This class explores Korean history from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth, during a period often called the late Chosŏn. Using a mix of sources translated into English, including literary texts, paintings, letters, archival documents and official and unofficial histories, we will discuss such issues as: how did Chosŏn monarchy respond to the world outside its borders, and negotiate its complicated relationship with its much larger neighbour, China?

how did it control (or fail to control) powerful aristocratic clans?

how did formal doctrines such as Confucianism and Buddhism respond to the lived realities of Chosŏn politics and society?

Image: Sin Yunbok (1758-1814)