

MATTHEW H. SOMMER

蘇成捷

Curriculum Vitae

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS:

2021-present: Bowman Family Professor of History and, by courtesy, of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Stanford University

2015-present: Professor, Department of History, Stanford University

2017-20: Department Chair

2015-17: Department Vice-Chair

2002-15: Associate Professor (with tenure), Department of History, Stanford University

2001 (Fall semester): Visiting Associate Professor of History, Swarthmore College

2000-02: Associate Professor (with tenure), Department of History, University of Pennsylvania

1994-2000: Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Pennsylvania

EDUCATION:

1994 Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles (History)

Advisor: Philip C. C. Huang 黃宗智

1987 M.A., University of Washington (International Studies: China)

1983-85 Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies, Taipei

1983 B.A. (High Honors), Swarthmore College (Political Science/Asian Studies)

BOOKS:

The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China, Columbia University Press, 2024.

*John K. Fairbank Prize, American Historical Association

*Peter Gonville Stein Book Award, American Society for Legal History

*John Boswell Prize, LGBTQ+ History Association

*Finalist, Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ+ Studies

**Choice Magazine* Outstanding Academic Title

*Chinese translation forthcoming (2026), Oriental Publishing Center, China Publishing Group

Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China: Survival Strategies and Judicial Interventions, University of California Press, 2015.

*Inaugural winner of the Peter Gonville Stein Book Award, American Society for Legal History

**Choice Magazine* Outstanding Academic Title

*Chinese translation in process, under contract to Guangxi Normal University Press

Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China, Stanford University Press, 2000; paperback, 2002.

*Chinese translation (traditional characters) 2022, Ainosco Press, Taiwan

*Chinese translation (simplified characters) 2023, Guangxi Normal University Press – 40,000+ copies sold within first year, now in seventh printing; one of Douban.com's top ten best books in history and culture from 2023

REFEREED PAPERS AND BOOK CHAPTERS:

- Forthcoming, 2026: "Comment," for "Symposium on Mitra Sharafi, 'Abortion in South Asia, 1860–1947: A Medico-Legal History,' " *Modern Asian Studies*, 59: 2.
- Forthcoming, 2025: "清代法庭中的性别与身体" (The Gendered Body in the Qing Courtroom, trans. by Jing Fenghua 景风华), in 黄宗智 (Philip C. C. Huang), ed., 《实践法史与法理：综合中西的研究》 (*The Study of Legal Practice and Theory: Syncretizing East and West*), Guangxi Normal University Press.
- 2024: "An Informal Death Penalty at the Ba County Jail? Magisterial Discretion and Criminal Procedure at the Grassroots in Qing Dynasty China," in Joan Judge et al., eds., *The Sinosphere and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Joshua Fogel*, De Gruyter, pp. 139-155.
- 2022: "Sexual Acts and the Articulation of Norms and Hierarchies in *The Plum in the Golden Vase*," in Andrew Schonebaum, ed., *Approaches to Teaching The Plum in the Golden Vase (The Golden Lotus)*, Modern Language Association of America, pp. 285-294.
- 2020: "Legal Understandings of Sexual and Domestic Violence in China," in Robert Antony et al., eds., *The Cambridge World History of Violence, Volume 3 – AD 1500-AD 1800*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 219-235.
- 2020: "Some Problems with Corpses: Standards of Validity in Qing Homicide Cases," in Martin Hoffman et al., eds., *Powerful Arguments: Standards of Validity in Late Imperial China*, Brill, pp. 431-470.
- 2013: "The Gendered Body in the Qing Courtroom," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 22: 2 [special issue: *Sexuality in Imperial China*], pp. 281-311.
- 2012: "Scandal in the Garden: *The Story of the Stone* as a 'Licentious Novel'," in Andrew Schonebaum and Tina Lu, eds., *Approaches to Teaching The Story of the Stone (Dream of the Red Chamber)*, Modern Language Association of America, pp. 186-207.
- 2011: "堕胎在明清时期的中国：日常避孕抑或应急性措施？" (Abortion in Late Imperial China: Routine Birth Control or Crisis Intervention? trans. by Zhang Yu 张宇), 《中国乡村研究》 (*Rural China: An International Journal of History and Social Science*), 9, pp. 1-52.
- 2010: "Abortion in Late Imperial China: Routine Birth Control or Crisis Intervention?" *Late Imperial China*, 31: 2, pp. 97-165; reprinted 2014 in Philip C. C. Huang and Kathryn Bernhardt, eds., *Research from Archival Case Records: Law, Society, and Culture in China*, Brill, pp. 119-190.
- 2009: "清代縣衙的賣妻案件審判：以 272 件巴縣、南部與寶坻縣案子為例證" (The Adjudication of Wife-Selling in Qing County Courts: 272 Cases from Ba, Nanbu,

