



Study Center in Shanghai, China

Course name: Modern Chinese History

Course number: EAST 3003 SCGC/ HIST 3001 SCGC

Language of instruction: English

Term: Spring 2008

Course meeting times: Friday 9:00-12:00am

Course meeting place: to be announced

Professor: Andrew Field

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Office address:

Office hours:

Contact Hours: Forty-five

Recommended Credit: Three

Course Synopsis

This course surveys the history of China from 1600 to the present day. Major themes discussed in this course include the rise of modern Chinese nationalism and the construction of a Chinese nation-state, the influence of Western and Japanese imperialism on China, and the role of revolutionary party politics in China in modern times (all of which, as we shall see, are closely related). Yet before discussing how the modern Chinese state was forged, it is important that we first explore the impact of Manchu rule on China during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), examining the great expansion campaigns of the 18th century, the internal rebellions and uprisings of the 19th century, and whether and to what degree the Manchus were “responsible” for China’s difficulties during that century, or whether in fact it was the whole imperial system that “held China back” (as we’ll see, both were premises of modern Chinese nationalism). We discuss how the Opium Wars of mid-19th century and the subsequent treaty port system catalyzed China’s modernization and hastened the demise of the traditional imperial system. We are then in a position to examine the social and economic forces behind the great revolutions of 1912, 1927, and 1949 as well as the consequences of these revolutions for Chinese society leading up to the present day.

Course Aims and Goals

Students will complete this course with a firm understanding of China’s modern history, as well as developing vital skills in research, writing, and analysis through the completion of two essays. In addition, through reading and discussing primary texts, they will learn how to question and interpret historical evidence.

Course Assessment Scheme

Students will be evaluated and given a final grade on the following basis:

- Minor Essay, due on March 12: 10%
- Major Essay, due on April 16: 30%
- Final exam, held on May 28: 30%
- Class Attendance and Punctuality: 10%
- Preparation for and Participation in Weekly Class Discussions: 20%

Minor Essay

This 1,000-word essay will provide a thoughtful response to one of the following sets of questions. For this assignment it will not be necessary to do any additional reading outside of our textbook. You may also draw on lecture notes to complete this assignment. You should use parenthetical references (i.e. a page number from

Spence or dated reference to lecture notes) in writing this essay. The essays will be judged on the basis of the quality of the writing, the overall organization of thoughts, persuasiveness of the analysis, and completeness of the answer.

Questions:

- 1) How were the Manchus able to take over China in 1644 and establish the Qing Dynasty? What motivated them to do so?
- 2) During the Kangxi reign, what were the chief obstacles that the emperor and his court faced in trying to consolidate their rule over China? How did they overcome these obstacles?
- 3) Why did the Chinese state expand westward during the 18th century? How was it able to carry out these campaigns of expansion?
- 4) What were some of the key problems that China faced as it entered the 19th century? To what extent did the Qing government attempt to solve these problems? Was it successful in doing so, and if not, why not?

Major Essay

The major essay will be a 3,000-word essay (approx. 12 pages double spaced in 12 point font) that will explore a certain theme, topic, or issue in modern Chinese history. Completing the essay will involve doing some additional reading outside of our assigned textbook. At the beginning of the course, the instructor will hand out a list of suggested topics and will give detailed instructions as well as practical advice on how to carry out this assignment.

Final Exam

The final exam will be comprehensive and will involve a combination of several short identification questions and one longer essay, to be completed during a 1-hour examination period. One week before the exam, the instructor will hand out a list of potential identification and essay topics.

Class Attendance

Each student will be responsible for showing up to all classes punctually. Students may not be excused from any class unless proper medical or school certification is provided. This must be provided as soon as possible before or following a missed session and must be approved by the program director.

Class Discussions

Every week for the first 50 minutes of class we will hold a group discussion. The discussion topics are listed below. Students will prepare for the class discussion by reading the textbook chapters and by doing selected readings in the Cheng & Lestz textbook, which will be available in the NYU office. Each student must choose three different weeks to prepare a written statement that will be submitted to the lecturer and will be used for the basis of class discussions. This statement should be around 300 words and should be submitted to the lecturer for evaluation. Everyone should participate in class discussions regardless of whether they have prepared a written statement for that week.

