

## **HMMA 5005 Modern Chinese History**

Spring 2023

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Office hours: Wednesday 4:30-6:30 pm, Saturday 4-5 pm, or by appointment

Although its title looks familiar, this course will likely surprise you by providing you with a very different view of modern Chinese history from a rather unconventional perspective. This course aims at exploring the political and social history of late imperial and modern China from the 1800s to early 1940s. A selection of important political events and social phenomena are examined to broaden our knowledge of the late-Qing and Republican politics, society, culture and economy as well as revealing the complexity of historical reality in this period. We'll look at why historical events or famous persons were/are described in specific ways in history textbooks, and what are the problems with that in terms of our understanding of historical truth?

ILOs: To understand critically the post-modernist discourse of historical narrative; deconstruct the different historiographical traditions in official Chinese history in late-imperial and modern period; understand how political persuasions are implanted into official/semi-official narratives of modern historical events (such as the Opium War, Taiping Movement, Western invasion of China, warlords, the emergence of Chinese nationalism, developments during the Nanjing Decade, the penetration of the Communist Party of China in rural hinterland, etc.) and characters (such as Lin Zexu, Hong Xiuquan, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, ordinary Chinese women, etc.) through in-depth analysis of those late-Qing and Republican-time episodes and personalities presented in Chinese history textbooks and movies; learn the skills of presenting one's arguments in academic debate and the techniques of writing a history paper properly.

### **Assessment**

- 1) Attendance: 10%
- 2) Participation in class discussion (and/or assignment): 40%
- 3) Term-end project or examination: 50%

Depending on the progress of your performance in class discussion, students maybe required to submit one piece of written assignment on one of the issues covered in this course. All details will be finalized by mid March.

## **Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Class is held weekly and it is the occasions on which you are required to explain your views on historical issues and to exchange ideas with me and your course mates. Its success, therefore, largely depends on your active participation in discussion. Your attendance to class, therefore, is mandatory; absence must be supported by medical proof or other written documents. Before coming to a class, you are expected to have read all the assigned readings, consulted other relevant materials, and come up with thought-provoking ideas or questions to share with me and your course-mates. Students must prepare to engage in discussion with the instructor and the course mates throughout the course.

Readings must be kept up with because they will help you understand the selected topics in greater details; in-class discussion is also based primarily on these reading materials. Optional readings are not compulsory, but they can help you understand a specific topic in greater details. You are strongly advised to read all the required reading before coming to class. Your active participation in classroom discussion is expected and will be graded.

Some suggestions on how to read your required readings:

- 1) Be critical when reading the required texts. Try to identify problems in your readings and try to provide your views on those problems, and to give suggestions on how to improve it. Pay attention to the kinds of sources an author used; the goodness and the limitations of those sources, and their methodological problems. Also try to learn how to write a proper historical essay by following the samples of readings you consult in this course, such as how to make citation and footnote properly, how to put forward a historical argument coherently with substantial examples, etc.
- 2) Try to look into an historical issue from a broader perspective, i.e. don't just narrow yourself to the reading of a specific week. Materials in other weeks, and even from other courses, can be very useful and should be consulted widely.
- 3) Go to the library to search for other relevant materials. The required readings listed on this course outline are far from exhaustive.

## **Classroom (Face-to-face) Etiquettes**

1. Refrain from using electronic devices such as laptop, phone, tablet computer, camera, voice recorder, in lecture.
2. Do not leave the lecture room early, or do not arrive late; if it is something important and you need to leave early, or to arrive late, alert me before the class starts.
3. Attendance is mandatory. Two points will be deducted on each unapproved absence.

## Topics and Schedule

1. The class schedule below is for reference only. Actual flow of the course is dependent on the class composition and other pedagogical factors and needs.
2. The amount of readings listed below will be adjusted realistically according to your needs.

### Week 1: Organizing the course, and, What is History?

Readings: E.H. Carr's What is History, chapters 1,2,5,6; Beverley Southgate, Why Bother with History, chapter 1; Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artefact"; Noël Carroll, "Interpretation, History, and Narrative"; G.R. Elton, The Practice of History, Part I.