- and Baodi Counties, trans. by Lin Wenkai 林文凱), in Qiu Pengsheng 邱澎生 and Chen Xiyuan 陳熙遠, eds., 《明清法律運作中的權利與文化》 (*Power and Culture in Ming-Qing Law*), Lianjing Chuban Gongsì, pp. 345-396.
- 2007: “Was China Part of a Global Eighteenth-Century Homosexuality?” *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* [special issue: *Eighteenth-Century Homosexuality in Global Perspective*], 33: 1, pp. 117-133.
- 2006: “清代法におけるジェンダーの構築” (The Construction of Gender in Qing Dynasty Law, trans. by Karasawa Yasuhiko 唐澤靖彦), in Mitsunari Miho 三成美保, ed., 《ジェンダーの比較法史学》 (*The Comparative Legal History of Gender*), Osaka University Press, pp. 272-301.
- 2005: “性工作：作为生存策略的清代一妻多夫现象” (Sex Work: Polyandry as a Survival Strategy in the Qing Dynasty, trans. by Li Xia 李霞), 《新社会史》 (*New Social History*), special issue on 身体・心性・权力 (Body, Consciousness, Power), 2, pp. 236-262; reprinted (with revisions) 2009, in 黄宗智 (Philip C. C. Huang) and 尤陈俊 (You Chenjun), eds., 《从诉讼档案出发：中国的法律、社会与文化》 (*Research from Archival Case Records: Law, Society and Culture in China, Past and Present*), Falü Chubanshe, pp. 111-139.
- 2005: “Making Sex Work: Polyandry as a Survival Strategy in Qing Dynasty China,” in Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson, eds., *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 29-54.
- 2002: “Dangerous Males, Vulnerable Males, and Polluted Males: The Regulation of Masculinity in Qing Dynasty Law,” in Susan Brownell and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, eds., *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, University of California Press, pp. 67-88.
- 1997: “晚期帝制中国法における売春——十八世紀における身分パフォーマンスからの離脱” (Prostitution in Late Imperial Chinese Law: The Eighteenth-Century Shift Away from Status Performance, trans. by Terada Hiroaki 寺田浩明), 《中国—社会と文化》 (*China – Society and Culture*), 12, pp. 294-328.
- 1997: “The Penetrated Male in Late Imperial China: Judicial Constructions and Social Stigma,” *Modern China*, 23: 2, pp. 140-180.
- 1996: “The Uses of Chastity: Sex, Law, and the Property of Widows in Qing China,” *Late Imperial China*, 17: 2, pp. 77-130.

BOOK REVIEWS:

- Forthcoming, 2026: Eileen Yuk-ha Tsang, *Unlocking the Red Closet: Gay Male Sex Workers in China*, in *China Studies International*.
- 2021: Ting Zhang, *Circulating the Code: Print Media and Legal Knowledge in Qing China*, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 80: 1, pp. 185-187.
- 2018: He Jiahong, *Back from the Dead: Wrongful Convictions and Criminal Justice in China*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 78: 1, pp. 221-224.
- 2017: Mark McNicholas, *Forgery and Impersonation in Imperial China: Popular Deceptions and the High Qing State*, in *Law and History Review*, 35: 2, pp. 547-549.

- 2015: Ying Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics: Masculine Morality in Seventeenth-Century China*, in *China Review International*, 22: 3 & 4, pp. 248-250.
- 2015: "What Does It Mean to be a Man in China?" (review article on studies of Chinese masculinity), in *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, E-Journal No. 16, pp. 190-199.
- 2015: Elizabeth Remick, *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*, in *American Historical Review*, 120: 2, pp. 596-597.
- 2012: Wenqing Kang, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950*, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 71: 1, pp. 212-213.
- 2010: Timothy Brook et al., *Death by a Thousand Cuts*, in *Social History*, 35: 2, pp. 204-206.
- 2008: Eugenia Lean, *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China*, in *Law and History Review*, 26: 3, pp. 741-743.
- 2005: Wu Cuncun, *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China*, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 64: 4, pp. 1017-1019.
- 2001: Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 61: 1, pp. 273-279.
- 2000: Melissa Macauley, *Social Power and Legal Culture: Litigation Masters in Late Imperial China*, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 59: 1, pp. 158-159.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

- 2013: "The Field of Qing Legal History," in Zhang Haihui et al., eds., *A Scholarly Review of Chinese Studies in North America*, Association for Asian Studies [open access e-book], pp. 113-132.
- 2012: Foreword to Amy Stanley, *Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets, and the Household in Early Modern Japan*, University of California Press, pp. xi-xvi.
- 2010: "北美清代法制史研究" (The Field of Qing Legal History in North America, trans. by Xue Zhaohui 薛昭慧), in Zhang Haihui 张海惠 et al., eds., 北美中国研究 – 概述、教学及文献资源 (*Chinese Studies in North America: Research, Teaching and Resources*), Zhonghua Shuju, pp. 244-266.
- 2005: "Qing County Archives in Sichuan: An Update from the Field," with Karasawa Yasuhiko and Bradley Reed, *Late Imperial China*, 26: 2 (December), pp. 114-128.
- 1994: Translation (from Chinese) of Jing Junjian, "Legislation Related to the Civil Economy in the Qing Dynasty," in Kathryn Bernhardt and Philip Huang, eds., *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 42-84.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

Books

- Criminal Procedure in Eighteenth-Century China: The Qing Judiciary in Action* (long-term project based on archival material already collected).
- Male Same-Sex Relations and Masculinity in Qing Dynasty China* (long-term project based on archival material already collected).

Papers

“Sexuality,” for Steven Miles and Yulian Wu, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Chinese History* (commissioned)

“Sexual Exploitation of Actors and Servants by Qing Elites” (draft completed).

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH:

Stanford’s Cangdong Village Archaeology Project (2013-19): with PI Barbara Voss, helped plan and lead five research trips to Guangdong; helped negotiate terms of access and excavation with Chinese authorities; participated in excavation of test pits and processing of artifacts; served as interpreter on multiple occasions.

Stanford’s Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project (2013-20), faculty affiliate.

