

Perspectives in History: China's Revolution

Spring 2018
21:510:316

Monday, 6:00–9:00 pm
Conklin Hall 348

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1. Course Description

China's modern transformation into a rising superpower has been one of the most consequential developments of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Contemporary 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 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. These policies also created conditions for the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989 and the government's violent crackdown on this movement.

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 Each of these moments also left behind traces in the form of a wide variety of historical documents.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, Chinese and foreign intelligence reports, and even works of fiction. We will use the tools of the historian to access 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

Specifically, 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, but 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 – 10%
Primary source analyses (8) – 40%
Papers (3) – 45%
Library resources worksheet – 5%

Class participation (10%). Students are expected to read the assigned texts before the class (by the date indicated on the syllabus). Simple attendance in class is not factored into the participation grade – students are required 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. Students must print out the primary source readings (indicated on the syllabus with this symbol: *) from Blackboard for each session and bring them to class. I will be checking

whether students have brought the readings to class and include that in the participation grade.

Primary source analyses (40%). Over the semester, you will submit eight written analyses of the week's primary source readings. This will involve filling out a short 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 analyses will involve and how they will be graded.

Papers (45% total). 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.

Library resources worksheet (5%). You will complete a worksheet that is 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 it will be graded.

Grading Rubric for Assignments:

- A: Outstanding
- A-: Outstanding, with one or two areas of improvement
- B+: Very good
- B: Good
- B-: Good overall, with some significant weaknesses
- C+: Satisfactory, with some potential for improvement
- C: Satisfactory, but needs significant development
- C-: Barely satisfactory
- D: Poor: overwhelming flaws
- F: Failing: doesn't complete assignment

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 not on Blackboard.

You will be required to read portions of the following book for class assignments:

Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*. Third Edition. New York: Norton, 2013. ISBN: 9780393934519. Note: This book has several editions. For this class we are going to be using the Third Edition (2013), which is different from earlier editions in its contents and page numbering.

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

1. Class Rules: 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.

2. Attendance policy: Attendance is required. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes.

Excused vs. Unexcused absences: The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog (http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_current/pg627.html) states: "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." If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. If you arrive late, after I have taken attendance, I will give you half credit for being in class. This means that two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit for this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F.

3. Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability

services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

For more information please contact Kate Torres at (973) 353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

4. 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 which 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.

6. Schedule

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

- Introduction / overview of class

Communist Revolution (late 1940s-1950s)

January 29

- “Chen Duxiu’s editorial in New Youth, 1915” (2 pages)*
- “Memoranda by Foreign Service Officers in China, 1943-1945” (12 pages)*
- William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997 [1966]), Chapter 3: Eating Bitterness, pp. 37-45.*

February 5

- 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 [RUL].
- 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. **Note:** Take notes on these two readings (Dikötter and Rogaski) and be prepared to discuss in class.
- “A Reader’s Complaint (Anonymous)” (1965) (2 pages)*

February 12

- Liao Yiwu, “The Corpse Walkers,” in *The Corpse Walker: Real-Life Stories, China from the Bottom Up* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2008), 28-39.*
- “The Marriage Law of the People’s Republic of China” (3 pages)*
- Propaganda posters from 1950s China: Campaigns, 1949 – 1965 (<https://chineseposters.net/themes/index.php>)*

February 19

- Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People” (1957) (5 pages)*
- “Peng Dehuai’s Letter To Chairman Mao, July 14, 1959” (2 pages)*
- Thomas S. Mullaney, *The Chinese Typewriter: A History* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2017). Chapter 7: The Typing Rebellion, pp. 283-313. **Note:** Take notes on this reading and be prepared to discuss in class.

February 26

- Instead of doing readings 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.
- Work on Paper #1

Paper #1 due at noon on Friday March 2nd

Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

March 5

- Yao Wen-yuan, "On the New Historical Play *Dismissal of Hai Ju*" (1965) (5 pages)*
- "Summary of the Forum on the Work in Literature and Art in the Armed Forces" (1966) (8 pages)*
- "Forward to the Second Edition of *Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse-tung*" (1966) and excerpts (12 pages)*

March 12

No Class (Spring Recess)

March 19

- "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (1966) (11 pages)*
- "Declaration of the Congress of the Red Guards" (1967) (5 pages)*
- Nicolai Volland, "Clandestine Cosmopolitanism: Foreign Literature in the People's Republic of China, 1957-1977." *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 76 , No. 1 (February) 2017: 185-210 **[RUL] Note:** Take notes on this reading and be prepared to discuss in class.

March 26

- Alexander C. Cook, *The Cultural Revolution on Trial: Mao and the Gang of Four* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). Chapter 1: Indictment, pp. 35-77. **Note:** Take notes on this reading and be prepared to discuss in class.
- "The Lost Generation" (1980s) (10 pages)*

Deng Xiaoping's "Reform and Opening Up" (1978)

April 2

- "Tables and Figures on Trends and Developments" (15 pages)*
- Work on Paper #2

Paper #2 due at noon on Friday April 6th

April 9

- "The Basic Character of Crime in Contemporary China" (late 1980s), translated by Michael Dutton, *The China Quarterly*, No. 149 (1997), pp. 160-177 [RUL]*
- "CIA Directorate of Intelligence Report, *China: Potential for Political Crisis*, February 9, 1989" (10 pages)*

April 16

- Watch excerpts from the documentary *Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1995). Take notes while you are watching and be prepared to discuss in class.
- U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency reports on Tiananmen Square crackdown (10 pages)*

April 23

- Deng Xiaoping, "Address To Officers At the Rank of General and Above In Command of the Troops Enforcing Martial Law In Beijing" (1989) (4 pages)*
- Start reading excerpts from Chan Koonchung, *The Fat Years* (2009). Take notes while you are reading.

April 30

- Finish reading excerpts from Chan Koonchung, *The Fat Years* (2009). Take notes while you are reading and be prepared to discuss in class.

Paper #3 due date: TBA