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Syllabus
History 272
China Since 1911
Spring 2020, Classroom: BH 208
(Hist 34122, 34123; GLAS 39459, 39460)

Over the last century or so China has seen dramatic changes in forms of government, family life, women's roles, economic systems, and areas of intellectual inquiry. In many ways 1911—or indeed the whole twentieth century—marks a divide between “traditional” China and “modern” China. New technologies and ways of thinking introduced during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted in changes that made many existing philosophies and patterns of behavior no longer viable. What kinds of narratives did people in China create in order to understand the changes that they experienced? How would they decide what to retain from their history and what to reject? How would they explain these choices? How would China come to define itself both in relation to other nations, and in relation to the past? What kinds of conflict emerged in this transition and how did people deal with it? How did Americans make sense of the changes happening in China and what kind of impact would these changes have on the US and other parts of the world? How does the history of twentieth-century China continue to impact the course of Chinese history, politics, and culture today? These are all important questions pertaining to the study of twentieth-century Chinese history that this course serves to address.

Course Goals

Content:

- To familiarize students with the issues, actors, and chronology of events central to the history of China since 1911, and to explore various ways that Chinese history of this period has been told and understood.

Skill building:

1) To work with students at becoming better readers through in-class discussion of and short written reflections on assigned readings:

- In a workshop environment, we will work on a close reading and analysis of both secondary and primary materials, engaging the material and each other in conversation. Students will identify key issues, flashpoints, and themes in the readings, and explore how metaphors and other techniques can be used both by historical actors and by scholars to reach and motivate an audience.

2) To work with students on posing, and grappling with, historical questions in response to the readings

in both oral and written form:

- What kinds of questions can we bring to the documents we encounter to help us better understand not only the explicit content, but also the goals and viewpoints of their authors? How does the historical context in which they were written leave its mark? Does the author play on the reader's emotions? Appeal to his/her reason? Incite his or her prejudices? How do the assumptions that could be made in China by 1980, or 2020, differ than those that were common in 1920? Did/do the same circumstances prevail in rural and urban China?

3) To work with students on becoming better note-takers in class:

- Mini-lectures augment the course readings, providing additional background as well as an opportunity for students to think about how specific details and events fit together into a larger framework of interpretation and analysis.

4) To work with students at becoming more effective writers through regular feedback on in-class assignments and two mid-terms exams, as well as the opportunity to write and revise one 5-7 page paper. When we write, our language needs to communicate our ideas effectively and efficiently. But how do we choose language that draws a reader in? How can we achieve maximum clarity? How can one avoid turning a reader off? What constitutes an effective thesis? What constitutes an effective paragraph? How does one create an effective argument? Personalized feedback on student writing, particularly their longer papers, will address these questions and assist students with revision. (See assignment details below under "Course Requirements and Assessment" below).

Required Readings:

Spence, Jonathan D. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980*. NY: Penguin, 1982.

Spence, Jonathan D. et al. *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Reader*. NY: Norton, 1999. (selections on Blackboard)

Additional selections as posted on Blackboard.

For those who would like to consult a standard textbook for reference, I recommend Jonathan D. Spence, *Search for Modern China*. NY: Norton, 2012.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Students will be assessed on their full participation in the course including: attendance, participation in discussion, evidence of engagement with the readings, completion of regular written assignments, performance on two mid-term exams, one 5-7 page paper (with opportunity for revision), and a final exam.

Regular attendance is expected, and records will be kept. *If you are ill or need to miss class for another reason please email the instructor so that plans can be made to make up the in-class work.* Quizzes may be given if the instructor deems it necessary in order to motivate adequate preparation.