GRANTS AND HONORS:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 2025 | John K. Fairbank Prize for East Asian History, American Historical Association, for <i>The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China</i> |
| 2025 | Peter Gonville Stein Book Award, American Society for Legal History, for <i>The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China</i> |
| 2025 | John Boswell Prize, LGBTQ+ History Association, for <i>The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China</i> (co-winner for 2023-24) |
| 2025 | Finalist, Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ+ Studies, for <i>The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China</i> |
| 2024-25 | National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship (terminated by the Trump administration on April 3, 2025) |
| 2021-22 | Faculty Research Fellow, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University |
| 2020-21 | Enhanced Sabbatical Fellowship, School of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford University |
| 2018 | Faculty Research Fellowship for China, Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University |
| 2017 | Peter Gonville Stein Book Award (inaugural winner), American Society for Legal History, for <i>Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China</i> |
| 2016 | <i>Choice Magazine</i> Outstanding Academic Title, for <i>Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China</i> |
| July 2016 | Invited Visiting Scholar, Institute for Modern History, Academia Sinica (three public lectures in Chinese) |
| 2016 | Faculty Research Fellowship for China, Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University (with Barbara Voss) |
| 2015 | Faculty Research Fellowship for China, Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University |
| 2014 | Faculty Fellowship, Stanford Center at Peking University |

March 2014	Invited Visiting Scholar in Gender and History, University of Connecticut (one public lecture, one seminar on research, mentoring meetings)
2013-14	Faculty Fellow, Stanford Humanities Center
2010-11	Faculty Research Fellow, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University
July 2010	Invited Visiting Scholar, Institute for Population and Development Studies, Xi'an Jiaotong University (two public lectures in Chinese; mentored faculty and students on use of historical sources)
June 2009	Invited Guest Scholar, Hurst Summer Institute in Legal History, University of Wisconsin (led a day-long seminar on my research)
2009-11	Grant from the Andrew M. Mellon Foundation (\$150,000) to support Sawyer Seminar on "Gender Bias in the Past and Future of Asia" (with Melissa Brown and Marcus Feldman)
2007-10	Presidential Fund for Innovation in International Studies (Stanford University), Research Fellowship (\$300,000) for "Female Deficit and Social Stability in China: Implications for International Security" (with Melissa Brown, Marcus Feldman, and Li Shuzhuo)
2008	Gordon and Dailey Pattee Faculty Fellowship to recognize outstanding faculty in the humanities and social sciences (Stanford University)
2008	Various grants for conference on "Same-Sex Desire and Union in China," Stanford University (intramural sources)
2007-08	UPS Endowment (Stanford University), Faculty Research Fellowship (\$49,600), to take Ph.D. students to China in two consecutive summers for onsite training in archival research
2006-08	Japanese Government Fellowship for Scientific Research (科学研究補助金, ¥ 11 million), awarded to a five-member team led by Karasawa Yasuhiko, to study the Qing archive of Nanbu County, Sichuan
2007	Faculty Grant in Chinese Studies, Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University (summer salary)
2007	Young Faculty Career Development Award, School of Humanities and Sciences
2006-07	Ellen Andrews Wright Faculty Fellow, Stanford Humanities Center
2006-07	ACLS International and Area Studies Fellowship
2006-07	Faculty Research Grants, Center for East Asian Studies and School of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford University (for Chinese translation of my first book)
2006	Yalom and Litt Awards for Faculty Research, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University
2001	Research Travel Grant, Center for East Asian Studies, Univ. of Pennsylvania
2000	M.A. (honorary), School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania (awarded upon promotion to tenure)
2000	Research Travel Grant, American Philosophical Society
2000	Type-C International Research Grant, Faculty Research Foundation, Univ. of Pennsylvania
1999	Various grants for conference on "Reading Eighteenth-Century China"

- through *Dream of the Red Chamber*” (with Tina Lu), Univ. of Pennsylvania (intramural sources)
- 1999 Curriculum Development Grant, Women’s Studies Program, Univ. of Pennsylvania
- 1999 Research Fellowship (extra semester of paid leave), University Research Council, Univ. of Pennsylvania
- 1997-98 Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship, ACLS/SSRC
- 1996 Type-A Grant, Faculty Research Foundation, Univ. of Pennsylvania
- 1996 Research Travel Grant, American Philosophical Society
- 1994 Writing Fellowship, Center for Chinese Studies, UCLA
- 1992-93 Laffin Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA
- 1991-92 Research Fellowship for China, Committee for Scholarly Communication with China
- 1990-91 National Resource Fellowship (Chinese), UCLA
- 1989-93 Chancellor's Fellowship, UCLA
- 1986 National Resource Fellowship (Japanese), Univ. of Washington
- 1985-87 Jackson Fellowship, Univ. of Washington
- 1983 Phi Beta Kappa
- 1983 High Honors, Swarthmore College

INTERVIEWS IN PUBLIC MEDIA:

