

## **Perspectives in History: China's Revolution**

Spring 2020  
21:510:316

Monday, 2:30–3:50 pm  
Wednesday, 1–2:20 pm  
Location: HAH 322

Instructor: Daniel Asen  
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 4–5 pm, and by appointment, Conklin 328  
Email: daniel.asen@rutgers.edu

### **1. Course Description**

China's modern transformation into a rising superpower has been one of the most consequential developments of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. China's spectacular rise can be understood as the product of multiple "revolutions," profound and often violent shifts that have altered the political, social, and economic landscape and even the fabric of everyday life.

The first of these revolutions, which had the goal of reversing a century of domestic chaos and foreign exploitation, was a communist revolution that led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The second of these – the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) – saw Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong and his supporters attempt to consolidate their power over state and society while violently reigniting the country's revolutionary legacy. The third "revolution," which began in the late 1970s with China's momentous shift to economic liberalization policies, has transformed China's economy and society into what it is today.

Each of these three moments – the communist revolution of the late 1940s, the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, and the post-1978 economic reforms – have involved profound changes of direction in national policy, but also deep changes in patterns of social and economic interaction and cultural values. Each of these moments also left behind traces in the form of a great variety of historical documents.

In this class we will examine China's contemporary history through this rich collection of documentary evidence, focusing especially on practicing the basic skills that historians use to learn about past events, to interpret their significance, and to communicate their findings. Some of the documents that we will examine include propaganda posters, official speeches, laws and legal documents, intelligence reports, and even works of fiction. We will use the tools of the historian to analyze these rich historical sources in

order to understand modern China's multifaceted "revolutions" and the impact that these events continue to have today.

## **2. Learning Goals**

Students will practice the following skills in this class, which is designated as Writing Intensive:

- Critical reading and analysis. Students will read and analyze various kinds of primary sources (historical documents), thinking carefully about who authored the document, who the intended audience was, and the agenda or politics that might be underlying the text. We will critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of evidence, and also think about the kinds of information that can be extracted from historical documents.
- Using the resources available at Dana Library and through the Rutgers University Libraries website. Students will locate primary sources as well as books and journal articles, and gain an introduction to some of the most important databases and other resources that are used in historical research.
- College-level academic writing. Students will write papers that present historical arguments based on evidence while synthesizing information from primary sources and secondary sources (scholarly books, articles). We will spend time working on how to make a compelling argument in writing and how to use and cite historical evidence.

## **3. Assignments and Grading**

Class participation / Attendance – 10%

Library resource worksheets (2) – 10%

Reading responses (7) – 35%

Papers (3) – 45%

Class participation / Attendance (10%). Students are required to read the assigned texts before the class (by the date indicated on the syllabus), to come to class ready with questions or observations about the readings, and to take part in the discussion to earn a good participation grade. We will devote much of our class time to interpreting the primary source readings; this in-depth analysis will compose the participation grade. I will be checking whether students have brought the readings to class and include that in the participation grade.

Any behavior that might be disruptive to other students, making it difficult for them to hear or distracting them from the lecture, or in any way intimidates them from participating in class, will be counted against the participation grade. This means, in concrete terms:

- no talking in private conversations (even in whispers),
- no cell phone use or any other form of texting,
- no working on other course homework.

I will take attendance in every class by means of a sign-in sheet. If you arrive late, you will only get half attendance credit for being in class on that day. This means that two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence.

According to the Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate Catalog: “The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.”

These are the situations in which an absence can be counted as excused (for all other situations, an absence is unexcused). For an absence to be excused, you must contact me in advance of the class that you will miss in order to receive permission, explain why you have to miss class, and provide suitable documentation (for example, a doctor’s note showing that you received medical treatment).

**Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will automatically fail the class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. I will try to warn you if you are getting close to this number, but it is up to you to make sure that you do not reach eight absences.**

Library resource worksheets (10% total, 5% each). You will complete two worksheets that are meant to familiarize you with the resources of Dana Library and the Rutgers University Libraries website. I will give you detailed instructions about what this will involve and how they will be graded.

