

Michael James Puett

Employment

2011-	Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
2002 – 2011:	Professor of Chinese History Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
1998 - 2002:	John L. Loeb Associate Professor of the Humanities Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
1994 - 1998:	Assistant Professor of Early Chinese History Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

Education

1986-1994	University of Chicago September, 1994: awarded Ph.D. December, 1987: awarded M.A. Advisor: Marshall Sahlins
1993-94	Department of Chinese Studies Beijing University Beijing, China (Dissertation Research)

Administrative Positions at Harvard University

- 2012- Chair,
 Committee on the Study of Religion
- Spring, 2013 Acting Director,
 Asia Center
- 2010-2011: Chair,
 Committee on the Study of Religion
- Spring, 2011: Acting Chair,
 Regional Studies – East Asia
- 2005-2008: Chair,
 Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
- 2004-2005: Director of Graduate Studies,
 Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
- 1998-2000: Director of Graduate Studies,
 Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

Affiliations

Member of the following departments and committees at Harvard University:

Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
Standing Committee for the Study of Religion
Committee on Inner Asian and Altaic Studies
Committee on Folklore and Mythology
Committee on Ethnic Studies

Professional Activities

- 2010-2011: Chair,
 Pre-1900 Joseph Levenson Prize Committee
- 2005-2008: President,
 Society for the Study of Chinese Religions

- 2007-2008: Chair,
China and Inner Asia Council
Association for Asian Studies
- 2005-2008: Co-chair,
Confucian Traditions Group
American Academy of Religion

Serving on the editorial boards of:
Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
Journal of Chinese Religions
HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory

Honors and Awards

- 2013 Harvard College Professor for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching
- 2013 Star Family Prize for Excellence in Advising
- 2008 Joseph R. Levenson Memorial Teaching Prize
- 2003 Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation Senior Scholar Grant
- 2002 Harvard University Graduate Student Council
Everett Mendelsohn Excellence in Mentoring Award
- 1996 American Council of Learned Societies
Funding to organize the workshop, "Approaches to Understanding
Sima Qian's Shiji."
- 1995 Marc Galler Prize for Best Dissertation
University of Chicago
- 1993-94 National Program for Advanced Study and Research in China
Committee on Scholarly Communication with China
- 1992-93 Center for East Asian Studies Dissertation Writing Grant
University of Chicago
- 1992 National Resource Summer Fellowship
- 1986-92 Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Visiting Appointments

- 2013- Non-resident Long-term Fellow for Programmes in
Anthropological and Historical Sciences
and the Languages and Civilizations of East Asia
Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study
Uppsala, Sweden
- 2012- Senior Adviser
Bernhard Karlgren Programme
Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study
Uppsala, Sweden
- 2012 Visiting Professor
École Normale Supérieure de Lyon
Lyon, France
- 2012 Visiting Professor
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore
- 2011 Visiting Fellow
International Research Consortium for Research in the Humanities
Fate, Freedom and Prognostication in East Asia and Europe
Erlangen, Germany
- 2009 Senior Research Fellowship
Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Berlin, Germany
- 2008 Bernhard Karlgren Distinguished Visiting Professorship
Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study
Uppsala, Sweden

Publications

Books:

Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity. Co-authored with Robert Weller, Adam Seligman, and Bennett Simon. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.)

To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China. (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002.)

The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.)

The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China. Co-edited with Sarah A. Queen. (Leiden: Brill, 2014.)

Narrative, Authorship, and Historiography: Studies on Sima Qian's Shiji (Records of the Historian), editor. (Forthcoming from the State University of New York Press.)

Articles and Reviews:

“Ghosts, Gods, and the Coming Apocalypse: Empire and Religion in Early China and Ancient Rome.” State Power in Ancient China and Rome. Edited by Walter Scheidel. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 230-259.

“Ritual Disjunctions: Ghosts, Philosophy, and Anthropology.” The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy. Edited by Veena Das, Michael Jackson, Arthur Kleinman, Bhargupati Singh. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 218-233.

“Sages, Creation, and the End of History in the Huainanzi.” The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China. Edited by Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 269-290.

“Classical Chinese Historical Thought.” A Companion to Global Historical Thought. Edited by Prasenjit Duara, Viren Murthy, and Andrew Sartori. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 34-46.

“Critical Approaches to Religion in China.” Critical Research on Religion. 1 (2013): 95-101.

“Economies of Ghosts, Gods, and Goods: The History and Anthropology of Chinese Temple Networks.” Radical Egalitarianism: Local Realities, Global Relations. Edited by Michael M. J. Fischer, Felicity Aulino, Miriam Goheen and Stanley J. Tambiah. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 91-100.

“Social Order or Social Chaos.” The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies. Edited by Robert A. Orsi. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 109-129.

