Asian Studies 550

**Week One** (early) meet with primary **project advisor** to discuss the requirements of the project and to clarify the instructor’s and students’ expectations.

**Week One** (end) send a preliminary statement of topic to primary project advisor and **reference librarian** (askref@hamilton.edu). The length of this statement varies depending upon how much time the student has already devoted to the project. The more you can say about your research aims in the first week, the more detailed feedback you will receive from your project advisor. Make an appointment with the reference librarian.

**Week Two** meet with a reference librarian.

**Week Two** (end) **bibliography** due; approximately 15-20 citations, including books and journal articles; printed in proper format as required by the project advisor. A bibliography will be evaluated on its comprehensiveness and whether its sources are up to date.

**Week Three** formal notification of **second reader** selected in consultation with primary advisor and program chair.

**Week Four** 6-10 pp. essay on part of the project, or an overview of it, based on a significant amount of reading and considerable critical reflection on the sources. This is *not* a ‘preliminary draft’; it is a piece of polished writing in which you present your preliminary interpretation of the sources, the issues raised in them, and document your claims on the basis of the sources in *proper citation form*. This is your first opportunity for critical engagement with your project advisor, so present your ideas cogently with the expectation that you will receive considered response and comments from your advisor.

**Weeks Four–Seven** *submit sections of thesis* in polished prose and appropriate documentation to advisor for comments; *meetings* with project advisor by appointment as needed

**Week Seven** report on progress of research to Asian Studies 550 peers: statement of a *thesis of the project*, description of your *sources*, your approach (e.g., what kind of problems you’re examining, questions you’re asking of the sources, critical theories you’re using) and what you expect to get out of them. These reports will be made available to other AS 550 students, who are expected to read and comment on these reports and return them to their authors on day of their presentation.

**Week Eight** student presentations to and discussion with other students in AS 550

**Week Nine–Ten** meetings with project advisor based on work submitted in advance

**Week Eleven** *Preliminary draft due* and *student presentation* (*approx. 20 mins.*) of the thesis.

The preliminary draft should be written in polished prose and fully documented as if it were the final draft.

**Week Twelve** drafts returned to students for revisions.
Week Thirteen  Final drafts due
A critical examination of a significant issue in the writings of scholars of Asian culture might entail a survey of secondary sources written on a particular problem in Asian studies and your critical evaluation of the scholarship, argumentation/interpretation, use of evidence found in the secondary sources. Examples: a study on the secondary literature on the fiction of Yukio Mishima, the idea of samsara in Buddhism, Chinese policy toward South East Asia, 1945–1979, etc. Students would be expected to read extensively on the available literature on such topics, review and analyze scholarly tendencies, critique these tendencies and draw their own conclusions on the basis of the insights gained in such an analysis.

An interpretive study of primary sources entails close scrutiny of primary sources produced by Indian, Japanese, Chinese, etc. “authors” (e.g., novelists, politicians, Confucian masters, film makers, etc.) whereby the student analyzes underlying trends, unspoken assumptions, political agendas, etc. of these primary texts, which could also respond to or elaborate upon the interpretations of scholars who have written on similar topics. Examples: a comparison of the novels of Mishima and Natsume Sôseki, Neo-Confucian critiques of Buddhism on basis of the latter’s idea of life and death, principles of Mao Zedong’s revolutionary strategy before and during World War II. Students would be expected to read available primary sources (in the examples noted, this might mean Mishima’s and Sôseki’s novels, Zhu Xi’s writings on Buddhism, Mao’s writings on revolution) and formulate an interpretation of the meaning and significance of these sources.