Textbook

Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China, Second Edition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

Weekly Lecture Topics

Week One, Feb 27

Lecture:

The Fall of the Ming and the Rise of the Qing Dynasty 1600-1644

Reading:

Spence ch. 1 and 2

Week Two, March 5

Discussion:

Read "Exchange of Letters Between Wu Sangui and Dorgon" in C & L pp. 23-27. How does Wu Sangui justify his alliance with the Manchus? How does Dorgon justify taking Beijing? Do these two men seem to have similar notions of what will follow or do their intentions differ?

Lecture:

Emperors of the High Qing Period, 1654-1799

Reading:

Spence ch. 3, 4, and 5

Week Three, March 12

Discussion:

Read "Kangxi's Valedictory Edict" in C & L pp. 58-64. How does the Kangxi emperor look back on his achievements and his life as emperor? How does he balance his identity as a Chinese-style "sage king" and as a Manchu warrior? What does this tell you about the special challenges that Manchu emperors faced?

Lecture:

Foreign Imperialism and Internal Uprisings, 1799-1870

Reading:

Spence ch. 7 and 8

Week Four, March 19:

Discussion:

Read C & L pp. 110-122. Discuss the pros and cons of banning opium vs. legalizing opium. What were the key social, economic, and/or political problems that the officials pointed out in their arguments for or against banning opium? Which point of view do you agree with most?

Lecture:

Late Qing Reforms and Collapse of Qing, 1870-1912

Reading:

Spence, ch. 9, 10, and 11

Week Five

Study Break

Week Six, April 2

Discussion:

Read “Sun Yat-sen’s Reform Proposal to Li Hongzhang, 1893” C & L pp. 168-172 and “Zhang Zhidong on the Central Government, 1898” pp. 181-185. What does each man argue is the best course for China to take? How does each support his argument? Do you find these two men at odds and if so, how do they differ in their viewpoints about what’s best for China?

Lecture:

The New Republic and China’s Descent into Warlordism, 1912-1919

Reading:

Spence ch. 12

Week Seven, April 9

Discussion:

Read “Japan’s Twenty-One Demands, 1915” in C & L pp. 216-220. What were the Japanese seeking to accomplish through these demands? Were these demands reasonable or not? Why were so many Chinese people angered by these demands?

Lecture:

The May Fourth Movement, the May Thirtieth Movement, the CCP, and the Nationalist Revolution, 1919-1927

Reading: Spence, ch. 13 and 14

Week Eight, April 16

Discussion:

Read “The New Culture Movement” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition* pp. 151-172. What do Chen Duxiu (Ch’en Tu-hsiu) and Hu Shi (Hu Shih) see as the most important functions of literature and philosophy? On what points do they agree? On what points do they disagree? Which person’s ideas do you favor and why?

Lecture:

The Nanjing Decade of Nationalist Rule and the Menace of Japanese Imperialism, 1927-37

Reading:

Spence, ch. 15 and 16

Week Nine, April 23

Discussion:

Read “Xi’an 1936: The Generals’ Demands and Chiang Kai-shek’s Reply” in C & L pp. 309-313. What reasons do the generals give for their decision to kidnap the G’issimo? How does he respond to their arguments? How does

his description of his service to the nation compare with that of Kangxi in our first discussion reading? Does he see himself as a modern Chinese leader or a traditional one?

Lecture:

The War of Resistance and the Communist Revolution, 1937-1949

Reading:

Spence, ch. 17-20

Week Ten

Study Break

Week Eleven, May 7

Discussion:

Read "Japan at War" in C & L pp. 314-324. How does Prince Konoe justify Japan's military aggression against China? Do you find his justifications reasonable or persuasive given the historical context (i.e. the 1930s)? How does Chiang Kai-shek respond and how does he view the attempt by Japan to create an "East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere?"

Special Lecture:

China Learns to Dance: Shanghai Cabaret Culture and Chinese Nationalist Politics, 1919-1954

Reading:

Week Twelve, May 14

Discussion:

Read Sean Macdonald, "The Shanghai Foxtrot (a Fragment) by Mu Shiyong: Introduction" *Modernism/modernity* - Volume 11, Number 4, November 2004, pp. 797-807
How does Mu Shiyong's story portray life in 1930s Shanghai? What roles do dance halls seem to play in this story? Whose perspective does the story take and why? Do you see any parallels between this story and Shanghai today?