- September 2025 Interview about *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China*, with Renia Lopez for *Exploring the Humanities: A Podcast from Hong Kong Polytechnic University*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTOTELX_E5E
- September 2025 Interview about *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China*, with Michele Kirichanskaya for Geeks OUT <https://www.geeksout.org/2025/09/03/interview-with-matthew-h-sommer-author-of-the-fox-spirit-the-stone-maiden-and-other-transgender-histories-from-late-imperial-china/>
- August 2025 Interview about *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China*, with Maura Cunningham for #AsiaNow blog <https://www.asianstudies.org/historian-matthew-h-sommer-on-the-fox-spirit-the-stone-maiden-and-other-transgender-histories-from-late-imperial-china/>
- July 2024 Interview about *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China*, with Sarah Bramao-Ramos for *New Books Network* podcast <https://newbooksnetwork.com/the-fox-spirit-the-stone-maiden-and-other-transgender-histories-from-late-imperial-china>
- May 2024 Interview about *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China*, with World Wide Wave on Joy Media, Australia (LGBTQ+ radio) <https://joy.org.au/worldwidewave/2024/05/31/china-transgender-histories-from-late-imperial-china/>
- September 2023 Interview about the Chinese translation of *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, with 《青年志》 (Youthology)
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/CD6_FW4_3RZKyLRpHoE8aw

- August 2023 Interview about the Chinese translation of *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, with You Chenjun for 《上海书评》 (*Shanghai Review of Books*)
<https://html.thepaper.cn/collection/shanghaishuping230813>
- August 2023 Interview about historian Qu Tongzu's classic *Law and Society in Traditional China*, with Micah Muscolino for *Old China Books* podcast
<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/oldchinabooks/episodes/Matthew-Sommer-on-Tung-Tsu-Ch-Qu-Tongzu---Law-and-Society-in-Traditional-China-e28jtb9>
- August 2023 Interview with Lin Yingyi for *Ming-Qing Studies Newsletter*, Academia Sinica
http://mingqing.sinica.edu.tw/Academic_Detail/1176
- May 2016 Interview about *Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China*, with Carla Nappi for *New Books Network* podcast
<http://newbooksnetwork.com/matthew-h-sommer-polyandry-and-wife-selling-in-qing-dynasty-china-u-of-california-press-2015/>
- March 2015 Interview with 《南方週末》 (*Southern Weekly*)
<https://www.infzm.com/contents/108529>

SELECTED LECTURES & WORKSHOPS, INVITED SPEAKER:

- Title TBA, History Department, University of Washington, May 2026.
- “What Three Cases Tell Us About the Qing Judicial System,” Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong, September 2025.
- “The Prosecution of Transgender as Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China,” Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong, September 2025; keynote address, 5th Asian Legal History conference, Doshisha University, Kyoto, July 2025.
- “Transgender in Late Imperial China” (book talk): Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, November 2025; Sunnyvale Public Library, August 2025; Northwestern University, May 2025; Hong Kong Polytechnic University, April 2025; Leiden University, Netherlands, September 2024.
- Conversation about *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories in Late Imperial China*, Iowa China Humanities and Arts Workshop, May 2025 (online).
- “Male Same-sex Relations and Masculinity in Qing Dynasty China: Evidence from Legal Archives,” Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, April 2025 (online).
- “The Institutionalized Hypocrisy of Qing Government,” Institute for Advanced Study, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, April 2025.
- “Polyandry and Wife Sale in Qing Dynasty China” and “Transgender in Late Imperial China” (two lectures + documents seminars), National Chengchi University, Taiwan, October 2024.
- “Sexual Exploitation of Actors and Servants by Qing Elites,” for conference on “Rethinking Modern Chinese Elites,” Aix-Marseilles University, France, June 2024.
- “Transgender Histories in Late Imperial China,” a public conversation (book launch) with Susan Stryker, for the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, Stanford University, May 2024.
- “Transgender Histories in Late Imperial China,” book launch seminar, East Asian Humanities Workshop, Stanford University, April 2024.

- “The Emotional History of Wife Sales in Qing Dynasty China,” for workshop on “Gender and the Emotional History of Relational Rupture,” Stanford University, April 2024.
- “Chosen Kinship, Unorthodox Sexual Relationships, and Alternative Family Formations in Qing Dynasty China,” Gender Studies Workshop on “The Chinese Family Romance,” Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University, April 2024.
- “Transgender in Imperial China: Three Qing Case Studies,” Forum Rubin lecture series, Zvi Yavetz School of Historical Studies, Tel Aviv University, May 2023; Contemporary China Initiative lecture series, Cornell University, April 2023.
- “*Xingke tiben*: A Murder Case from 1762,” Cornell Classical Chinese Colloquium, Cornell University, April 2023.
- “How to Study the History of Marginalized People: Two examples from the Qing Archives,” keynote address for workshop on “The History of Marginalized People,” History Dept., National Chengchi University, Taiwan, September 2022 (online).
- Panelist, International Roundtable on “Gender, Law, and Women Trafficking in Chinese History,” sponsored by Yunli Yuetianxia, March 2022 (online, 4700+ viewers).
- “How the History of the Qing Dynasty Helps Us Understand China Today,” guest “cultural lecture,” 80th Annual Meeting of the Japan Neurosurgical Society, Yokohama, October 2021 (online); Yamanashi University, December 2023.
- “The Persecution of M-F Crossing in Qing Dynasty China,” for a workshop on “Acting the Part: Gender and Performance Onstage,” Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University, April 2021 (online).
- “Transgender in Imperial China,” Center for Chinese Studies, UC Berkeley, February 2021 (online).
- “Sexual Exploitation of Actors and Servants by Qing Elites in Legal Cases and in *Dream of the Red Chamber* – A Dialogue with Tina Lu,” Early Modern Chinese Literature Workshop, University of Chicago, November 2020 (online).
- “Transgender and Official Panic in Qing Dynasty China,” Symposium on Gender History, Annual Ming-Qing History Summer Retreat (明清史夏合宿), Miura, Japan, August 2019.
- “The Traffic in Children in Late Qing and Republican-era Guangdong,” Fifth Annual Conference on Qing China and Inner Asia, Kyoto University, August 2019.
- “清代司法檔案資料” (Qing Legal Case Records), three 60-minute lectures (in Chinese), for Workshop on Manchu and Chinese Documents from the Qing Dynasty, Kyoto University, August 2018 & 2019.
- “Alternative Family Formations in Late Imperial China” (keynote address), conference on “Stepfamilies in the Early Modern World, 1400-1800,” Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, May 2019.
- “Book Talk: Polyandry and Wife Sale in Qing Dynasty China”: History Department and Asian Studies Program, University at Buffalo, May 2019; Inaugural Coughlin Lecture on East Asia, Corcoran Department of History, University of Virginia, April 2019; Asian Division, Library of Congress, October 2016; Chinese Gender History Research Group, Tōyō Bunko (The Oriental Library), Tokyo, February 2016 (invited speaker for symposium about my new book); Legal History Seminar, University of Minnesota, Sept. 2015; Ohio State University, for