Reading responses (35% total, 5% each). Over the semester, you will submit seven written analyses of the week’s readings. This will involve filling out a form that asks you questions about each reading. The goal of these assignments is to hone your critical reading skills. I will give you a detailed handout that explains what these assignments will involve and how they will be graded.

Papers (45% total, 15% each). This course has three 3-4 page papers, each of which is worth 15% of your final grade. For each paper you will be asked to do a close reading and analysis of primary source documents alongside secondary sources. I will give you a handout for each paper that includes a detailed explanation of the topic. We will discuss paper writing in class as well as how I will grade them.

**The following scale will be used to determine your semester grade, according to the grades that are available in the Rutgers grading system:**

|            |    |
|------------|----|
| 90 - 100   | A  |
| 87 - 89    | B+ |
| 80 - 86    | B  |
| 77 - 79    | C+ |
| 70 - 76    | C  |
| 60 - 69    | D  |
| 59 or less | F  |

#### **4. Course Readings**

Weekly reading assignments will usually include primary sources and secondary sources (articles, book chapters). Most of the primary sources and secondary sources will be available on Blackboard.

The readings marked on the syllabus with “RUL” are available electronically through the Rutgers University Libraries website (<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu>) and are not posted on Blackboard. Early in the semester you will learn how to locate and download these readings. Using the University library to find information is one of the skills that you will practice in this class.

You will be required to read the following book (“Karl” on the syllabus) for weekly reading assignments:

Rebecca E. Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*. Duke University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8223-4795-8.

This book will be made available on reserve at Dana Library, at the campus bookstore, and can be purchased from other sources as well (i.e. Amazon.com).

#### **5. Course Policies and Other Information**

1. Academic dishonesty in this class will not be tolerated. Period. This includes plagiarism, cheating, and any other behavior described in the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy. For this reason it is absolutely crucial that you familiarize yourself with this policy, which describes the actions that will be counted as violations of academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

You must include the following Rutgers Honor Code Pledge statement on every assignment that you turn in: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment. (Name) (Signature – typing your name is fine) (Date)”.

If anyone has any questions at all about this policy, what counts as a violation of academic integrity, or even simply how to cite sources on a paper (a topic that we will cover in class), I am always willing to discuss these issues with you. Students who plagiarize assignments or otherwise violate academic integrity will receive serious penalties, ranging from a failing grade in the class to suspension.

2. The Writing Center: The Writing Center (<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>), located in Room 126 of Conklin Hall, offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers-Newark campus. Their tutors work to help students become more independent readers and writers capable of responding well to the demands of writing within the university. The Writing Center is available to you free of charge and I encourage you to take advantage of its services to strengthen your reading, writing, and research skills.

3. Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:ods@newark.rutgers.edu).
- **Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations:** Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or [DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu).

- **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>.
- **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.
- **Students Who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).
- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). To submit an incident report: [tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm](http://tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm). To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **NOT** have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu).

## 6. Schedule

### January 22      Welcome to “Perspectives in History: China’s Revolution”!

- Introduction / overview of class

### Reform and Revolution in Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century China

### January 27

- Karl 1-34
- “Letter of Commissioner Lin to Queen Victoria”
- “Treaty of Shimonoseki.” Available at the following link: <https://china.usc.edu/treaty-shimonoseki-1895>

### January 29\*

- “The Boxer Uprising – 1,” *MIT Visualizing Cultures*. This essay is available here: [https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/boxer\\_uprising/bx\\_essay01.html](https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/boxer_uprising/bx_essay01.html)  
Be sure to read all of the sections.
- “Manifesto of the Revolutionary Alliance”

### **February 3\***

- “Chen Duxiu’s editorial in New Youth”
- Mao Zedong, “A study of physical education”

### **February 5\***

- Read the following section of the website Chinese posters.net, which discusses Lu Xun and the reception of his work in China:  
<https://chinese posters.net/themes/luxun.php>
- Lu Xun, “A Madman’s Diary”

### **February 10\***

- “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan”
- William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997 [1966]), Chapter 3: Eating Bitterness, 37-45.

### **February 12**

- Karl 35-72
- For today’s class, you will complete a worksheet that will familiarize you with some of the resources of Dana Library and the Rutgers University Libraries website.