Lecture:

The Mao Years, 1949-1976

Reading:

Spence, Ch. 21, 22, and 23

Week Thirteen, May 21

Discussion:

Read C & L pp. 385-399 on the Hundred Flowers Campaign of 1956 and Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. What reasons are given for "letting one hundred flowers bloom and one hundred schools of thought contend?" What reasons are given for cracking down on the people who voiced complaints during this campaign? What do these documents tell you about the relationship between state and society during the early Mao era?

Lecture:

The Era of "Opening and Reforms," 1978-present

Reading:

Spence, ch. 24, 25, and 26

Week Fourteen, May 28

Final exam

Course Reader Contents

C & L = Pei-kai Cheng & Michael Lestz, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999)

- 1) "Kangxi's Valedictory Edict," C & L pp. 58-64
- 2) Qing debates on opium policy, C & L pp. 110-122
- 3) "Sun Yat-sen's Reform Proposal to Li Hongzhang, 1893," C & L pp. 168-172
- 4) "Zhang Zhidong on the Central Government, 1898" pp. 181-185
- 5) Catherine Vance Yeh, "Reinventing Ritual: Late Qing Handbooks for Proper Customer behavior in Shanghai Courtesan Houses" in *Late Imperial China*, vol.19, No.2 (December 1998):1-63.
- 6) Christian Henriot, "'From a **Throne of Glory** to a Seat of Ignominy': Shanghai Prostitution. Revisited (1849-1949)." *Modern China*, 22 (1996): 132-163.
- 7) "Japan's Twenty-One Demands, 1915" in C & L pp. 216-220
- 8) "The New Culture Movement" in *Sources of Chinese Tradition* pp. 151-172
- 9) "Xi'an 1936: The Generals' Demands and Chiang Kai-shek's Reply" in C & L pp. 309-313
- 10) "Japan at War" in C & L pp. 314-324
- 11) Sean Macdonald, "The Shanghai Foxtrot (a Fragment) by Mu Shiyong: Introduction" *Modernism/modernity* - Volume 11, Number 4, November 2004, pp. 797-807
- 12) C & L pp. 385-399 on the Hundred Flowers Campaign of 1956 and Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957
- 13) C & L pp. 487-506 on the 1989 demonstrations and the crackdown of June 4

About the Instructor

Andrew first came to Mainland China in 1988 as a college student, having studied Chinese language in Taiwan, and traveled around the country extensively using his then very basic Mandarin skills to get around. In the process of his travels, Andrew developed a life-long passionate interest in the culture, people, landscapes, and history of China. He then proceeded to earn a BA in Asian Studies from Dartmouth College ('91), and went on to Columbia where he spent the next ten years (!) earning a Masters and eventually a PhD with a focus on modern Chinese history. During that time he spent a year studying advanced Chinese language at the IUP "Stanford Center" in Taipei, Taiwan, from 1993-4, and two years in the PRC, mostly in Shanghai, conducting dissertation research between 1996 and 1998. He continued to return to Shanghai with regularity, having something to do with a certain lady he had met during his period of dissertation research, and whom he married in the Marshal House in Shanghai in 1999. After graduating from Columbia in 2001, Andrew taught Chinese and Japanese History at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington in 2001-2002, and has since taught Chinese, East Asian, and World History at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia from 2002-2007. In addition, Andrew has taught courses on the history of modern China and Shanghai for CIEE's Shanghai program in 2001, 2005, and 2006, and has also taught for the CET study abroad program in Beijing in 2007. In fall 2007 he directed the Dartmouth College Foreign Studies Program at Beijing Normal University. Andrew is working on completing a forthcoming book, based on his doctoral dissertation focusing on the nightlife and dance hall culture that rose and fell in Shanghai during the Republican era (1912-1949) as a fascinating window into China's modernity. He is also co-writing a book on "A Century of Shanghai Nightlife" with sociologist James Farrer. Andrew plans to write a more general history of Shanghai hopefully to be published in time for the Shanghai World Expo in 2010. Andrew is married to Zhang Mengxi (Mency), who currently directs and hosts a program for the new International Channel in Shanghai (you can see her every Sunday night at 7 pm). They have a daughter Sarah, now 3 years old.