Classical China
Zhou, Qin, Han Dynasties
AP World History
Foundations: 8000 BCE - 600 CE
Timeline of Classical China

Zhou: 1029 - 258 BCE

Warring States: 402 BCE - 201 BCE

Qin: 221 - 202 BCE

Han: 202 BCE - 220 CE
Chinese Dynastic Cycle

1. New family establishes dynasty (new institutions, economy)
2. Dynasty grows weak
3. Social Divisions Increase
4. Internal rebellions and/or external rebellions
5. New dynasty emerges
Mandate of Heaven

- Belief that the gods transfer their power to a specific family in China that is meant to establish a dynasty and rule the region
- Emperors were Sons of Heaven
Zhou

- **Social**
  - Rise of a strong, landowning class; inherit social status
  - Patriarchal

- **Political**
  - Loose alliance of regional princes, depended on loyalty; relatively weak rulers
  - Exchange land for promise of taxes and military - **Feudalism**
  - Landowners become more powerful than rulers

- **Interactions**
  - Expanded the Middle Kingdom

- **Cultural**
  - Banned human sacrifice; formalized religious practices; Ancestor worship; focus on harmony
  - Promoted use of one language for everyone
  - End of dynasty leads to development of new philosophies (Confucianism)
  - Tea ceremonies; chopsticks

- **Economic**
  - Agriculture dominated (N-wheat; S-rice)
Period of Warring States

- **402 BCE - 201 BCE**
  - Competing interests of landowning class and ruling class cause political turmoil
  - Landowners raise own military - origins of regional warlords
  - No political unity - China is exceptionally weak
  - Cultural innovations survive
  - Results in new philosophies
Rise of Chinese Philosophies

- Confucianism
- Daoism/Taoism
- Legalism
Confucianism

- Confucius (K’ung Fu Tzu)
  - Period of Warring States
  - Scholar - history, music, ethics
  - Main Writing: The Analects
    - Promoted by followers - Mencius
Main Ideas

- Restore social order, harmony and good government to China
- Ethical systems based on relationships and personal virtue
- Emphasized family
  - Filial piety - respect for parents and elders is necessary for order
- Early Zhou Dynasty was seen as perfect society
  - Inferiors devoted to service
  - Superiors looked after dependents
Confucianism

- Five Basic Relationships in Society
  - Ruler/Subject
  - Father/Son
  - Husband/Wife
  - Older Brother/Younger Brother
  - Friend/Friend

- Chinese gentleman - education and moral standards; birth status not important

- Bureaucracy - those who help run government
  - Courteous, precise, generous, just/fair
Daoism/Taoism

- Founded by Lao Tze (604-531 BCE)
- Main Writing: *Tao-te-Ching* (*The Way of Virtue*)
- Human actions are not important
- Most important part of society is natural order of things
  - The Tao (The Way) - guides all things
Daoism/Taoism

- Search for knowledge and understanding of nature
- To understand nothing, it is best to do nothing, to observe nature
  - Nature is not jealous or power hungry
  - Does not argue about right or wrong, good or bad
Legalism

- Practical, political reaction to Confucianism
  - Han Feizi - 3rd century BCE

- Powerful and efficient government is key to restoring order
  - Laws will end civil war and restore harmony
  - Rewards to good subjects and punish disobedient
  - Rulers must control ideas and actions of people
  - Favored by Shi Huangdi during Qin dynasty
Qin Dynasty

- Emerges out of end of Zhou Dynasty/Period of Warring States
- Founder: Shi Huangdi (“First Emperor”)
- Goals:
  - Unify and expand China
  - Restore order
Social
- Primogeniture eliminated (practice of having eldest son inherit all property and land)
- Nobles must leave land and live in Emperor’s court

Political
- Emperor had complete control over all aspects of society
- Use of brutality and force to accomplish goals
- Bureaucracy (not of the nobility) expanded to help control all regions
- National census
- Single law code

Interactions
- Army expanded to crush rivals and regional rebellions
- Expanded territory of China, including Hong Kong
- Influenced parts of Vietnam through conquest
- Expanded infrastructure to increase interactions
Cultural
- Confucianism looked down upon and followers persecuted
- Legalism promoted
- Architectural: Initiates construction of Great Wall; Terracotta Soldiers/Tomb of Shi Huangdi
- Uniform written language
- Banned books

Economic
- Introduced standard weights and measures
- Eliminated the very rare practice of slavery
- Forced labor necessary for construction projects
- Extremely high taxes
- Sponsored agricultural projects (irrigation) and manufacturing of silk
Why did the Qin Dynasty Fall?

- Shi Huangdi
  - Extremely paranoid; killed off suspected enemies (nobles, intellectuals, warlords)
  - Desire to control EVERYTHING
- High taxes, forced labor
- Shi Huangdi dies in 210 BCE; followed by 8 years of peasant revolts to determine successor - winner establishes Han Dynasty
Establishment of Han Dynasty
202 BCE - 220 CE

- Liu Bang - leads peasant revolts after death of Shi Huangdi
- 202 BCE - Liu Bang has eliminated almost all of his competition through military might and diplomacy
Han Society

- Some lower classes allowed into bureaucracy
- Strict emphasis on family relationships
- Women
  - Patriarchal
  - Some could gain influence through male relatives
- Three main groups:
  - Landowners & educated bureaucrats
  - Peasants and Artisans
  - “Mean People” - merchants, actors, musicians
Han Politics/Government

- Centralized administration, with less brutality than Qin dynasty
- Improved bureaucracy
- Attacked warlords/regional princes
- Focused less on military buildup
- Emphasized Confucianism - education for bureaucrats

Wu Ti - most famous emperor (140-87 BCE)
  - Brought peace to much of Asia
  - Expanded territory
  - Civil Service Examination
Han Interactions

- Expansion into Korea, Vietnam and Central Asia
- Expanded contact/trade with India and Persian empires
- Later with Roman Empire
Han Culture

- Treated Confucianism as religion-shrines constructed
- Gov’t promoted philosophy
- Continued construction of Great Wall
- Innovations - Seismograph, anatomical research, hygiene
  - Animal collars
  - Pulleys and gears
  - Increased production of textiles
  - Water-power mills
  - Paper
Han Economy

- Taxes lower than Qin, but get higher as dynasty progresses
- Copper coins
- Required people to work on gov’t projects
- Gov’t influenced and controlled parts of economy
  - Iron and Salt production
  - Weights and Measures
  - Trade - silk, jewelry, leather goods, agricultural goods
  - Public works programs - canal systems
  - Store surplus of rice and grain