- Women's, Gender, and Sexuality History Workshop and Pre-modernist History Workshop, Sept. 2015.
- “Abortion as a Topic for Feminist Historical Research: The Case of China,” University at Buffalo Gender Institute, May 2019.
- “Gender and Sexuality in Late Imperial China,” for Spring School: Remapping Asian Studies, Universidad de Granada (Spain), March 2019.
- Invited speaker for “book launch” celebration of Xiaowei Zheng’s *The Politics of Rights and the 1911 Revolution in China*, History Department, UC Santa Barbara, October 2018.
- “Autopsy and Confession in the Qing Dynasty’s Judicial System,” for workshop on the “Global History of Forensic Medicine,” triennial conference of the International Association of Forensic Sciences, Toronto, August 2017.
- “An Informal Death Penalty at the Ba County Jail?”, symposium on “Trial Procedure in Early Modern and Modern China,” Otomon Gakuin University, Osaka, December 2023; Yale Legal History Forum, Yale Law School, April 2018; conference on “The Origins, Application, and Transformation of Chinese Legal Principles,” Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, July 2017.
- “Gender Passing and Official Panic in Qing Dynasty China,” Center for East Asian Studies, University of Chicago, May 2017.
- “Cross-dressing and Gender Passing in Qing Dynasty China,” UC Davis, as the annual guest of the Women’s and Gender History Research Cluster, January 2017.
- “The Economics of Wife Sales in Qing Dynasty China,” Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, September 2016.
- “清代中國一妻多夫和賣妻行為” (Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China), “清代中國跨性別現象：三個案例” (Transgender in Qing Dynasty China: Three Case Studies), and “如何論證清代的社會行為：以打胎問題為中心” (How to Document Social Practice in the Qing Dynasty: The Case of Abortion), three lectures delivered in Chinese, Institute for Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, July 2016.
- “The Role of False Accusation in Negotiations after Wife Sales,” Workshop on “False Accusation in Chinese History,” China Centre, Oxford University, May 2016.
- “Qing Dynasty Law and the Illicit Realm of Customary Practice,” Triangle Legal History Seminar, National Humanities Center, April 2016.
- “State and Society in Qing China from the Standpoint of the Ba County Archive,” symposium on “Defining ‘State and Society’ in Qing Dynasty Ba County,” Kyoto University, February 2016.
- “Marriage, Sex Work, and Trafficking: Blurring Normative Boundaries in Late Imperial China,” conference on “Human Trafficking, Labor Migration, and Migration Control in Comparative Historical Perspective,” Pozen Family Center for Human Rights, University of Chicago, October 2015.
- “Cross-Dressing and Gender Passing in Qing Dynasty China: Three Case Studies,” Center for Early Modern History, University of Minnesota, Sept. 2015.
- “Discourses of the ‘Bare Stick’ from the Qing Dynasty to the Present,” delivered in Chinese, Conference on “Sex and Gender in the Chinese Revolution,” East China Normal University, Shanghai, Sept. 2015.
- “Chinese Legal History: The State of the Field,” Conference of the International Society

