We have read two first person accounts of educated men on the margins of officialdom, Wu Yubi’s early Ming Journal and Shen Fu’s mid-Qing Six Records of a Floating Life. Situate both authors in their respective places in the social and political order of the times, and then analyze the various ways that late imperial intellectual currents and social practices (Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, three-teachings syncretism, cult of qing, companionate marriage, cult of chastity, etc.) shaped their writings and lives. If we take these primary sources as representative of their respective times, what do the differences in their worldviews, careers, and family relations tell us about the transformation of Chinese thought and society from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries?

The essay should have a clear thesis. You should draw upon the primary and secondary readings for this course to complete this assignment. No outside sources will be allowed for this paper, including online sources. If you quote or paraphrase from a primary or secondary source, you must give proper attribution. Failure to provide proper attribution for sources constitutes plagiarism.

The essay should be typed, double-spaced, and 5-7 pages in length. Please number the pages and use a staple or paper clip to fasten the pages of the paper together.

You will be asked to submit the paper through Turnitin.