Daily assignments follow a two-part process. Students will read and briefly answer the discussion questions on the readings in preparation for each class (unless otherwise noted on the syllabus), turning them in on Blackboard by the beginning of the class period. They will be marked on a 10-point scale. Revised assignments, may be turned in to Blackboard within one week for a revised grade. Late assignments will be marked down 20%, and accepted only until the end of the week (Saturday at 5:00 p.m.). After that, a zero will be assigned. Grading will be influenced by the overall clarity and cogency of your submission as well as by any rubric/skill for that day as articulated in the assignment. These skills are cumulative. Once you have mastered a skill, please keep in it regular use as appropriate!

Midterm exams will be given on Thursday of weeks 6 and 10. The exam will have a two-part format is as follows. Part One (take home): you will answer one of several essay questions from which you can choose. These questions are of the type that you will be used to answering based on the discussion questions for the readings. Please submit a 1.5 to 2 page typed, double-spaced, response to the questions of your choice, paying attention to the kinds of writing conventions we will have been working on in class (heading, page numbers, proper citation, topic sentences, full sentences, appropriate punctuation, a summary statement, etc.). Part One must be turned in via Blackboard by the beginning of class. Part Two: The second part of the exam will be written in class, and will consist of a timeline of events that we have discussed in class, for which you need to provide a connecting a narrative. You will need to indicate a significant event that happened on each date mentioned, who was primarily involved, how it is related to the other events that happened in the sequence of dates provided. A study guide will be provided to help you prepare.

Longer Paper. One 5-7 page paper is required in order to complete the course. You may choose your assignment from the “PAPER OPTIONS 1-5” listed on the syllabus. Please note that due dates are staggered (week 8, 12, 13, or 14) and that you may select which assignment to pursue based on your interests and the particular demands of your semester. If you have multiple final projects due during the last week of class in other classes you might want to choose an option with an earlier due date in this class. Please make your preference known via Blackboard by the third week of class. Please also see the Writing Guidelines on Blackboard for general guidance and tips on avoiding plagiarism. Papers need to be submitted on Blackboard by the due date. *Late work will not be accepted without prior agreement of the instructor.*

Paper Revisions are optional but encouraged. You may submit revisions of your major paper within two weeks of when you receive comments on the original submission. Revisions should closely heed the suggestions made. Feel free to consult with the instructors as you plan your paper, and/or as you begin to work on your revisions. (Office hours appear at the top of the first page of this document.) If you choose not to revise, the grade of the original submission will count as the revised paper grade. If you do revise, you will receive two grades: one for the original submission, and another for the revised and improved paper.

For paper topics, see addendum to syllabus (last page).

The breakdown of the final grade will be calculated as follows:

In-class work	30%
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Attendance and participation	10%
Two midterm exams	20% (10% each)
Longer paper:	10%
(Optional) Revision of paper:	10%
Final exam:	20%

Schedule of assignments

Week 1

Jan. 14 Introduction and Overview

Jan. 16 **Read: Spence, *Gate*, Preface & Chapter 1 “Arousing the Spirits,”**
Kang You-wei and his petition.
Lecture: Foreign Encroachment

Week 2

Jan. 21 **Read: *Gate*, Chapter 2, “Visions and Violence,”** Sun Yat-sen’s Political Activities;
Kang You-wei’s *Datong shu*; Liang Qichao; Zou Rong; Qiu Jin; Chinese students in
Japan.
Lecture: Transitional Figures

Jan. 23 **Read (on Blackboard):** Zou Rong on Revolution 11.1 (197-202);
Qin Jin, Feminist Revolutionary, 11.3 (185-187);
Revolutionary Alliance Proclamation, 187-191;
Search for Modern China on Social Darwinism (290-292).
Lecture: Race and Nation

Week 3

Jan. 28 **Read: *Gate*, Chapter 3, “Wanderings,”**
Lu Xun (remarks on students’ deaths); Kang’s peregrinations; 1911 Revolution.
Read also (on Blackboard): “The Incident”
Discussion: Fostering Nationalism

Jan. 30 Film: *China in Revolution*, Part One
Indicate which paper option you have chosen.
No daily assignment

