

HIST 5391.01 Asian History: Twentieth-Century China
Credit Hours: 3.0
Class Location: Online
Fall 2016

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursday 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The twentieth century was a time of unprecedented change in China, as the country transitioned from an empire to casting itself as a modern nation-state. This graduate-level seminar aims to provide an understanding of the patterns and contradictions of the social and political revolutions in the making of modern China, in particular the rise of the Chinese Communist Party. We will also consider how issues related to the economy, gender, ethnicity, and cultural production shaped Chinese politics and society during this period. Topics will include the formative years of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Civil War, the consolidation of the People's Republic of China, the Great Famine, and the Cultural Revolution.

Throughout the semester students will complete five response papers and participate in online discussions on the assigned readings. No prior knowledge of Chinese culture, history or language is required.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The goals of this course are:

- To understand the major political, economic, and social changes that transformed China during the twentieth century;
- To identify the major historiographical trends in modern Chinese history by examining a variety of secondary sources;
- To sharpen analytical skills by engaging with the course content;
- To formulate and articulate ideas clearly through online discussions and written assignments.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course is divided into eight units. Each unit will feature a short 15-minute video produced by the instructor that will provide the historical context and raise questions on the assigned readings. These course videos will be posted on Blackboard. Students are required to watch the video before beginning the reading assignment for that unit.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The readings for this course include eight assigned books that can be purchased online through websites such as www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com. Copies are also available at the university bookstore.

The assigned books are listed below:

Christina K. Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Mark Seldon. *China in Revolution: Yenan Way Revisited* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

Xiaoyuan Liu. *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2004.

Jeremy Brown and Paul Pickowicz, eds. *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Chung-tai Hung. *Mao's new world: political culture in the early People's Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

Gail Hershatter. *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

Frank Dikotter. *Mao's Great Famine: the history of China's most devastating catastrophe*. (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2010).

Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowitz, and Andrew Walder eds. *The Chinese cultural revolution as history* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Response Papers (75% of your final grade): Students will choose five of the required readings in Units 1-7 and write a five- to six-page response paper based on the assigned reading for that unit. Response papers should not be limited to a discussion of the books' content. It should also examine the analytical and methodological techniques employed by the author, the book's contribution to the field, and how it connects to the other readings in the course. A handout with tips on writing a response paper has been posted on Blackboard. Should students have any questions on how to structure their response papers, the instructor will be glad to provide additional assistance.

Discussion Forum (25% of your final grade): There will be eight discussion fora on Blackboard in which participation is mandatory. Each student will compose a discussion forum post (ca. 300

words) as well as respond to two postings (ca. 150 words). Each discussion forum contains a prompt with questions on the reading that are intended to help students think about the major issues in the unit and formulate their posts. Students are not required to address all questions in the prompt. They can select any particular aspect(s) of the readings they wish to discuss. Posts will be graded based upon the quality of the student's engagement with the assigned reading and their understanding of the historical content. **Students must complete all eight of the discussion fora to pass this course.**

My grading scale is as follows: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69, F = 59 or lower.

SKYPE MEETINGS WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

Students are required to schedule at least two Skype meetings with the instructor during the semester. The first meeting will be scheduled after the student hands in the first response paper. The primary objective of this meeting will be to discuss the student's first response paper and provide him/her any additional assistance needed to excel in this course. The second mandated meeting will occur during the last week of November to discuss the student's overall performance in the course and answer any questions he/she might still have on the course themes and readings.

Students are also welcome to schedule additional Skype meetings with the instructor whenever they need assistance or simply wish to further engage in a discussion on the course themes.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, plagiarism and cheating, will be subject to disciplinary action. For more information of the university policies, please see: <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic functioning should contact the Services for Students with disabilities (SSD) Office located in the Lee Drain Annex (next to Farrington) telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786 to apply for accommodations. In the event that accommodations are approved by SSD, the student must schedule an appointment with the course instructor in order to present his/her accommodation form and discuss the arrangements for the accommodations.

NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the SSD.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2)

defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

COURSE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Unit 1 (August 23-September 3)

Christina K. Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Initial post due by August 31st

Replies to two postings due by September 3rd

Response paper due by September 3rd

For those who completed their first response paper, please contact the instructor (ericvb@shsu.edu) to schedule a Skype meeting.

Unit 2 (September 4-17)

Mark Seldon. *China in Revolution: Yen'an Way Revisited* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

Initial post due by September 14th

Replies to two postings due by September 17th

Response paper due by September 17th

Unit 3 (September 18-October 1)

Xiaoyuan Liu. *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism*. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004).

Initial post due by September 28th

Replies to two postings due by October 1st

Response paper due by October 1st

Unit 4 (October 2-15)

Jeremy Brown and Paul Pickowicz, eds. *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Initial post due by October 12th

Replies to two postings due by October 15th

Response paper due by October 15th

Unit 5 (October 16-29)

Chung-tai Hung. *Mao's new world: political culture in the early People's Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

Initial post due by October 26th

Replies to two postings due by October 29th

Response paper due by October 29th

Unit 6 (October 30-November 12)

Gail Hershatter. *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

Initial post due by November 9th

Replies to two postings due by November 12th

Response paper due by November 12th

Unit 7 (November 13-26)

Frank Dikotter. *Mao's Great Famine: the history of China's most devastating catastrophe*. (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2010).

Initial post due by November 23rd

Replies to two postings due by November 26th

Response paper due by November 26th

Unit 8 (November 27-December 3)

Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowitz, and Andrew Walder eds. *The Chinese cultural revolution as history* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

Initial post due by November 30th

Replies to two postings due by December 3rd

Skype Meetings with Instructor