SQ: What is history? Is it possible to write history objectively? Is there historical truth?

### Week 2: The Purposes of Writing History of Modern China

Readings: Paul Cohen, Discovering History in China, chapter 1; 錢穆, "中國史學之特點"; 梁啟超, "新史學", 第一章, 第二章; 陳立夫, "要為創造歷史而講歷史"; 戴逸, "序言";

SQ: Compare the different approaches to Chinese history writing with reference to the three sets of Chinese reading. How do their differences tell us about the historiographical traditions of pre-modern and modern China? How could we characterize traditional and modern Chinese historiography? What kinds of common problems do these historical narratives share? What possibly can be learnt, or avoided, from a Western-centric approach to China's history? How and why Chinese historiography is different from its modern European counterparts?

### Weeks 3-4: The Opium War: narratives and reality

Readings: 電影 "鴉片戰爭" 1958 and 1997 versions; Arthur Waley, Opium War Through Chinese Eyes, Parts 3 & 4; 黃敬華, 中國近代史常識, pp. 4-25; 茅海健, 天朝的崩潰, chapters 2, and pp. 293-324; Chang Hsin-pao, Commissioner Lin and the Opium War, chapters 1,2,3,7; Frederic Wakeman Jr., Strangers at the Gate, Part One.

SQ: What did you learn about “history as narrative” by studying the two Chinese movies on the Opium War? How did/do the force of Chinese nationalism and patriotism affect the writing/representation of the War? What was the nature of the War: a war of commerce, of cultural misunderstanding, or outright territorial aggression? What did you learn about Chinese cultures, society, and the common people of that time from this historical event?

### **Week 5: The Taiping Rebellion: narratives and reality**

Readings: Theodore Hamberg “The Visions of Hung-Siu-Tshuen, and the Origin of the Kwangsi Insurrection” (there is a Chinese version); 黃敬華, 中國近代史常識, pp. 26-56; Teng Tsu-yu, The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers, Part 1 & chapter 14; Mary Bernhardt, Rents, Taxes and Peasant Resistance, chapters 2 & 3; 羅爾崗, ‘天朝田畝制度的實施問題補考’

SQ: Why are CCP historians so determined to interpret the nature of the Taiping rebellion as “peasant revolution”? What are the problems with that view? What are missing from the CCP’s narrative of the Taiping movement, and how crucial are those missing information to our “objective” understanding of this historical episode?

### **Weeks 6-7: Foreign invasion and its impacts on China**

Readings: 吳圳義, 清末上十租界社會 chapters 2 & 4; 蔣介石, 中國之命運 pp. 122-8, 130-6; Rhoads Murphey, "Treaty Ports and China's Modernization"; Chao Kang, “The growth of a modern textile industry and the competition with handicrafts” in Dwight Perkins ed., China’s Modern Economy in Historical Perspective ; 粵海關十年報告 nos. 1 to 3.

SQ: How was China invaded and “dismembered”? Critically assess how China was suffered from the various forms of aggression (territorial, economic, social, cultural, etc.). Who were those “imperialists”? How did they differ from each other? How did the Qing and Republican governments respond to these challenges? Assess critically the social, cultural, economic, and political impact of imperialism on China during the late-Qing and early Republican period.

### **Weeks 8-9: Nationalism, the “Plight” and the “Liberation” of Chinese Women**

Readings: James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism”, in Jonathan Unger's *Chinese Nationalism* ; 陳東原, 中國婦女生活史, chapters 8, 9 and 10; Elisabeth Croll, Feminism

and Socialism in China, chapter 3; Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘, “The Chinese Women” in *The Spirit of the Chinese People* (Chinese translated; 楊步衛, 一個女人的自傳, (Taipei: 1967), Parts 1-2; Elizabeth Johnson, “Hakka Women”; 吳麗娥, 命運的雲沒有雨, pp.1-64; 廣州民國日報 (I), pp.1-6, 8-19, 22-3, 54-6; 風俗改革叢刊 (Canton: 1930), pp.49-84; Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han* (中譯本: 漢家女); Arthur Smith, *Village Life in China*, chapter 23 (中譯本: 中国乡村生活)