- for Chinese Law and History, Fudan University, Shanghai, July 2015 (invited speaker for plenary session).
- “Polyandry and Wife Sale in Qing Dynasty China,” UC Davis, the History Department’s annual Liu Lecture, April 2015 (also conducted a workshop on Qing legal cases).
- “Polyandry and Wife Sale in Qing Dynasty China,” University of Illinois, for “Cultures of Law in Global Contexts” initiative, April 2015.
- “Polyandry and Wife Sale in Qing Dynasty China” and “Abortion in Ming-Qing China,” Tel Aviv University, January 2015 (two separate lectures).
- “Polyandry and Wife Sale in Qing Dynasty China,” Georgetown University, November 2014.
- “‘Unauthorized Private Settlement of Matters of Official Concern’ (私和公事): The Ambiguous Status of Mediation in Qing Law,” delivered in Chinese, Conference on “Law and Social Change in Ming-Qing China,” Chinese University of Hong Kong, September 2014.
- “中国明清时期的堕胎史” (Abortion in Ming-Qing China), delivered in Chinese, Qing History Institute, Renmin University, and Stanford Center at Peking University, September 2014 (two separate lectures).
- “Wife Sales and Land Sales in Late Imperial China,” conference on “Legalism: Rules and Categories,” All Souls College, University of Oxford, May 2014.
- “Male Same-Sex Relations and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century China,” History Department, University of Connecticut, March 2014 (in my role as Visiting Scholar in Gender and History).
- “Male Same-Sex Relations in Qing Dynasty China,” Chinese Studies Research Group, University of San Francisco, February 2014.
- “Chosen Kinship and Masculinity in Late Imperial China,” conference on “Chinese Masculinities,” University of Hong Kong, November 2013.
- “Some Problems with Corpses: Standards of Validity in Qing Homicide Cases,” conference on “Standards of Validity in Late Imperial China,” Heidelberg University, October 2013; Modern China Seminar, Columbia University, April 2018.
- “Confusion in the Archive: Sodomy Cases from the Ba County Court,” conference on “Queer Asia as Historical Critique,” University of Warwick, May 2013.
- “Abortion in Late Imperial China: Routine Birth Control or Crisis Intervention?” Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University, April 2010; Morrison Institute for Population and Resource Studies, Stanford University, January 2011; Center for Chinese Studies, UCLA, May 2012.
- “Lillian Li’s Influence on my Teaching and Scholarship,” for symposium on “Unfolding Perspectives on Chinese History and Asian Studies: A Celebration of the Contributions of Lillian M. Li,” Swarthmore College, April 2012.
- “Religion and Politics in the Qing Empire: Heterodoxy, ‘Splittism,’ and Mass Killing,” for conference on “Religion and International Politics” in honor of Daniel Chirot, Jackson School of International Relations, Univ. of Washington, February 2012).
- “The Gendered Body in the Qing Courtroom,” for conference on “Global Perspectives on the History of Chinese Legal Medicine,” University of Michigan, October 2011.

- “Codified Law, Social Reality, and Judicial Practice: The Adjudication of Illegal Wife Sales in Qing County Courts,” Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford, June 2011.
- “墮胎在明清時期的中國：日常避孕抑或應急性措施？” (Abortion in Late Imperial China: Routine Birth Control or Crisis Intervention?) and “清代民間作為生存策略的賣妻行為” (Wife Selling as a Survival Strategy in Qing Dynasty China), both lectures delivered in Chinese; Institute for Population and Development, Xi'an Jiaotong University, July 2010.
- “Male Same-Sex Union in Eighteenth-Century China,” University of Minnesota, November 2007.
- “Polyandry, Wife-Selling, and Same-Sex Union in Late Imperial China,” History Department, University of Toronto, April 2007.
- “Wife-Selling in Late Imperial China: Survival Strategies and Judicial Interventions,” Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, January 2007; Cornell University, September 2007; Washington University, St. Louis, April 2009.
- “State and Society in Late Imperial China,” for “Understanding China: A History Institute for Teachers,” a workshop sponsored by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, October 2006.
- “What Made *The Peony Pavilion* so Provocative and Controversial?” for Kunqu Lecture/Demonstration, in conjunction with “Symposium: *The Peony Pavilion* in Context,” UC Berkeley, September 2006.
- “The Adjudication of Wife-Selling in County Courts during the Qing Dynasty: 220 Cases from Ba, Nanbu, and Baodi Counties,” Academia Sinica, Taiwan (invited speaker), October 2005; Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, March 2006.
- “招夫養夫：作為生存策略的清代一妻多夫現象” (Getting a Husband to Support a Husband: Polyandry as a Survival Strategy in the Qing Dynasty), delivered in Chinese, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, October 2005.

OTHER PRESENTATIONS:

- “The Prosecution of Transgender as Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China,” for pre-conference symposium on Queer Legal History, and panelist for roundtable on “New Directions in Queer Legal History,” American Society for Legal History annual conference, Detroit, November 2025.
- “Transgender in Late Imperial China,” for International Federation for Research in Women’s History Conference, Tokyo, August 2024.
- “How Does History Help Us Understand the Current Crisis?” for roundtable on “Reproductive Labor during COVID: Personal, Scholarly, and Political Reflections,” Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, San Francisco, January 2024.
- “Sexual Exploitation of Actors and Servants by Qing Elites,” for panel on “People as Commodities among the Early Modern Chinese and in the Qing Empire,” held online, May 2020 [intended for annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Boston, April 2020, canceled because of COVID-19].

- “Cross-Dressing and Gender Passing in Qing Dynasty China,” History Department Faculty Seminar, Stanford University, May 2015.
- “Paradigms, Themes, and Questions in the Field of Queer History,” for conference on “Queer Horizons,” Stanford Humanities Center, April 2011.
- “The Social and Economic Logic of Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China,” for Sawyer Seminar on “Gender Bias in the Past and Future of Asia,” Stanford Humanities Center, January 2011.
- “Was Abortion Used for Birth Control in Late Imperial China?” History Department Faculty Seminar, Stanford University, November 2009.
- “Chosen Kinship as a Framework for Non-Normative Sexual Alliances in Qing China,” for panel on “The Dialectics of Patriarchy: New Reflections on Gender and Class in Late Imperial China,” sponsored by the Society for Qing Studies, annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies, March 2009.
- “How to Understand the Male Same-Sex Relationships Found in Qing Legal Cases,” conference on “Same-Sex Desire and Union in China: Interdisciplinary and Historical Perspectives,” Stanford Humanities Center, May 2008.