Week 4

Feb. 4 **Read: *Gate*, Chapter 4, “The Far Horizon,”** Shen Congwen; 1911 aftermath; Yuan’s
bid for emperorship; 21 Demands; restoration of Puyi; Lu Xun, syphilis metaphor; *New
Youth*; Lu Xun: Iron House, “Medicine” (long excerpt).
Discussion: Militarism and metaphor

Feb. 6 **Reader: “21 Demands” (203-207);** Chen Duxiu, “Call to Youth,” (219-225)

SMC Twenty-One Demands 281-282.
Lecture/Discussion: Japanese encroachment/Chinese responses

Week 5

Feb. 11

Read: Gate, Chapter 5 “The Land of Hunger”

May 4; recap of 21 Demands; Ding Ling introduced; suicide of Ms. Zhao (Mao’s article); Qu Qiubai; Li Dazhao; Bertrand Russell; Hong Kong Seaman’s Strike;
Also Read: SMC: 292 bottom line to top of 295: Mao’s early writings. SMC: May 4th 299-308.

Lecture: The May 4th Incident, and May 4th Movement

Feb. 13

Read: Selection from Ibsen, *A Doll’s House*; Lu Xun: What Happens After Nora Leaves Home? (239-243).

Discussion: The nexus of culture, politics, and economics

Week 6

Feb. 18

Read: Gate, Chapter 6, “Extolling Nirvana”

Xu Zhimo in Britain (and the divorce); Liang Shuming; Tagore in China.

Lecture: Science and Modernity

Feb. 20

FIRST MIDTERM

Week 7

Feb. 25

Read: Gate, Chapter 7, “Whose Children Are Those?”

Ah Q; May 30 incident (1925); Intro of Wen Yidou; communist activities in the countryside; Northern Expedition starts.

Read also: SMC May 30th pp. 322-323 (on Blackboard).

Lecture: Labor & Politics

Feb. 27

Read: Sun Yat-sen Opens the Whampoa Academy, 1924 (244-247);

Lu Xun, “Sudden Notions” – Reactions to the May Thirtieth Incident, 1925 (247-249); “A Patient Named Taiwan” (249-251); and SMC: Sun Joffe and Whampoa 314-322.

Lecture: KMT (GMD) and CCP: Cooperation and Conflict

Week 8

March 3

Read: Gate, Chapter 8, “Wake the Spring,”

1927—Shanghai massacre aftermath; literary society struggles (political); *Diary of Miss Sophie* (Ding Ling); Hu Yepin’s fate; Xu Zhimo’s death (airplane accident).

Lecture: Constructing a Thesis

March 5

PAPER OPTION #1 DUE TODAY.

Also Read: Purging the Communists: Three Documents (251-255);
SMC Shanghai Massacre: 330-336.
Lecture: Origins of the CCP

Week 9

March 10

Read: *Gate*, Chapter 9, “Farewell to the Beautiful Things,”
(Long March); Ding Ling joins CCP; Lao She—*Cat Country*; Qu’s execution;
Lu Xun’s death.
Read also: “The New Life Movement,” (299-309).
Lecture: Options facing Chinese Intellectuals

March 12

Read: “The Long March: The Tale of the Luding Bridge,” (296-299);
Selections from *Red Star over China* (available on Blackboard)
Lecture: The Power of Narrative

Week 10

March 17

Read: *Gate*, Chapter 10, “Refugees.”
Lao She: *Rickshaw*; Sino-Japanese War; Wen Yidou’s growing political
commitment; Yan’an; Ding Ling: “When I was in Xia Village,” and “In the
Hospital.”
Lecture: Politics and Literature

March 19

SECOND MIDTERM
Film: *A Century of Revolution*, Part Two. No daily assignment

SPRING BREAK—MARCH 23-27

Week 11

March 30

Read: *Gate*, Chapter 11, “Rectifications,”
“Thoughts on March 8;” Ding Ling’s retraction; Wen Yiduo’s assassination; land
reform.
Lecture: Political Pressures

