decline factors: Loss of Central Asian territories to Arabs, corruption, high taxes, drought, famine, and rebellions.
- Key Rulers: Empress Wu Zhao
 - The only female emperor in China's history. Seized power after the emperor's death, unseated her sons and declared herself "Son of Heaven". Her rule guided China through a brilliant period

The Song Dynasty (960–1279)

- Founding & Territory
 - Founded by Zhao Kuangyin in 960, reunified most of China but controlled less territory than the Tang. Faced northern invasions, retreated south of the Huang River (Southern Song) and fell to the Mongols in the late 1200s.
- Prosperity Despite Challenges
 - Economic growth: Improved farming methods (imported fast-growing rice from Southeast Asia), open border policy, and the Grand Canal (completed under the Sui) boosted internal trade (tons of grain shipped north yearly).
 - Foreign trade: Flourished with merchants from India, Persia, and Arabia; Song porcelain found as far as East Africa. The government issued paper money to improve trade.
 - Urban development: Cities shifted from government centers to major trade hubs.
- Society in Tang and Song China
 - Social Classes:
 - Gentry (scholar-officials): Top class; wealthy landowners who studied Confucian classics for civil service exams. Valued education over physical labor, revived Confucian thought.
 - Peasants: Majority of the population; worked the land, lived in self-sufficient villages. Some produced handicrafts for extra income; could rise socially via education/exams.
 - Merchants: Lowest social status (per Confucianism, as wealth came from others' labor), but some bought land/educated sons to join the gentry.

- Status of Women
 - Tang/early Song: Higher status; managed family affairs, finances, and servants.
 - Late Song: Foot binding emerged (a symbol of nobility/beauty), reinforcing women's subordinate role and the Confucian tradition of women staying home. Most women (except peasant workers) practiced foot binding.
- Technology & Culture
 - Technological Inventions
 - Tang: Block printing, water-powered mechanical clocks (700s).
 - Song: Gunpowder (850, first used in fireworks/weapons), movable type (1040s), smallpox vaccine, spinning wheel, and arched bridge building.
- Art & Literature
 - Art: Painting/calligraphy were core skills for the gentry. Song landscape painting (influenced by Daoism) sought harmony with nature; Buddhist themes dominated sculpture/architecture (e.g., pagodas). Porcelain-making perfected (valued worldwide as "chinaware").
 - Literature: Prose and poetry flourished. Tang poets (Li Bo: romantic, celebrated nature; Du Fu: realistic, criticized war/court luxury); Song poet Li Qingzhao wrote about war's impact on women.
- Architecture & Daily Life
 - Tang/Song homes: Wealthy families lived in compounds with courtyards, south-facing for winter warmth. Roofs with upturned edges and decorative tiles; gardens (hills, ponds, rare plants) created harmony with buildings.

12.2 The Mongol and Ming Empires

The Mongol Empire (c.1200–1368)

- Rise of the Mongols
 - Genghis Khan (Temüjin): United warring Mongol clans in the early 1200s; titled “Universal Ruler”. Led Mongol forces to build an empire stretching from the Pacific Ocean to Eastern Europe.
 - Mongol Military: Nomadic herders from the Central Asian steppes; highly mobile armies with skilled horsemen. Learned to use cannons (from Chinese/Turkish experts) to conquer walled cities.
- Mongol Invasion of China
 - Genghis Khan began subduing northern China; his heirs completed the conquest (took 70+ years to conquer southern China).
 - Kublai Khan: Genghis Khan’s grandson; toppled the Song Dynasty in 1279, founded the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), and ruled from Khanbaliq (modern Beijing).
 - Government under Yuan: Mongols held top military/government jobs; allowed Chinese officials to rule provinces. Adopted Chinese dynastic name and rebuilt the Grand Canal.
- Pax Mongolia (Mongol Peace)
 - Period of political stability and peace across Eurasia (1200s–1300s) under Mongol rule.

- Trade & Cultural Exchange: Protected Silk Road boosted trade between Europe and Asia; goods (gunpowder, porcelain), technologies (papermaking), and ideas spread across continents.
- Religious Tolerance: Genghis Khan and successors respected Confucians, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Zoroastrians.
- Marco Polo
 - Venetian traveler who spent 17 years in Kublai Khan's court (1271–1295).
 - Wrote *The Travels of Marco Polo*, a vivid account of China's wealth and infrastructure (e.g., efficient mail system), sparking European interest in Asian riches.

The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)

- Founding & Government Restoration
 - Zhu Yuanzhang: Peasant rebel leader who toppled the Mongols in 1368; founded the Ming Dynasty (“brilliant”).
 - Restored the civil service system (based on Confucian classics) with stricter exams; set up a censor board to fight corruption. Moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing.
- Economic Growth
 - Agriculture: Fertile eastern plains supported a 100M+ population; new crops (corn, sweet potatoes from Americas) and terrace farming boosted production.
 - Industry & Trade: Nanjing became a hub for porcelain, paper, and tool production; repaired canals improved trade; new printing technologies increased book production.

- Cultural Flourishing
 - Art: Ming artists developed unique landscape painting styles and perfected blue-and-white porcelain (highly valued in the West).
 - Literature: Confucian scholars created classical poetry; new popular literature emerged (e.g., *The Water Margin*, world's first detective stories).
- Maritime Exploration (Zheng He)
 - Zheng He's Voyages (1405–1433): Ming admiral led 7 expeditions with huge fleets (62 large ships, 28,000 sailors) to Southeast Asia, India, Persian Gulf, and East Africa. Goals: promote trade, collect tribute, and display Chinese power.
 - End of Exploration: In 1435, the Ming emperor banned seagoing shipbuilding (fleets were costly; Confucian scholars favored tradition over overseas trade). Zheng He's ships were retired and rotted away.