CONFERENCES & SPEAKER SERIES ORGANIZED:

- “**Queer Horizons**” (faculty adviser and speaker for undergraduate conference organized by my advisees Janani Balasubramanian and Charles Syms IV), Stanford Humanities Center, April 2011.
- “**Gender Bias in the Past and Future of Asia**,” a John Sawyer Seminar sponsored by the Andrew M. Mellon Foundation (with Melissa Brown and Marcus Feldman), Stanford Humanities Center, 2010-11.
- “**Same-Sex Desire and Union in China: Interdisciplinary and Historical Perspectives**,” an international conference at the Stanford Humanities Center, May 2008.
- “**New Directions in Modern Chinese History**,” colloquium series sponsored by Stanford University’s History Department and Center for East Asian Studies, Fall 2003.
- “**Reading Eighteenth-Century China through *Dream of the Red Chamber***” (with Tina Lu), an international conference of historians and literary scholars at the University of Pennsylvania, April 2001.

COURSES:

1) Taught at Stanford University (2002-present):

Undergraduate Lecture Courses—The Chinese Empire, from the Mongol Invasion to the Boxer Uprising; Historical Roots of Modern East Asia (co-taught with Kären Wigen); Trans History: The Long View (co-taught with several colleagues)

Undergraduate Colloquia—Chinese Legal History; Chinese Women’s History; Queer History in Comparative Perspective; Junior Honors Colloquium and Bing Honors College (2009-12)

Bing Overseas Studies Program, Kyoto: Japan and China in the Early Modern World (winter 2016, fall 2023); Japan: History, Culture, Religion (summer 2022 & ‘23, co-taught with Catherine Ludvik)

Graduate Colloquia—Graduate Workshop: Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (required for the FGSS Ph.D. minor); Gender and Sexuality in Chinese History; Frontier Expansion and Ethnic Statecraft in the Qing Empire; Law and Society in Late Imperial China; State, Society, and Economy in Qing Dynasty China; Queer History in Comparative Perspective

Graduate Research Seminar—Qing Legal Texts as Sources for Historical Research (two-quarter sequence)

Master of Liberal Arts program—Gender and Sexuality in Chinese History; Chinese Legal History

2) Taught at the University of Pennsylvania (1995-2002):

Undergraduate Lecture Courses—Late Imperial China; China in the 20th Century

Undergraduate Seminars—Mao's Cultural Revolution (General Honors); History of Women in China (General Honors); Topics in Chinese Social History; Revolution in China

Graduate Seminars—Feminist Theory in Historical & Comparative Perspectives (co-taught with Lynn A. Hunt); Law & Government in Late Imperial China

The Lauder Institute (MA program in international studies for MBA students at the Wharton School)—East Asia Area Survey (intensive summer course, co-taught with William LaFleur)

PH.D. STUDENTS SUPERVISED AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY (main advisor):

Quinn Doyle Javers, graduated 2012; dissertation: *Conflict, Community and Crime in Fin-de-siècle Sichuan*; Assistant Professor, History Department, University of California, Davis, 2012-20.

Philip Thai, graduated 2013; dissertation: *Smuggling, State-Building, and Political Economy in Coastal China, 1927-1949*; currently Associate Professor (with tenure), History Department, Northeastern University.

Yiwen Yvon Wang, graduated 2014; dissertation: *"Injuring Customs and Corrupting Hearts": Pornography and Modernity in Beijing at the Turn of the 20th Century*; currently Associate Professor (with tenure), History Department, University of Toronto.

Ying HU, graduated 2014; dissertation: *Justice on the Steppe: Legal Institutions and Practice in Qing Mongolia*.

Wesley Chaney, graduated 2016; dissertation: *Land, Trade, and the Law on the Sino-Tibetan Border, 1723-1911*; currently Associate Professor (with tenure), History Department, Bates College.

Zhijian (George) Qiao, graduated 2017; dissertation: *The Rise of the Shanxi Merchants: Empire, Institutions, and Social Change in Qing China, 1688-1850*; currently Assistant Professor (tenure-track), History Department, Amherst College.

Peter Hick, graduated 2023; dissertation: *Migration and Conflict in the Siyi Region, 1849-1949*.

Luther Cenci, ABD; dissertation: *A Sea of Law: Communal Politics and Vernacular Legal Culture in the Chinese Diaspora, 1780-1890*.

Preetam Prakash, ABD; dissertation: *Weighing Life and Death: Punishment, Mercy, and Sovereignty in the Qing Autumn Assizes*.

Amanda Zhang, ABD; dissertation: *Pulling the Mountains Towards the Sea: Trans-Imperial Networks in the Sino-Indochinese Borderlands, 1883-1949* (co-advised with J. P. Daughton).

Kelly Keming Fu, ABD; dissertation: *Plastic Modernity Across the Strait: Material Innovation, Ecology, and the Politics of Development in China and Taiwan* (co-advised with Tom Mullaney).

Sina Salessi, ABD; dissertation: *The Property of Science: Global Knowledge, Law, and Institutions, 1650–1800* (co-advised with Paula Findlen).

Hong SONG, ABD; dissertation: *The Geography of Symbiosis: Environment, Mobility, and Power in Southwest Sichuan, 1728-1911*.