April 2

Read: “Wen Yiduo, The Poet’s Farewell” (345-47);
The Jiangxi Soviet Land Law (290-296)
Discussion: Political Agency under Repression

Week 12

April 7

Read: *Gate*, Chapter 12, “A New Order”1947-57. Lao She’s return to China; His
description of a criticism meeting; Anti-rightist movement; Great Leap Forward
Lecture: Contributing to the New Nation

April 9

Film: *The Mao Years* Part One

PAPER OPTIONS #2 and #3 are is DUE TODAY—no daily assignment

Week 13

April 14

Read: *Gate*, Chapter 13, “The Noise of the Renegades”

Cultural Revolution; Lao She’s demise; Democracy Wall.

Excerpts from *Son of the Revolution* (Chapters, 1, 3, 4 on Blackboard)

Discussion: How did this happen?

April 16

Film – *The Mao Years*, Part Two

PAPER OPTION #4 is DUE TODAY—no daily assignment

FINAL TWO WEEKS: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES (Topics below subject to change)

Week 14

April 21

Economic Prosperity: The New Contract and Its Costs

- Ideological: Normalization and the One China Policy (“two systems”)

- Familial: One Child Policy

- Environmental: air quality, land utilization.

- Public Health (AIDS crisis in Hunan for example)

Readings TBA

April 23

Democracy Fever: The Tian’an men Uprising of 1989

Readings TBA

If you chose to write on **PAPER OPTION #5 it is DUE TODAY**

No daily assignment

Week 15

April 28

Political Preoccupations:

- Protests on China’s periphery: Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong.

Readings TBA

April 30

- Corruption and its uses;

- History and its (ab)uses.

Readings TBA (from contemporary press)

Final Exam: Date, time, and location to be announced.

Revised papers for Paper Options 4 and 5 may be turned in on the last day of class or at the time of the final exam (if not already submitted).

Longer Paper Topics

PAPER OPTION #1: Read Pang Mei Natasha Chang, *Bound Feet and Western Dress* to understand what happened with Xu Zhimo's marriage from the perspective of his wife. Write a paper that interprets their story not simply as a personal tragedy, but that sets it into the context of changing expectations of and for both men and women in 1920s China. How did these expectations vary according to gender, and what was the role of the traditional extended family in this instance? DUE MARCH 5, THURSDAY OF WEEK 8. Please note that you are responsible for obtaining your own copy of this book. You can either purchase it, or request it from I-Share through UIC's library (recommended).

PAPER OPTION #2: Read the full text of one of Ding Ling's stories. You are responsible for locating and selecting one from the library. I suggest the collection *I Myself am a Woman: Selected Writings of Ding Ling* (Beacon, 1989). What theme(s) does she explore, and why might the CCP have been critical of it? On what grounds could she have been (and was she) criticized? What was the sub-text (i.e., what issues did she raise that the CCP found threatening?). DUE APRIL 9 (THURSDAY OF WEEK 12).

PAPER OPTION #3: Based on "The Dingxian Experiment" (posted on Blackboard), how did the GMD attempt to influence the cultural life of the people? How did it invoke (and shape) Chinese history in order to do so? What was the basis of the values that it wanted to instill and hold up? DUE APRIL 9 (THURSDAY OF WEEK 12).

PAPER OPTION#4: What is celebrated on March 8? How did it tradition begin, and how is the day commemorated in different parts of the world? Why isn't it widely recognized in the US? If you choose to write on option # 4 the due date is on April 16 (Thursday, of Week 13).

PAPER OPTION #5. Read the full account of Wei Jingsheng's statement "The Fifth Modernization." What is at stake in the Democracy Wall Movement? How is it like/unlike the Cultural Revolution? Why does Deng Xiaoping open up avenues for (limited) political expression among the people (and which people)? Why—and at what point—was it clamped down on? DUE APRIL 23 (THURSDAY OF WEEK 14).