

HIS-275-01, China's Revolutions: History and Historiography
Fall 2015, MW, 8:30-9:50am
ARH 227

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

China's 20th-century revolutions provide historians with an introduction to how modern nation-states have been formed amidst the encounter between industrial modernity and pre-industrial agrarian empires. In this class we will engage in close reading of primary sources to understand how the revolutionary process took place from the perspective of contemporary participants and observers, using what we learn from these documents to assess the conclusions of other historians. In addition, we will compare successive generations of scholarship to examine how the writing of history about China's revolutions—that is to say, the *historiography* of modern China—has changed over time.

Some of the key themes addressed in this course will include:

- The forces which pushed forward China's revolutionary process;
- How successive visions of revolution were implemented, politically, economically, culturally, and socially;
- The limitations which revolution encountered, and the inequalities which persisted in spite of (or, in some cases, as a result of) the particular forms of revolutionary state-making espoused by China's modern leaders;
- Other, related aspects of China's modern history which have received significant attention from contemporary historians.

Ultimately, the goal of this course is not solely to impart knowledge concerning China's revolutions (what educators would call a "content" goal) but also build skills in the following areas as part of a larger, evidence-driven agenda:

- Understanding and testing of big themes, often derived from social science and historiographical literature (e.g. revolution, state-society relations, imperialism, etc.), within a specific global and/or historical context;
- Effective reading and writing which allows you to engage constructively and critically with existing interpretations in a scholarly field;
- The ability to situate historical arguments, and evidence, within a broader spatial framework;
- Understanding of political events and micro-processes in relationship to long-term demographic and secular trends;
- Sensing where the fallacies of historical argument may lie;
- Confidence participating in an intellectually open-ended and inquiry-based environment.

Our general strategy will thus be to integrate all aspects of the course into the classroom through discussion, peer workshopping of writing, and other in-class exercises. This approach requires significant out-of-class preparation, and as a result participation and engagement will be significant components of how your performance in the course is evaluated.

COURSE TEXTS

John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution, 1800-1985* (HarperPerennial, 1987)

Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China Before Mao* (University of California Press, 2008)

Andrew G. Walder, *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Harvard University Press, 2015)

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, China, and Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 1979)

In addition, many readings intended to complement these texts will be posted on PWeb. You are expected to have access to these readings during each class session for which they will be covered

**NOTE: All readings and assignments indicated on the syllabus are to be completed by the class meeting indicated. An emailed reading guide for each week will be circulated in advance (usually by the end of the previous Thursday) to aid you in negotiating the reading and other upcoming assignments; provide additional resources; and clarify points made during previous class meetings. In general:

I. For **primary sources** (texts produced during the period under investigation, i.e. pieces of the historical record):

- 1) What was the writer's intent in creating that text?
- 2) Who or what is the subject of the piece? Whom does the author claim to represent or speak for?
- 3) Who was the intended audience? How does the author attempt to connect with that audience?
- 4) What kind of story is the author trying to tell, and how does he/she structure that narrative? What argument does the author seek to advance? Which passage best exemplifies the underlying point of the piece?
- 5) What rationale or evidence does the author employ to make his/her case? Which elements of the story are factual, and which are subject to interpretation?
- 6) What was the larger historical context in which the author was working?
- 7) What kind of background or bias shaped the author's message?

(Note: if any of above questions cannot be answered by the text itself, or if any textual references are unclear, do a little online digging!)

II. For **secondary sources** (historians' analyses of the past):

- 1) What question is the writer posing?
- 2) How does the author answer that question? Which sentence(s) best state the writer's overall argument?

- 3) What other interpretation(s) does the author appear to be arguing against?
- 4) How does the author develop the argument throughout the piece? What are the sub-arguments that bolster the main argument? What kind of story is the author trying to tell?
- 5) How does the author use evidence to prove the argument? (Note: you need to read footnotes in order to answer that question!)

You may be called upon to provide answers to any/all questions that apply on a given day, and to support your answers with specific points in the text.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week One

[No class meeting scheduled]

1. China's Revolutions: The Fairbank-ian Perspective

Week Two: The Old Order; Theories of Revolution

MONDAY, AUG. 31

[Handout, "An Introduction to China's Modern History"]

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 2

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 1-45

[Geography exercise]

Week Three: The Transformation of Late Imperial China

MONDAY, SEPT. 7

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 46-121
- Excerpts from: Sun Yat-sen, [Letter to Li Hongzhang] (1894); "The Manifesto of the Tongmeng Hui" (1905), in Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank et al., eds., *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 223-229 [PWeb]

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 125-163
- Liang Qichao, "The Renovation of the People" (1902), in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 220-223 [PWeb]
- [Press Coverage of the Wuchang Uprising] (1911); "The Nineteen Articles" (November 3, 1911); "Edict of Abdication" (February 12, 1912), in Cheng and Lestz, *The Search for Modern China*, pp. 206-213 [PWeb].