## **Communist Revolution (late 1940s-1950s)**

### **February 17\***

- Karl 73-97
- “The Marriage Law of the People’s Republic of China”

### **February 19\***

- **[RUL]:** Frank Dikötter, “Crime and Punishment in Post-Liberation China: The Prisoners of a Beijing Gaol in the 1950s.” *The China Quarterly*, No. 149 (1997), pp. 147-159.
- Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Chapter 10: Germ Warfare and Patriotic *Weisheng*, pp. 285-299.

### **February 24\***

- Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of “Brainwashing” in China* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989 [originally published 1961]), 3-7, 473-484.
- **Paper #1 Due**

### **February 26\***

- Thomas S. Mullaney, *The Chinese Typewriter: A History* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2017). Chapter 7: The Typing Rebellion, pp. 283-313.
- “A Reader’s Complaint (Anonymous)” (1965)

### **March 2\***

- Karl 99-116
- “Peng Dehuai’s Letter To Chairman Mao, July 14, 1959”

## **Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)**

### **March 4\***

- Karl 117-138
- Yao Wen-yuan, “On the New Historical Play *Dismissal of Hai Ju*”

### **March 9\***

- “Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”
- “Declaration of the Congress of the Red Guards”

### **March 11\***

- Karl 139-158
- “The Lost Generation”

### **March 16<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup>** **No Class (Spring Recess)**

### **March 23**

- Karl 159-184
- For today’s class, you will complete a worksheet that will familiarize you with some of the resources of Dana Library and the Rutgers University Libraries website.

## **Deng Xiaoping’s “Reform and Opening Up” (1978 – 1990s)**

### **March 25\***

- Indictment of “Lin Biao and Jiang Qing counter-revolutionary cliques” (1980)

### **March 30\***

- “Tables and Figures on Trends and Developments”
- **Paper #2 Due**

#### **April 1\***

- “Crime and Punishment in China: Trial of Wang Yungtai,” *New York Times*, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1979
- **[RUL]:** “The Basic Character of Crime in Contemporary China” (late 1980s), translated by Michael Dutton, *The China Quarterly*, No. 149 (1997), pp. 160-177

#### **April 6\***

- “CIA Directorate of Intelligence Report, *China: Potential for Political Crisis*, February 9, 1989”
- U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency reports on Tiananmen Square crackdown

#### **April 8\***

- Deng Xiaoping, “Address To Officers At the Rank of General and Above In Command of the Troops Enforcing Martial Law In Beijing” (1989)
- “Main Points of Deng Xiaoping’s Talks in Shenzhen” (1992)

### **Post-Deng China (1990s – Present)**

#### **April 13\***

- Evan Osnos, “Born Red,” *The New Yorker*, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

#### **April 15\***

- **[RUL]:** Jianhong Liu and Bin Liang, “A Case Study of Chinese Netizens’ Opinions on Capital Punishment: Diversity, Rationale, and Interaction.” *Modern China* (2018), Advance Publication (27 pages)

#### **OR**

- **[RUL]:** Guangzhi Huang, “Policing Blacks in Guangzhou: How Public Security Constructs Africans as *Sanfei*.” *Modern China* 45, no. 2 (2019): 171–200

#### **April 20\***

- Leta Hong Fincher, “China’s ‘Leftover’ Women,” *New York Times*, Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- Leta Hong Fincher, “China Is Attempting To Muzzle #MeToo,” NPR, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Available at the following link:  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/01/582167268/china-is-attempting-to-muzzle-metoo>

**April 22\***

- Arif Dirlik, “Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism and the Reinvention of Confucianism,” *boundary 2* 22, no. 3 (1995): 229-73 (Focus mainly on 229-242).

**April 27**

- Start reading Ma Boyong, “The City of Silence” (2005)

**April 29\***

- Finish reading “The City of Silence” by today’s class

**May 4**

- Ross Anderson, “What Happens If China Makes First Contact?” *The Atlantic*, December 2017. Available at the following link:  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/12/what-happens-if-china-makes-first-contact/544131/>

**Paper #3 Due Date TBA**