

# HUMA 2640 Unofficial China: Social History 1800s-1930s

Fall 2024

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A survey of socio-cultural history of China from the 19th Century to the 1930s. This course surveys the socio-cultural history of China from the 19th century to the 1930s, with a focus on marginalized groups such as women, workers, peasants, beggars, and criminals. Through a critical analysis of popular culture, violence, crime, and everyday life, students will develop a deeper understanding of Chinese society during this transformative period. By examining both elite and non-elite perspectives, the course seeks to redress stereotypical representations of Chinese society and encourage critical historical analysis.

## Texts and Electronic Resources

No textbook is required. Articles, extracts from books and journals are used, and most of them are available on the Canvas site of this course. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to utilize supplementary (optional) reading materials which are relevant to this course. These readings are useful for developing broadening your knowledge on the topics covered in this course and enhancing your performance in classroom discussion and final examination.

With the university's approval, this course is not to be video-captured and hence no recording of lectures will be available.

### Assessment

Participation in tutorials and classroom discussions will contribute 50% to your overall grade, and the final research essay, based on one of the course topics, will count for 50%.

**Essay:** A final essay (1,800-2,500 words, excluding references and bibliography) is required on a topic of the student's choice, selected from the themes discussed in the course. Students are encouraged to use both primary and secondary sources.

Select a topic that aligns with the themes discussed in the course, such as violence, crime, gender roles, marginalized groups, or social transformations in late imperial and Republican China. You should tailor your topic to keep it manageable (for example, do not select "Chinese women" as a topic).

Submit your essay via the course's Canvas site in PDF or Word format. Please include your name, student ID, and essay title on the first page.

### Basic Guidelines

In the introduction:

- Clearly state your research question or hypothesis.
- Provide background information on your chosen topic.
- Outline the structure of your essay.

In the body of your paper:

- Summarize and critically evaluate relevant secondary sources. What have scholars said about your topic, and how does your research engage with or differ from existing literature?
- Develop your argument using both primary and secondary sources. Ensure that your analysis is focused, coherent, and supported by evidence.
- Depending on the topic, you may want to incorporate specific case studies to illustrate your points.

Your conclusion should:

- Summarize your main findings and arguments.
- Reflect on the implications of your research and suggest areas for further study.

### Sources

- Secondary Sources: Engage with at least three academic sources (books, journal articles) to provide context and support your argument.
- Primary Sources: Not compulsory. Use a variety of primary sources relevant to your topic, such as historical documents, newspaper articles, personal memoirs, government records, or visual materials.
- Citation Style: Use a consistent citation style (Chicago) for footnotes or in-text citations and bibliography.

As a general guide, you will find below a list of references that relate to the course topics. They are meant as backup reading to support your essay, but you can also entirely rely on other scholarly references of your own.

### List of References

Asen, Daniel S. *Death in Beijing: Murder and Forensic Science in Republican China*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Brook, Timothy, Jérôme Bourgon, and Gregory Blue. *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Chen, Janet Y. *Guilty of Indigence: The Urban Poor in China, 1900-1953*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.

*China's War on Smuggling: Law, Economic Life, and the Making of the Modern State, 1842-1965*. Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University Press, 2021.

Freedman, Maurice. *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*. London: Routledge, 2021.

Friedman, Edward, Paul Pickowicz, and Mark Selden. *Chinese Village, Socialist State*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Gamble, Sidney D. *Peking: A Social Survey*. Brill, 2011.

Henriot, Christian. *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai: A Social History 1849-1949*. Translated by Noel Castellino. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Hershatter, Gail. *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Hershatter, Gail. *Workers of Tianjin, 1900-1949*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Lipkin, Zvia. *Useless to the State: "Social Problems" and Social Engineering in Nationalist Nanjing, 1927-1937*. Harvard East Asian Monographs. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006.

Lu, Hanchao. *Street Criers: A Cultural History of Chinese Beggars*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Martin, Brian G. *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime, 1919-1937*. University of California Press, 1996.