[Discussion of Fairbank paper assignment]

Week Four:

MONDAY, SEPT. 14

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 167-216
- Excerpts from: Sun Yat-sen, [Theory of Knowledge and Action] (1919) and [Adoption of the Russian Party System] (1923); Liang Qichao, [Review of China's Progress, 1873-1919] (1922), in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 258-274 [PWeb]
- "Manifesto of the First National Congress of the Kuomintang" (January 30, 1924); excerpts from Dai Qitao, *The National Revolution and the Chinese Kuomintang* (1925) and *The Road for Youth* (1928), in Gentzler, *Changing China*, pp. 193-205 [PWeb]

[Film and discussion, *China: A Century in Revolution*]

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 217-269
- Sections: "Democracy and Absolutism: The Debate Over Political Tutelage" and "Chiang Kai shek: Nationalism and Traditionalism," in Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Sources of East Asian Tradition, Volume Two: The Modern Period* (Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 688-698 [PWeb]

[Film and discussion, *China: A Century in Revolution*]

Week Five:

MONDAY, SEPT. 21

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 273-315
- Mao Zedong, "The Dictatorship of the People's Democracy": On Learning to One Side (1949), *Asia for Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/mao_zedong_leaning.pdf
- "Mao Zedong on War and Revolution," *Asia for Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1900_mao_war.htm

[Fairbank paper workshop]

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 23

- Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*, 316-368

[Film and discussion, *China: A Century in Revolution*]

**Due Friday: Paper, "China's Revolution in History and the Historical Record"

2. The Republican Era Revisited

Week Six: The State

MONDAY, SEPT. 28

- Dikötter, *The Age of Openness*, 1-52

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 30

- Robert E. Bedeski, "The Tutelary State and National Revolution in Kuomintang Ideology, 1928-1931," *The China Quarterly*, No. 46 (Apr - Jun, 1971), pp. 308-330 [JSTOR]
- "Reactions Toward Propaganda Campaigns," in Sherman Cochran and Andrew C. K. Hsieh (with Janis Cochran), *One Day in China: May 21, 1936* (Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 76-92

Week Seven: Urban Culture

MONDAY, OCT. 5

- Dikötter, *The Age of Openness*, 53-102

[Discussion of Republican China historiography paper assignment]

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7

- David Strand, "A High Place Is No Better Than a Low Place': The City in the Making of Modern China," in Wen-Hsin Yeh, ed., *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (University of California Press, 2000), pp. 98-136 [PWeb]

[Discussion, *Ling Long Women's Magazine*]

Week Eight: China and the World

MONDAY, OCT. 12

- William C. Kirby, "The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations at Home and Abroad in the Republican Era," *The China Quarterly*, No. 150 (June 1997), pp. 433-458 [JSTOR]

[Republican China historiography paper workshop]

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14

- Zou Taofen, "Alabama: Reds and Blacks" (1935) and Lin Yutang, "Impressions on Reaching America" (1936)," in R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee, eds., *Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (University of California Press, 1989), pp. 151-163 [PWeb]

**Due Friday: "Historiography of China's Republican Era"

****FALL BREAK, Oct. 19-23****

3. The Communist Revolution Revisited

Week Nine: Early Chinese Communism

MONDAY, OCT. 26

- Laszlo Ladany, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism 1921-1985: A Self Portrait* (Hoover Institution Press, 1988), pp. 1-50 [PWeb]
- Howard L. Boorman, "Introduction: Chinese Leaders and Chinese Politics," in Chun-tu Hsueh, ed., *Revolutionary Leaders of Modern China* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. xiii-xxiii.
- Mao Zedong, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (February, 1927), in Conrad Brandt, Benjamin Schwartz, and John K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (Atheneum, 1966 [1952]), pp. 77-89 [PWeb]

[Timeline of Chinese Communist revolution]

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 28

- Jieli Li, "Geopolitics of the Communist Party in the Twentieth Century," *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter, 1993), pp. 315-333 [JSTOR]
- Feng Chongyi and David S. G. Goodman, "Introduction: Explaining Revolution," in Feng and Goodman, eds., *North China at War: The Social Ecology of Revolution, 1937-1945* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp. xi-xiv, 1-23 [PWeb]

[Geography of Chinese Communist revolution]

Week Ten: Maoism and Stalinism

MONDAY, NOV. 2

- Walder, *China Under Mao*, 1-39
- Excerpts from: Liu Shaoqi, "On the Training of a Communist Party Member," (August 7, 1939); "Decision of the CC [Central Committee] on the Work of Penetrating the Masses" (November 1, 1939); Mao Zedong, "Correcting Unorthodox Tendencies in Learning, the Party, and Literature and Art" (February 1, 1942), in Brandt, Schwartz, and Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, pp. 337-344, 346-349, 375-392 [Pweb]

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4

- Walder, *China Under Mao*, 40-81
- Chen Yung-fa, "Suspect History and the Mass Line: Another 'Yan'an Way'," in Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N. Lipman, and Randall Stross, eds., *Remapping China: Fissures in the Historical Terrain* (Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 242-257 [PWeb]