SERVICE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY (2002-present):

1) SERVICE TO THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

a) Administration:

Department Chair (2017-20); Department Vice-Chair (2015-17); Director of Honors and Research (2008-12); Policy Committee (multiple years)

b) Promotion committees:

Chair, Thomas Mullaney reappointment committee (2009) and tenure committee (2012); Chair, Jun Uchida tenure committee (2012-13); member, Rowan Dorin tenure committee (2023)

c) Search committees:

Chair, Modern Chinese History search committee (2003-04, '05-06, hire of Thomas Mullaney); Chair, History Department search committee in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and History representative on Central Search Committee (2021-22, hire of Rachel Jean-Baptiste); member, Modern Japanese History search committee (2004-05, hire of Jun Uchida) and Modern Korean History search committee (2005-06, hire of Yumi Moon)

d) Other:

Designated mentor for selected junior faculty; member and/or chair, Faculty Appointments Committee and Graduate Admissions Committee; co-organizer, Gender History Workshop; faculty sponsor, East Asian History Working Group

2) SERVICE TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

a) Administration:

Appointments and Promotions Committee, Humanities and Arts Cluster (2017-20), Program Committee, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (2012, '15-16, '22-), Steering Committee, Center for East Asian Studies (2002-06, '08-09)

b) Bing Overseas Studies Program:

Oversight Committee (2009-10), Faculty Advisory Committee for Hong Kong program (2018-), Faculty Advisory Committee for Kyoto program (2020-)

c) Search committees (outside History):

Korean Social Sciences interdepartmental search committee (2004-05); Chinese Literature search committee, EALC Department (2003-04)

d) Application review:

Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies and Stanford Humanities Center (multiple years); Post-doctoral Selection Committees, Center for East Asian Studies and Center for Korean Studies (multiple years); Faculty Research Grants Committee, Center for East Asian Studies (2007-08)

e) Other:

Pre-Major Advising for new undergraduates (2016-18); Judicial Affairs Panel Pool, School of Humanities and Sciences (2002-06, '12-13); Melissa Brown Reappointment Committee, Department of Anthropological Sciences (2005-06)

3) SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

a) Senate of the Academic Council:

Elected member of the Senate (2008-10); member, Committee on Libraries (C-Lib) (2007-10); Chair, C-Lib Subcommittee on the Future of Stanford's Libraries ("Sommer Subcommittee") (2009-10); member, C-Lib Subcommittee on Digital Information Technologies in the Research Library Environment at Stanford ("Marrinan Subcommittee") (2008)

b) East Asia Library:

Member, Chinese bibliographer search committee (2005-06) and Library Head search committee (2022-23)

SERVICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA (1995-2002):

Executive Committee, History Department; Executive Committee, Center for East Asian Studies; search committees for Lauder Chair in International Relations and Asian-American History, History Department; search committees for Early Chinese Thought and Chinese Literature, Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Board of Directors, International Society for Chinese Law and History, elected founding member (2014-present)

Editorial Board: *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* (2015-20), *Journal of Chinese History* (2020-present), *Modern China* (2000-present)

Tenure/Promotion Review: Boston College, Brown University, California State University at Long Beach, College of Charleston, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dickinson College, Drake University, Emory University, Georgetown

University, Harvard University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Indiana University, MIT, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Peking University, Princeton University, Stanford University, Syracuse University, University of Arizona, UCLA, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Cruz, University of Chicago, University of Colorado, University of Hawai'i, University of Hong Kong, University of Kentucky, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Pennsylvania, University of Toronto, University of Utah, University of Virginia, Washington University in St. Louis

Manuscript Referee – books: Cambridge University Press; Oxford University Press; Routledge; University of California Press

Manuscript Referee – journal articles: *American Historical Review*; *China Studies International*; *East Asian History*; *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*; *Journal of Asian Studies*; *Journal of Chinese History*; *Journal of Women's History*; *Late Imperial China*; *Law and History Review*; *Modern China*

Application Referee: American Philosophical Society; Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange; Junior Scholars Law & Humanities Interdisciplinary Workshop; Magdalen College, Oxford, Fellowship by Examination competition; Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowships; National Humanities Center; SSRC International Dissertation Field Research Fellowships; St. John's College, Cambridge, Research Fellowship competition

Doctoral committees, external member: Georgetown University, Harvard University, UC Berkeley, University of Leiden, University of Southern California

American Society for Legal History: Honors Committee (2025-); Local Arrangements Committee for San Francisco (2024); Johnson First Book Program Committee (2018 & 2019)

Association for Asian Studies: China and Inner Asia Council (CIAC) – elected member (2009-2012), vice-chair (2009-10), chair (2010-11)

Swarthmore College: External Honors Examiner (1995, 1996, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010); Head Honors Examiner (2004, 2007, 2010)

RESEARCH LANGUAGES:

Chinese: Professional fluency in speaking (Mandarin); advanced literacy, with expertise in pre-modern legal texts and Qing archives. Equivalent of 10 years of classroom training, including two years at IUP (Taipei), three summers at Middlebury, and graduate seminars on Qing documents and Ming-Qing literature. Field experience: two years+ in Taiwan and three years+ in the PRC.

Japanese: Professional fluency in speaking; can read scholarship in my field. Equivalent of five years of classroom training, including two summers at Middlebury and professional tutorial at IUC (Yokohama). Field experience: three years+ in Japan.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

American Association of University Professors

American Historical Association

American Society for Legal History

Asian American Research Center at Stanford
Association for Asian Studies
Center for East Asian Studies, Stanford University
CLAGS: Center for LGBTQ Studies
Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University
LGBTQ+ History Association (affiliate of AHA) – lifetime member
Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Stanford University
International Society for Chinese Law and History
Stanford Center for Population Research

CONTACT:

Email: msommer@stanford.edu

Office address: Dept. of History, 450 Jane Stanford Way, Stanford CA 94305

Website: <https://history.stanford.edu/people/matthew-sommer>