Newark, Timothy. *Empire of Crime: Opium and the Rise of Organized Crime in the British Empire*. First Skyhorse Publishing edition. New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2018.

Smith, Arthur H. *Village Life in China*. Little, Brown Series in Anthropology. Boston: Little, Brown, 1970.

Sommer, Matthew Harvey. *Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China: Survival Strategies and Judicial Interventions*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016.

Spence, Jonathan. *The Death of Woman Wang*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.

*The Opium Business: A History of Crime and Capitalism in Maritime China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2022.

Wakeman, Jr, Frederic. *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937-1941*. Cambridge Studies in Chinese History, Literature, and Institutions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

上海文史研究館編著. 舊上海的烟賭娼. Chu ban. Xianggang: 中原出版社, 1989.

Martin, Brian G. 上海青幫. 第1版. Shanghai: 上海三联书店, 2002.

Wakeman, Frederic E. 上海歹土: 战时恐怖活动与城市犯罪, 1937-1941. Shanghai shi yan jiu yi cong. Shanghai: 上海古籍出版社, 2003.

Students will have the opportunity to lead one tutorial session in small groups, engaging with a specific week's topic and stimulating discussion among their peers. Tutorials are designed to reinforce the material covered in lectures through in-depth discussions of the weekly readings. The aim is to enhance critical thinking, provide space for debate, and allow students to explore their own interpretations of the historical material.

Attendance to tutorials is compulsory.

## Intended Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course, students will: 1) identify the major problems in our conventional wisdom on some of the selected topics of China social history covered in this course; 2) arrive at a better and deeper understanding of the Chinese society and culture in this period of modern China, and with that to formulate original viewpoints in this regard; 3) read historical materials critically with the basic skills taught in the course;

4) receive basic training in writing an academic paper on a history topic appropriately.

## Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Lectures are held once or twice weekly, depending on the tutorial schedule in a particular week.

Readings must be kept up with because they will help you understand the selected topics in greater details; discussion at tutorial sessions is also based primarily on these reading materials. Optional readings are not compulsory, but they can help you understand a specific topic more deeply. These materials can be also useful if you want to write a better essay (to be decided) in this course. You are strongly advised to read all the required reading before going to classes and, in particular, tutorials. Your active participation in tutorial discussion is expected and will be graded.

## Classroom Etiquettes (some of the)

1. Please refrain from using electronic devices such as laptop, phone, tablet computer, camera, voice recorder, in lecture. All forms of recording are strictly prohibited. Laptops may be used for notetaking during lectures, but please refrain from using them for other purposes such as social media.
2. Please do not leave the lecture room early; if it is something important and you need to leave early, please alert me before the class starts.

The class schedule below is *for reference only*. Actual flow of the course may vary, depending on the class composition, circumstances and other pedagogical factors and needs.

## Class Schedule

**11 September:** Organisation of the Course & What is "unofficial" history of China?

Optional readings:

Jim Sharpe's "History from Below", in Peter Burke ed., *New Perspectives in Historical Writings*.

中國近代史常識, '序言'

Discussion Questions: Give your impressions of modern China (from the Opium War to 1937). Try to identify problems in these narratives of modern Chinese history.

How are "the people" and "China" represented in these narratives? What do these texts tell us about the historical characteristics of the Chinese people? Identify problems of these images of the Chinese people.

## 13 September - Violence and Society

Introductory lecture

## 18 September No Class

### Week 2 - 20 September - Violence and Society

Readings: Harry Lamley, "Lineage Feuding in Southern Fujian and Eastern Guangdong Under Qing Rule"

Optional: 林語堂, '論宏大'; 鄭義, 紅色紀念碑; 魯彥

Discussion Questions: What functions did violence play in traditional Chinese culture and society? What do these descriptions of public violence tell us about the Chinese people, their society, and their country in the traditional and modern periods (approx. between the years 1800s and the 1930s)?