SQ: How are Chinese women’s life portrayed in Chen Dongyuan’s, Arthur Smith’s, and the other writings? What are the possible ideological reasons/motivations behind these narratives? How accurately are these descriptions of the plight of the Chinese women’s lives in the late-imperial and Republican period? How bad were lives of women in rural and urban China in this period? How did women’s fate change in the early twentieth century? Was May-fourth a true watershed in the “liberation” of Chinese women in modern China? How did/does nationalism affect our understanding of the past?

#### **Weeks 9-10: Sun Yat-sen and his historical significances**

Readings: 中國國民黨中央黨史資料, “總理史蹟簡編稿”; 黃敬華, 中國近代史常識, 第八章; Marie Bergere, Sun Yat-sen, chapters 2 to 6; Harold Schriffin, Sun Yat-sen and the origins of the Chinese Revolution.

SQ: Does Sun Yat-sen deserve to be regarded as “Father of the [Chinese] Nation”? Why Guomindang has been so eagerly promoting the cult of Sun Yat-sen? Identify and discuss the problems in the Chinese versions of Sun’s official biography. Contrast the representations of Sun in the CCP and the GMD historical writings in different periods in order to understand how political ideologies influenced historical writing.

#### **Week 11: Warlords and the Disintegration of China**

Readings: 張靜如, 北洋軍閥統治時期中國社會之變遷, pp.24-55, 141-187; “The Dog-Meat General”; Robert Kapp, “Chungking as a Center of Warlord Power, 1926-1937”; James E. Sheridan, Chinese Warlord; pp.74-107; Odoric Wou, Militarism in Modern China, chapters 7 & 9; John Fitzgerald, “One Nation, One State” and “One State, One Party” in Awakening China.

SQ: What and who were the warlords? Were there typical warlords? Assess warlords’ impact on modern China in terms of political culture, society, and the people’s condition of existence. What had actually happened in China during these years of civil war? How destructive were the wars fought among the warlords? To what extent was China’s problems of poverty and backwardness attributed to warlords?

## **Weeks 12 & 13: Rural China and Peasant revolutions**

### **Readings:**

(A) Fei Hsiao-tung, Peasant Life in China, chapters 2-8, 10-12, 15; Duara Prasenjit, Culture, Power and State in North China, chapters 4,6,8; 林耀華, 金翼, chapters 1-4, 6-?; Sulamith and Jack Potters, China's Peasants, chapter 1; Sidney Gamble, Ting Hsien, chapters 3,5, 10,13; Mary Bernhardt, Rents, Taxes and Peasant Resistance, pp.161-220; 古田縣七保村農村調查; 陳翰笙 article; 周谷城, 農村中貧富懸殊之風險

**SQ:** Explore the issue of exploitation in the countryside: how bad was it? How did the peasants survive under such exploitative and oppressive environment? How far could the state reach the local society, and in what ways?

(B) 廣東區委關於廣東農民運動報告, 廣民革命历史文件彙集 vol.6; 毛澤東, 湖南農民運動考察報告, Jack Belden, China Shakes the World, pp.174-185

**SQ:** Peasants' political consciousness? What had motivated the peasants to collective struggle against "exploitations"? The CCP strategy towards the peasantry: how and why was the policy changed, how did the party win (or conquer) the peasants' support?

## **Week 13: What did the Guomindang do to China?**

**Readings:** 王桧林, '国民党法西斯统治的加強.....'; James E. Sheridan, China in Disintegration, chapter VII; Lloyd E. Eastman, The Abortive Revolution, chapters 1, 2, 5, 7; Fei Hsiao-tung, Peasant Life in China, chapter 12; 朱羲農, "十年來之中國農業"; 羅敦衛, '十年來的工業'

**SQD:** Compare these readings and assess whether China's weaknesses between 1927 and 1937 was attributed mainly to the misrule of the Guomindang. Pick one Chinese city or village, and to assess its progress, or degeneration, in this decade.