

HI250 History of Modern China  
**Gender, Ethnicity and Social Status during the Qing**  
**at the Colby Museum**  
(2 pages)

This semester, we will be visiting the Colby Museum twice to conduct primary source research in Qing-era artifacts. After we visit the museum, you will write a brief object study.

**Rules of the museum**

- No pens. Pencils only.
- No food, drink, candy etc.
- Hang up your coat and bag in the lobby.
- Bring a pencil, notebook and this assignment into the viewing gallery (or laptop).
- Photography is allowed with permission. No flash.
- Do not touch. You may ask the handler to pick up or move object for you.

The **goal of this assignment** is to learn how to describe and analyze a historical artifact and how to frame your analysis in a larger historical picture.

<b>PART I: Brainstorm – Group work – Present your object to the class</b>
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**1) Identify the object**

What is the object?

- What is it?
- Where is it from?
- When was it made?

**2) Describe the object (put what you see into words)**

What does the object look like?

- What materials is it made out of?
- What color is it?
- What kinds of designs or markings does it have?
- Is it a reproduction, original?
- Is it heavy or light?
- What size is it? Measurements?

**3) Put it in historical context – Thinking about gender, social status and ethnicity**

Depending on your object, you can think about how it was made and who made it, or how it was used and who used it. What can this object tell us about Chinese history? In other words, how is it historically significant?

How was it made?

- Where was it made?
- When was it made?
- Who made it?
- Is it factory-produced, handicraft, domestic-made?

How was it used?

- Who was the intended audience?
- What was the intended use?
- Who used it?
- When was it used?
- Where was it used?
- Was it a high/low class object?
- What role did it play in society?
- Did the object play a role in fashioning gender roles?
- Did the object play a role in fashioning ethnic identities?
- Did the object play a role in fashioning status identities?

What is the significance?

- What did this object mean for the society that produced it?
- What did this object mean for the society that consumed it?
- What is this object's role in history? What is its historical significance?
- What bigger questions does this object point to?

## **PART II: Individual Weekly Writing – object study**

2 pages -- **Due next Thursday 3/2 in class**

Your object study should:

- 1) Identify the object
- 2) Describe the object (put what you see into words)
- 3) Consider the historical significance:
  - How it was made or How was it used?
  - What does it tell us about gender, ethnicity, and/or social status during the Qing?

Your object study should have a **thesis**:

You do not need to have an argument for this primary source study, but you should have a thesis (stated in the first paragraph) that considers the object's historical significance in terms of gender, ethnicity, and/or social status during the Qing.

You may consult assigned readings and websites, lectures, and class discussion for this essay. If you use any of these sources, you must use footnotes. You should not (and do not need to) conduct outside research on the internet.