- “Sages, the Past, and the Dead: Death in the Huainanzi.” Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought. Edited by Amy Olberding and Philip J. Ivanhoe. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 225-248.
- “Theodicies of Discontinuity: Domesticating Energies and Dispositions in Early China.” Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 37, Supplement 1 (December 2010): 51-66.
- “Ritualization as Domestication: Ritual Theory from Classical China.” Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual, Volume I: Grammars and Morphologies of Ritual Practices in Asia. Edited by Axel Michaels, Anand Mishra, Lucia Dolce, Gil Raz, and Katja Triplett. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), pp. 365-376.
- “The Haunted World of Humanity: Ritual Theory from Early China.” Rethinking the Human. Edited by J. Michelle Molina and Donald K. Swearer, with Susan Lloyd McGarry. (Cambridge: Center for the Study of World Religions, 2010), pp. 95-111.
- “Becoming Laozi: Cultivating and Visualizing Spirits in Early Medieval China.” Asia Major, Third series, 23.1 (2010): 223-252.
- “Centering the Realm: Wang Mang, the Zhouli, and Early Chinese Statecraft.” Statecraft and Classical Learning: The Rituals of Zhou in East Asian History. Edited by Benjamin A. Elman and Martin Kern. (Leiden: Brill, 2010.) Pages 129-154.
- “Sages, Gods, and History: Commentarial Strategies in Chinese Late Antiquity,” Antiquorum Philosophia 3 (2009): 71-87.
- “Combining the Ghosts and Spirits, Centering the Realm: Mortuary Ritual and Political Organization in the Ritual Compendia of Early China.” Early Chinese Religion: Shang Through Han (1250 BC-220 AD). Edited by John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski. (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Pages 695-720.
- “The Belatedness of the Present: Debates over Antiquity during the Han Dynasty.” Perceptions of Antiquity in Chinese Civilization. Edited by Dieter Kuhn and Helga Stahl. (Heidelberg: Würzburger Sinologische Schriften, 2008). Pages 177-190.
- “Human and Divine Kingship in Early China: Comparative Reflections.” Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond. Edited by Nicole Brisch. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008.) Pages 199-212.
- “The Temptations of Sagehood, or: The Rise and Decline of Sagely Writing in Early China.” Books in Numbers. Edited by Wilt Idema. (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007.) Pages 23-47.
- “Humans, Spirits, and Sages in Chinese Late Antiquity: Ge Hong’s Master Who Embraces Simplicity (Baopuzi).” Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident 29 (2007): 95-119.

- “Listening to Sages: Divination, Omens, and the Rhetoric of Antiquity in Wang Chong’s Lunheng.” Oriens Extremus 45 (2005-2006): 271-281.
- “Innovation as Ritualization: The Fractured Cosmology of Early China.” Cardozo Law Review 28.1 (October 2006): 23-36.
- “The Offering of Food and the Creation of Order: The Practice of Sacrifice in Early China.” Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China. Edited by Roel Sterckx. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.) Pages 75-95.
- “Bones.” Encyclopedia of Religion, second edition Edited by Lindsay Jones. (New York: MacMillan Reference Books, 2005.) Pages 1013-1016.
- “Forming Spirits for the Way: The Cosmology of the Xiang’er Commentary to the Laozi.” Journal of Chinese Religions 32 (2004): 1-27.
- “Following the Commands of Heaven: The Notion of Ming in Early China.” The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture. Edited by Christopher Lupke. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.) Pages 49-69.
- “The Ascension of the Spirit: Toward a Cultural History of Self-Divinization Movements in Early China.” Religion and Chinese Society. Edited by John Lagerwey. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004.) Pages 193-222.
- “The Ethics of Responding Properly: The Notion of Qing in Early Chinese Thought.” Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature. Edited by Halvor Eifring. (Leiden, Brill, 2004.) Pages 37-68.
- “Determining the Position of Heaven and Earth: Debates Over State Sacrifices in the Western Han Dynasty.” Confucian Spirituality. Edited by Tu Wei-Ming and Mary Evelyn Tucker. (New York: Crossroad Press, 2003)
- “‘Nothing Can Overcome Heaven’: The Notion of Spirit in the Zhuangzi.” Hiding the World in the World: Essays on Zhuangzi. Edited by Scott Cook. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003)
- “Violent Misreadings: The Hermeneutics of Cosmology in the Huainanzi.” Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. 72 (2000): 29-47.
- “Humans and Gods: The Theme of Self-Divinization in Early China and Early Greece.” Thinking Through Comparisons: Ancient China and Ancient Greece. Edited by Stephen Durrant and Steven Shankman. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 55-74.

“Philosophy and Literature in Early China.” The Columbia History of Chinese Literature, edited by Victor Mair. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 70-85.

“China in Early Eurasian History: A Brief Review of Recent Scholarship on the Issue.” Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia. Edited by Victor Mair. (Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1998), pp. 699-715.

“Sages, Ministers, and Rebels: Narratives from Early China Concerning the Initial Creation of the State.” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 58.2 (December 1998): 425-479.

“Nature and Artifice: Debates in Late Warring States China Concerning the Creation of Culture.” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 57.2 (December 1997): 471-518.

Review of Stephen Durrant’s The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian. Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 57.1 (June 1997): 290-301.

Conferences Organized

“Feeling an Obligation: Exploring Evaluative and Normative Constraints of Human Agency in a Historical and Ethnographical Perspective.” Co-organized with Christoph Harbsmeier. Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study. June 2012.

“The Construal of National Identity through the Concept of the State – in China and Elsewhere.” Co-organized with Christoph Harbsmeier. Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala. June 2011.

“Scholars, Craftsmen and Technology: Defining Experts and Expertise in Chinese Culture.” Co-organized with Dagmar Schäfer. Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. March 2009.

“Liu An’s Vision of Empire: New Perspectives on the Huainanzi.” Co-organized with Sarah Queen. Harvard University, May 2008.

“‘Religion’ in China: Rethinking Indigenous and Imported Categories of Thought.” Co-organized with Robert Weller and Adam Chau. Harvard University, May 2005.

“A Workshop on the Eastern Jin.” Co-organized with Tian Xiaofei. Harvard University, May 2005.

“Approaches to Understanding the Han Dynasty.” Harvard University, May 2002.

“Religion and Authority in Early China.” Harvard University, April 1999.

“Approaches to Understanding Sima Qian’s Shiji.” Harvard University, October 1996.