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**Syllabus**  
**History 272**  
**China Since 1911**

Spring 2017, Classroom: BH 209  
(Hist 34122, 34123; GLAS 39459, 39460)

What is history? Whose story is it? Why do we study our own history? Why do we study the history of other peoples and other places? How do we decide what is “our” history and what is someone “else’s” history? What kinds of history are there? How does our understanding of history become revised? How does history intersect with story?

“You don't have anything if you don't have the stories.”  
- Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

“Revision is an ordinary consequence of living an open and curious life.”  
- Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew (lecture)

“...memory possesses authority . . . in a world where it is necessary to have authority in order to  
Question Authority.”  
- Patricia Hampl, “Memory and Imagination”

“I will tell you something about stories . . . They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They  
are all we have, you see, all we have to fight off illness and death.”  
- Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Course Content

Since 1911 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 age-old philosophies and patterns of behavior no longer viable. What kinds of narratives did Chinese people create in order to understand the changes that they experienced? How would people in China 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?

### Course Goals

Content:

- To familiarize students with the events, actors, and issues 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:

- 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 issues, flashpoints, and themes in the readings, and understand how metaphors and other tools 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:

- 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 2016, differ than those that prevailed in 1920? Did the same circumstances prevail in rural and urban China?

3) To work with students at becoming more effective writers:

- According to Patricia Hampl, "A careful first draft is a failed first draft." A first draft is provides an opportunity to brainstorm, to explore ideas and get them down on paper in whatever form. Freedom from the inner censor is essential to a productive first draft. For the same reason, we cannot expect our first drafts to serve as final drafts. A final draft needs to be polished, to be honed. Some ideas from an early draft may not stand up to scrutiny and need be tossed out, others refined. The language needs to communicate our ideas effectively and efficiently. But how do we revise effectively? 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 paragraph? How does one create an effective argument? Again, using a workshop environment we will work together toward answering these questions as we share and critique each other's writing.

**Required Readings:**

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

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

Course Requirements

This syllabus has been designed according to the premise that as more and more information on Chinese history becomes readily available via the web and other sources, classroom time need no longer be spent primarily on the delivery of information through the lecture format. Instead classes will follow a workshop format designed to help students develop skills in close reading, questioning, analysis, and writing—all of which are essential to the practice of history. 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.

Grading will be based on:

In-class work and participation:	30%
midterm quiz:	15%
paper:	20%
rewrite of paper:	20%
final exam:	15%

Requirements:

- Daily in-class assignments need to be turned in to Blackboard by the end of the class period. This helps the instructor keep track of attendance as well as of your individual progress.
- Volunteer to share a paragraph you have written for critique once or twice during the course of the semester.
- 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 and that you may select which assignment to pursue based on your interests and the particular demands of your semester (week 8, 12, 13, 14). (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 to me via Blackboard by the third week of class. Please see Writing Guidelines on Blackboard for general guidance and tips on avoiding plagiarism. Papers need to be submitted on Blackboard via SafeAssign.

Schedule of assignments:

**Week 1**

Jan. 10 Introduction and Overview

Jan. 12 **Read: Spence, *Gate*, Preface & Chapter 1 “Arousing the Spirits,”**  
Kang You-wei and his petition.

**Week 2**

Jan. 17 **Read: *Gate*, Chapter 2, “Visions and Violence,”** Sun Yat-sen’s Political Activities; Kang You-wei’s *Datong shu*; Liang Qichao; Zou Rong; QiuJin; Chinese students in Japan.

Jan. 19 **Reader:** Zou Rong on Revolution 11.1 (179-183) &  
Qin Jin, Feminist Revolutionary, 11.3 (185-187)

**Week 3**

Jan. 24 **Read: *Gate*, Chapter 3, “Wanderings,”** Lu Xun (remarks on students’ deaths); Kang’s peregrinations; 1911 Revolution.

Jan 26 Selection from Ibsen, *A Doll’s House* (provided on Blackboard)  
**Reader:** Revolutionary Alliance Proclamation, 187-191.  
**Indicate on Blackboard which paper option you have chosen.**

**Week 4**

Jan. 31 **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).

Feb. 2 **Reader:** “21 Demands” (203-207) & Chen Duxiu, “Call to Youth,” (219-225)

**Week 5**

Feb. 7 Film: *China in Revolution*, Part 1

Feb. 9 **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.

**Week 6**

Feb. 14 **Read: *Gate*, Chapter 6, “Extolling Nirvana”**  
Xu Zhimo in Britain (and the divorce); Liang Shuming; Tagore in China.

Feb. 16 **Reader:** Lu Xun: What Happens After Nora Leaves Home? (239-243).

**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 FEBRUARY 28, TUESDAY OF WEEK 8.

**Week 7**

Feb. 21

**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.

Feb. 23

**Reader:** 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).

**Week 8**

Feb. 28

**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).

If you chose to write on **PAPER OPTION #1** it is **DUE TODAY**.

Mar. 2

**Reader:** Purging the Communists: Three Documents (251-255)  
**MIDTERM QUIZ**

**Week 9**

Mar. 7

**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.

Mar. 9

**Reader:** "The Long March: The Tale of the Luding Bridge," (296-299); Selections from *Red Star over China* (available on Blackboard)

**Week 10**

Mar. 14

**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."

Mar. 16

**Reader:** "The New Life Movement," (299-309), & "The Ding Xian Experiment" (Beginning through portion on cultural life, 272-278.)

## PAPER OPTION #2:

Read the full text of one of Ding Ling's stories. What theme(s) does she explore, and why would 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 4 (TUESDAY OF WEEK 12).

## PAPER OPTION #3:

Based on the primary readings for today, 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? (IF YOU SELECT THIS OPTION, READ ALL OF "THE DIAN XIAN EXPERIMENT, 272- 287). DUE APRIL 4 (TUESDAY OF WEEK 12).

SPRING BREAK—MARCH 20-24

### Week 11

Mar. 28

**Read:** *Gate*, Chapter 11, "Rectifications,"

"Thoughts on March 8;" Ding Ling's retraction; Wen Yiduo's assassination; land reform.

Mar. 30

**Reader:** "Wen Yiduo, The Poet's Farewell" (345-47)  
16.1 The Jiangxi Soviet Land Law (290-296)

## PAPER OPTION#4

What is March 8? How did it begin, and how is it 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 13 (Thursday, of Week 13).

### Week 12

Apr. 4

**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

**If you chose to write on PAPER OPTION #2 OR #3 it is DUE TODAY**

Apr. 6

Film: *The Mao Years* Part 2

### Week 13

Apr. 11

**Read: *Gate*, Chapter 13, “The Noise of the Renegades”**  
Cultural Revolution; Lao She’s demise; Democracy Wall.

Apr. 13

**Read: Excerpts from *Son of the Revolution* (Chapters, 1, 3, 4).**  
If you chose to write on **PAPER OPTION #4, it is DUE TODAY.**

**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 20 (THURSDAY OF WEEK 14).**

FINAL TWO WEEKS: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES.

### Week 14

April 18

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 20

Democracy Fever: The Tian’an men Uprising of 1989  
**Readings TBA**  
If you chose to write on **PAPER OPTION #5 it is DUE TODAY**

### Week 15

April 25

Political Preoccupations:  
- Protests on China’s periphery: Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong.  
**Readings TBA**

April 27

- 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** may be turned in on the last day of class or at the time of the final exam (if not already submitted).