[Discussion of Communist revolution historiography paper assignment]

Week Eleven: High Socialism – A Civilization and Its Discontents

MONDAY, NOV. 9

- Walder, *China Under Mao*, pp. 82-151
- “Intellectual Opinions from the Hundred Flowers Period” (1957), *Asia for Educators* website, <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/1950.htm#literature>

[Film and discussion, title TBA]

**Note: on Monday evening there will be a special event featuring writer Xu Xing which will consist of a film screening and conversation with the director.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11

- Walder, *China Under Mao*, pp. 152-199
- “The Commune System,” *Asia for Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_commune.htm

Week Twelve: The Cultural Revolution and After

MONDAY, NOV. 16

- Walder, *China Under Mao*, pp. 200-286
- *Morning Sun* website and film, sections TBA

[Communist revolution historiography paper workshop]

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18

- Walder, *China Under Mao*, pp. 287-344
- Wei Jingsheng, “The Fifth Modernization: Democracy” (1978), *Asia for Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/wei_jingsheng_fifth_modernization.pdf
- Deng Xiaoping, “Uphold the Four Basic Principles” (1979), *Asia for Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/deng_xiaoping_uphold_principles.pdf
- Deng Xiaoping, “The Present Situation and the Tasks Before Us” (1980), *Asia for Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/deng_xiaoping_present_situation.pdf

**Due Friday: paper, “Historiography of China’s Communist Revolution”

3. Theorizing China’s Revolutions

Week Thirteen: Theories of Social Revolution

MONDAY, NOV. 23

- Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 1-43
- Kathleen Hartford and Steven M. Goldstein, “Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution,” in Hartford and Goldstein, eds., *Single Sparks: China’s Rural Revolutions* (M. E. Sharpe, 1989), pp. 3-33 [PWeb]

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25

- Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 47-111

- Lloyd Eastman, *Family Fields, and Ancestors*, Ch. 5, "The Agricultural Sector in the Early Twentieth Century: The Problem of 'Peasant Immiseration'" (Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 80-100 [PWeb]
- "Issues and Trends in China's Demographic History," *Asia For Educators* website, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_population.htm

Week Fourteen: Beyond Social Revolution Theory

MONDAY, NOV. 30

- Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 112-118, 147-157
- A. James Gregor, *A Place in the Sun: Marxism and Fascism in China's Long Revolution* (Westview, 2000), Ch. 1, "On Understanding the Twentieth Century," pp. 1-23 [PWeb]

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2

- Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 161-173, 236-293

Week Fifteen: Presentations

MONDAY, DEC. 7

[Presentations]

**Due Monday: paper draft, "Defining and Explaining 'Revolution' in Modern China"

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9

[Presentations]

****EXAM WEEK, DEC. 14-18****

**Revised paper, "Defining and Explaining 'Revolution' in China," due by
Friday, 5pm, 12/18/2015**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Contribution to class discussions (25%)

Although class days will also include some short lectures and group work, the vast majority of our time together will be devoted to collective discussion. History happens in dialogue; therefore, I really do evaluate class participation. If you do not participate regularly and substantively, you will receive a significantly lower grade for the course. Note that this mode of evaluation assigns more worth to the quality than the quantity of your participation each day; offering one thoughtful, helpful, and well-substantiated comment will earn you more points than dominating the discussion with unfounded or tangential observations. Absences will be excused for personal issues, health issues, or extracurricular commitments if/when accompanied by documentation from the appropriate office. Late arrivals, early departures, and leaving the room during class time are disruptive and will be duly noted when calculating your participation. To prepare for discussion, you should

engage in two levels of inquiry with the reading. The first is to understand what the texts are saying. To that end, you should come to class prepared to address the discussion questions concerning each assigned text, including marking where in the text you see these elements at work:

I do understand that speaking up in class is difficult for some people. As in honing any critical skill, contribution to group discussions requires strategy, practice, and feedback. The above requirements are designed to help you become more adept and more comfortable with posing and answering questions and responding to others' ideas. I will provide additional written opportunities for feedback flowing from you to me as well.

What is meant by participation? Demonstration of thorough presentation for class meetings. Active participation in all group assignments. Thoughtful engagement with the ideas of classmates.

Papers (70% total)

Paper length is approximately 5-6 pages exclusive of references. You will be given opportunities to draft, workshop, and revise your work prior to submission.

- First paper, "China's Revolution in History and the Historical Record," 15%
- Second paper, "The Historiography of China's Republican Era," 15%
- Third paper, "The Historiography of China's Communist Revolution," 20%
- Final paper, "Defining and Explaining 'Revolution' in Modern China, 20%

End-of-Semester Presentation (5%)

These short, group presentations (approximately 15-20 minutes total) will give you the opportunity to collaborate with classmates on developing your own explanation of China's revolutionary process. What has revolution meant to participants and to historians? Do these attempts to understand and frame revolution effectively account for the wide range of observable interactions that revolution seems to entail?