### Week 3 - 25 September - Violence and Society

Readings: 沈從文自傳, chapters 2-5, 9-11

Optional: 韋正通, "崇尚和平"

Discussion Questions: How was violence justified in public and private spheres? What insights can we gain from autobiographies about personal experiences of violence?

### Week 3 - 27 September - Crime and punishment

Readings: V.K.Y. Ho, "Butchering fish and execution of criminals: socio-cultural meanings of violence" in Aijmer & Abbink eds. *The Meanings of Violence*.

Asen, Daniel. "Suspicious Deaths and City Life in Republican Beijing", *Death in Beijing. Murder and Forensic Science in Republican China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), chapter 1, pp. 25-56

魯彥 '柚子'

Discussion Questions: How were murders treated under the law during the Qing dynasty and Republican era? What do case studies of murder reveal about the role of violence in Chinese society? How did gender, class, and local politics affect the outcomes of murder trials? How do the legal treatments of murder reflect broader societal values and anxieties?

## 2 October No Class

### Week 4 - 4 October - Women Lives

Readings: 陳東原, 中國婦女生活史, pp.221-291

Readings: Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han* (中譯本: 漢家女)

Optional: Arthur Smith, *Village Life in China*, chapter 23 (中譯本: 中國鄉村生活); 辜鴻銘, 中國人的精神.

Discussion Questions: How did patriarchal norms shape women's lives, and how did some women navigate or resist these structures?

### Week 5 - 9 October - Women Lives

Readings: Elizabeth Johnson's "Hakka Women"

Readings: 楊步衛, 一個女人的自傳, Parts 1-2;

Discussion Questions: In what ways did regional or class differences shape women's lives? How did individual women resist or adapt to social expectations?

## 11 October No Class

## 16 October Tutorial session

### Week 6 - 18 October - Women Lives

Readings: 吳麗娥, 命運的雲沒有雨, pp.1-64.

Readings: 廣州民國日報 (I), pp.1-6, 8-19, 22-3, 54-6.

Readings: Sommer, Matthew. "Making Sex Work. Polyandry as a Survival Strategy in Qing Dynasty China" in *Gender in Motion. Divisions of Labor and Cultural ( 270 FJ) in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Lanham:Rowman & Littlefield, 2005) pp. 29-54

Optional: Dong, Madeleine Yue. "Unofficial History and Gender Boundary Crossing in the Early Republic" in *Gender in Motion. Divisions of Labor and Cultural ( 270 FJ) in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Lanham:Rowman & Littlefield, 2005) pp. 169-187

### **Week 7 - 23 & 25 October - Prostitution**

Readings: 平襟亞, "舊上海的娼妓" in 舊上海的烟賭娼 (香港: 中原出版社, 1989), 239-267

Readings: Henriot, Christian. "From the High-class Brothels to Mass Sexuality: The Explosion of Common Prostitution from 1849 to 1949," *Prostitution and sexuality in Shanghai: a social history 1849-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 3 (pp. 75-98)

Readings: Sidney Gamble, *Peking*, chapter 6

Readings: Henriot, Christian. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy: Shanghai Prostitution Revisited, 1849-1949", *Modern China* ㉔, vol. 22, n° 2, April 1996, pp. 132-163.

Readings: 廣州民國日報 (II), '廢娼問題'等, pp.468-70, 527-36.

Readings: Henriot, Christian. "Chinese courtesans in late Qing and Early republican Shanghai (1849-1925)", *East Asian History* ㉔, n° 8, December 1994, pp. 33-52.

Readings: Henriot, Christian. "The Prostitute in the Twentieth Century: An Essay in Social Anthropology," *Prostitution and sexuality in Shanghai: a social history 1849-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 5 (pp. 115-137)

Readings: 康素珍, 青樓恨, chapters 1,2,3

Discussion Questions: What were the social and economic factors that sustained prostitution in Republican China? How did societal attitudes toward prostitution change during the early 20th century?

