

Friends of Houston Cole Library presents Dr. Catherine Pagani



Luck, Wealth, Longevity and Happiness: Symbolism in Chinese Art

**By Catherine Pagani, Ph.D.
Professor of Art
University of Alabama**

**Wednesday, April 9, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.
Houston Cole Library - Room 1103 B**

**An Alabama Humanities Foundation sponsored
Road Scholar Presentation**

Symbolism holds an important place in Chinese culture and art. Found between both the peasant and elite strata of society, symbolic messages offer wishes ranging from prosperity to immortality. Drawing from Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, as well as ancient myths and legends, these symbols were believed to have the power to effect change and could offer a means of communication with the spirit world. Symbols communicated to the illiterate and educated equally are found on a variety of art forms.

Using slides of art objects including porcelain, textiles, jade, paper cuts and woodblock prints, Pagani discusses the social and cultural significance of these various symbols to Chinese society.



Dr. Pagani's Biographical Information:

Catherine Pagani is a professor of Asian art history in the Department of Art at The University of Alabama, where she has taught since 1993. Beginning in August 2008, she will assume the duties of department chair. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of East Asian studies at the University of Toronto and has worked at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the National Museum of History, Taipei, Taiwan.

Cathy has published and lectured widely on the arts of Asia, including rural Chinese embroidered textiles, China's first emperor, cross-cultural influences in the arts and sciences between China and Europe, and Japanese woodblock prints. In addition to three books, her work has appeared in journals that include *Arts of Asia*, *Apollo*, *Burlington Magazine*, and *Arts Asiatiques*. Her most recent book, *Eastern Magnificence and European Ingenuity: Clocks of Late Imperial China*, is the result of research conducted at the Palace Museum, Beijing, where she was the first Westerner given research access to the large collection of eighteenth-century elaborate clockwork.

In her spare time, Cathy enjoys knitting, beadwork, running, cycling, and coaching marathoners. She is also a certified personal trainer.