HISTORY 4242 / 6242 SYLLABUS

China’s Encounter With Modernity

Spring 2016

10:10 am - 12:05 pm Wednesdays

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Office hours: Thursday 4:15-5:15pm and by appointment

DESCRIPTION

This course explores the processes and paradoxes of China’s engagement with the modern world from the late Qing dynasty to the early years of Communist rule, with a particular focus on the Republican era, which lasted from 1912 to 1949. This period witnessed epochal changes in Chinese society and culture, ranging from the adoption of republican government and expansion of print culture to the promotion of women’s rights and explosion of nationalism. Taken together, these and other changes can be said to signify the emergence of Chinese modernity. Yet what exactly do we mean by the term “modernity”? And what makes modern China “modern”? This class will seek to answer these questions by examining in detail the concrete developments that were occurring in different spheres of Chinese society in the early twentieth century and how these developments impacted the lives of individual Chinese, while also critically engaging the rich variety of ways that scholars have utilized the concept of modernity to understand and analyze them. In the process, we will learn to be alert to such issues as the potentially hegemonic aspects of “modernity” as a conceptual category, the ways in which modernity both integrates and transforms previously existing sociocultural patterns, and the inherent tension between the universalizing pretensions of modernity and the stubborn persistence of cultural particularism.

REQUIREMENTS

The following elements will determine your grade in this course:

Participation (20%)—Since this is a seminar course, your active participation is vital to making it a success, both for yourself and others. Therefore, it is expected that you will come to class having done the reading and that you will be ready to engage in discussion and interact with other students on this material. In addition, each student will be required to lead discussion once during the semester, which will involve giving a general overview of the week’s readings at the beginning of class and then posing several questions to guide class discussion.

Response essays (25%)—Each week you will need to write a short response essay (1 to 2 pages double spaced) that will answer one or more questions provided in advance that are related to the readings. Full credit will require that you refer to the readings in answering these questions. You may choose to skip writing a response essay once during the course of the semester. Response essays will be due electronically by 11:59pm on the Monday before class.

Book review (15%)—Choose a book to review (4 to 5 pages double spaced) from the list that I will provide you. Your review should describe the structure of the book and summarize its main arguments. However, its primary focus should be on analyzing and critiquing how the book deploys and/or engages the concept of modernity in its account of Chinese history.
Analytical essay (35%)—Choose two or three major aspects of modernity discussed in the course and write an analytical essay (8 to 10 pages double spaced) that explores the interconnections and tensions between them in the context of Republican Chinese history. Include reflections on what makes Chinese modernity “Chinese” and also on how useful modernity is as a conceptual rubric for understanding early twentieth century China. It is strongly recommended that you come to see me during office hours to discuss your essay before it is due. This assignment is to be handed in on the last day of class.

NOTE: Graduate students will not be required to write an analytical essay, but will instead do a final research paper (15 to 20 pages double spaced).

Presentation (5%)—Give a ten-minute talk on the last day of class that summarizes the contents of your analytical essay or research paper and be prepared to engage with comments and questions from your fellow students.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Students enrolled in this course are expected to follow the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted to fulfill the requirements of this course must be the student’s own. For details on the Code of Academic Integrity, please go to:
http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/AcadInteg/code.html.

SCHEDULE

Class One—January 27  Introduction: Surveying Modernity
Required readings:


February 1  Response Essay 1 due by 11:59pm

Class Two—February 3  State Building and Bureaucracy
Required readings:


Additional suggestions:

February 8  
**Response Essay 2 due by 11:59pm**

Class Three—February 10  
**Nation and Nationalism**

Required readings:
• Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). Read Chapter One, “Identity Crisis in Post-Imperial China.”

Additional suggestions:
February 15 | Response Essay 3 due by 11:59pm

Class Four—February 17 | Public Sphere and Print Culture

Required readings:
- Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: “Shibao” and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). Read “Introduction: The Significance of the New Middle Realm.”

Additional suggestions:

February 22 | Response Essay 4 due by 11:59pm

Class Five—February 24 | Democracy and Autocracy

Required readings:

Additional suggestions:

**February 29**

**Response Essay 5 due by 11:59pm**

**Class Six—March 2**

**Law and the Prison**

**Required readings:**

**Additional suggestions:**
• Alison Conner, “Lawyers and the Legal Profession During the Republican Period,” in *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).
• Sheping Hua, “Shen Jiaben and the Late Qing Legal Reform (1901-1911),” *East Asia* 30:2 (June 2013): 121-138.

**March 7**

**Response Essay 6 due by 11:59pm**

**Class Seven—March 9**

**Governmentality and Urban Society**

**Required readings:**

Additional suggestions:
• Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Identities and Networks in Shanghai, 1853-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

**March 14**
**Response Essay 7 due by 11:59pm**

**Class Eight—March 16**
**Capitalism and Industry**

Required readings:
• Wellington Chan, *Merchants, Mandarins, and Modern Enterprise in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge: East Asia Center, Harvard University, 1977). Read Chapter Four, “From Merchant to Bureaucratic Management.”
• Elisabeth Koll, *From Cotton Mill to Business Empire: The Emergence of Regional Enterprises in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003). Read Chapter One, “Regional Enterprise and the Corporation as a Concept.”

Additional suggestions:

**SATURDAY, MARCH 19—BOOK REVIEW DUE BY 11:59 PM**
March 21  

Response Essay 8 due by 11:59pm

Class Nine—March 23  

Commerce and Consumerism

Required readings:

- Wellington Chan, “Premier Department Stores on Nanjing Road, 1917-1937,” in *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999).

Additional suggestions:


SPRING BREAK

April 4  

Response Essay 9 due by 11:59pm

Class Ten—April 6  

Peasants and Rural Modernity

Required readings:


Additional suggestions:


April 11

Response Essay 10 due by 11:59pm

Class Eleven—April 13

Gender and Family

Required readings:


Additional suggestions:


• Helen Schneider, *Keeping the Nation’s House: Domestic Management and the Making of Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).


April 18

Response Essay 11 due by 11:59pm

Class Twelve—April 20

Science and Scientism

Required readings:


Additional suggestions:
• Grace Shen, Unearthing the Nation: Modern Geology and Nationalism in Republican China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

April 25 Response Essay 12 due by 11:59pm

Class Thirteen—April 27 Religion and Secularism

Required readings:
• Vicent Goosaert, The Religious Question in Modern China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Read Ch. 3, "Model Religions for a Modern China: Christianity, Buddhism, and Religious Citizenship."

Additional suggestions:
• Ryan Dunch, Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
• Don Pittman, Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu’s Reforms (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).
• Xun Liu, Daoist Modern: Innovation, Lay Practice, and the Community of Inner Alchemy in Republican Shanghai (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

May 2 Response Essay 13 due by 11:59pm

Class Fourteen—May 4 Medicine and Hygiene

Required readings:


Additional suggestions:


May 9

**ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE BY 11:59PM**

Class Fifteen—May 11

**Conclusion: Student Presentations**