### **30 October**

#### **Tutorial session**

### **Week 8 - 1 November - Opium Smoking**

Readings: 平襟亞, '舊上海的煙';

Readings: Jonathan Spence, "Opium Smoking in Ch'ing China"

Optional: Virginia Berridge and Edwards Griffith, *Opium and the People* (1986); '勸戒鴉片文'; '勸戒洋煙'

Discussion Questions: What were the social and economic consequences of opium smoking in Qing China? What factors contributed to the failure of anti-opium campaigns?

### **Week 9 - 6 November - Opium Smoking**

Readings: Paulès, Xavier, *Living on Borrowed Time. Opium in Canton, 1906-1936*, chapters 5 (pp. 172-214) & 7 (pp. 251-277)

Optional: '勸戒鴉片文'; '勸戒洋煙'

### **Week 10 - 8 November - Workers**

Readings: Emily Honig, "The Working Day", *Sisters and Strangers* (Stanford: 1986), Chap. 6 (pp. 132-165)

Readings: '英商公共汽車'

Optional: 林耀華, 金翼 (*Golden Wing*), chapters 1-4.

Discussion Questions: How did industrialization affect class relations in Republican China? What role did urban workers play in challenging the social and economic order during the Republican period? How did state responses to labor movements shape future labor policies?

### **13 November**

#### **Tutorial session**

### **Week 11 - 15 November - Peasants**

Readings: 周谷成, '農村中貧富懸殊之風險'

Readings: Fei Hsiao-tung, *Peasant Life in China*, chapters 11 & 15 (中譯本: 江村經濟)

Discussion Questions: How did rural families adapt to changing economic conditions in modern China?

**20 November**

**Tutorial session**

**Week 12 - 22 November - Beggars, Vagrants, and Rootless People**

Readings: Lipkin, Zwia, "Beggary: 'Consumes without Producing'", *Useless to the State: "Social Problems" and Social Engineering in Nationalist Nanjing, 1927–1937* (Cambridge: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2006), pp. 200-228

Readings: Lu Hanchao. *Street criers: a cultural history of Chinese beggars* (Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2005), Chap. 4 (pp. 90-107) & Chap. 5 (pp.108-132)

Optional: Henriot, Christian. "Street Culture, Visual Fragments and Everyday Life: Narrating Peddlers in Shanghai Modern,"

Discussion Questions: What were the social and economic factors that contributed to the rise of beggars and vagrants in late imperial and Republican China? How were beggars and vagrants perceived by society and the state in late imperial and Republican China? In what ways did state policies and charity organizations address the issue of homelessness and vagrancy? Compare the lives of rural vagrants with those of urban beggars—what does this reveal about the structure of Chinese society.

**Week 13 – 22 & 27 November - Social Invisibility**

Readings: Lipkin, Zwia, "Refugees: An Unforreseen Consequence of Development", *Useless to the State: "Social Problems" and Social Engineering in Nationalist Nanjing, 1927–1937* (Cambridge: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2006), pp. 61-87 & "Shantytown: A Side Effect of Population Increase", pp. 88-128

Readings: Henriot, Christian. "'Invisible Deaths, Silent Deaths'. 'Bodies Without Masters' in Republican Shanghai", *Journal of Social History* [↗](#), Vol. 43, no. 2, Winter 2009, pp. 408–437

Optional: Henriot, Christian. "Slums, squats or hutments? Constructing and deconstructing an in-between space in modern Shanghai (1926-1965)", *Frontiers of history* [↗](#), 7, 2 (2012), 499-528

Discussion Questions: How did informal housing and street economies shape urban life in Republican China? What role did squatters and street vendors play in urban survival strategies, and how were they perceived by the authorities? How did the state attempt to manage or control these groups, and what were the consequences?

Discussion Questions: How do death rituals and burial practices for marginalized people reflect broader social attitudes toward them?