A Quick Review: the Shang

- 1750-1045 BCE in the Yellow River Valley
- Use of tortoise shells for worship (oracle bones); ancestor veneration; no organized priesthood
- Warriors; built cities with massive walls (30 feet thick in places)
- Use of jade in burials reflects trade and belief in its magical properties
- Skilled bronze casters - government kept a monopoly over production
- Evidence of trade with Central (jade), Southwest (bronze), and Southeast Asia (tin)
- Frequent wars; captured prisoners and enslaved them or sacrificed them to the gods
- Buried their warriors with live servants
- Developed a written script of pictographs (symbols representing ideas not sounds)
- Slave revolt overthrew the dynasty
A Quick Review: the Zhou

- 1045 - 403 BCE in the Wei River Valley (a branch of the Yellow River)
- China’s first “Golden Age” - relative peace, prosperity, and innovation
  - Use of crossbows, iron swords, and mounted cavalry as well as plows, improved irrigation systems, and better roads to support trade
- “Mandate of Heaven” – moral rulers would be allowed to continue ruling (Shang had been immoral and therefore overthrown)
- Emperor was the center of Chinese society
- Feudal society (powerful nobles governed their own city-states; mutual defense arrangements and tax collection)
- All possessions of the father passed to his eldest son upon death thereby preserving family wealth and power
- First Chinese money (copper coins) and iron technology
- Capital at Xian – beginning of the Silk Road
Period of the Warring States

- Disordered government of Later Zhou devolves into “Warring States Period” from 403 - 221 BCE
  - Autonomous smaller regions emerge as largely independent nations
  - Feudal lords attempting to gain power
  - Periodic, violent war ensues
  - One among the several emerges to establish a new, far more centralized dynasty
  - Qin Dynasty emerges as the first Chinese “Empire” 221 BCE (pronounced “chin”)
Qin Dynasty
China
221 BC-205 BC
The First Real Empire
Qin Shihuangdi

Unifies China by brute force by defeating the Zhou leaders in 221 BCE along with nearby regional authorities.
Shihaungdi means “first emperor”

Rules with ruthless, iron fist
Establishes a very centralized state with all of the government under his personal control.
Abolished local laws and appointed magistrates (judge) to replace local leaders.
Legalism is adopted as the official governing ideology.

Promoted by Han Fei Zi: 233 BC
- Humans are selfish and evil; cannot be reformed
- Ruler must establish rule of law and rule with force and violence
- Confucian doctrine is misguided and corrupting
- Education was unnecessary - people should live their lives as farmers or soldiers
- One should observe one’s relatives and neighbors and turn them in if they break the law (collective responsibility)
Legalism in Action

- Orders the slaughter of 400 scholars (buried alive)
- Orders ALL Confucian documents/books burned
- Anyone who resisted authority could be executed or sent into exile
  - Many dissenters were sent north to work on defensive walls (they were buried in the wall if they died while working)
Achievements of the Qin Dynasty

- Expanded the size of the empire
- Gave peasants the right to own land
- Built the **first** Great Wall for defense
- Built a canal system to improve trade
- Built roads for communication and to move his armies
- Standardized laws, currencies, and weights and measures
- Standardized Chinese script, not languages, to make communication and trade easier
Qin Shihuangdi’s Greatest Legacy

His tomb was discovered in 1974 (untouched for 2000 years)
Builds Great Tomb (700,000 laborers)
Terracotta Warriors – 8000+ and still counting; an army for the afterlife

Each soldier was unique, demonstrating a level of realism that had not been seen in Chinese art to this point.
Terracotta Army
Brutality Pays (but only for a while)

Brutality of Legalist Governance alienates:

Gentry
- Not recognized as important
- Traditional privileges stripped

Scholars
- Confucian knowledge and skills disdained
- Many scholars slaughtered

Commoners
- Brutal, forced labor and harsh law enforcement
Qin Dynasty: Problems

Legalism provides no legitimating myth
   No Mandate of Heaven claim
Legalism = rule of law --- but by force
Force as a source of Power???
   Generates hostility
   Requires vigilant monitoring
   Inevitably creates the revolution that destroys it
Qin Shihuangdi dies in 210 BCE. His son takes the throne but is not as capable or as brutal.

In 206 BCE, one of Qin’s generals leads a revolt - killed the emperor and the entire royal family = the beginning of the Han Dynasty