

HUMA 2640 Unofficial China: Social History 1800s-1930s
Fall 2023

Instructor: V. K.Y. HO

Room 3349

Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday (1500-1600), or by appointment

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A survey of socio-cultural history of China from the 19th Century to the 1930s. Emphasis is laid on analysing different aspects of life and popular culture in this period in order to arrive at a better and deeper understanding of the Chinese society and culture in this important period of modern China. At the end of the course, some of our conventional stereotyped pictures of the Chinese society, culture and its people in the modern times will be redressed. This course will teach you how to read history in a more critical and analytical manner.

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 utilise 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.

Assessment (to be finalised after Week 2)

Class/tutorial/essay 40%

Examination 60%

Attendance to tutorials (if any) 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 classroom/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.
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.

Week 1: Organisation of the Course & What is “unofficial” history of China?

Optional readings:

Peter Burke’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.

Weeks 2 & 3:

Violence and Society

Readings: Harry Lamley, "Lineage Feuding in Southern Fujian and Eastern Guangdong Under Qing Rule"; 沈從文自傳, chapters 2-5, 9-11.

Optional readings: 林語堂, '論宏大'; 鄭義, 紅色紀念碑; 魯彥, '柚子' V.K.Y. Ho, "Butchering fish and execution of criminals: socio-cultural meanings of violence" in Aijmer & Abbink eds. *The Meanings of Violence*.

DQ: 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)?

Weeks 4 & 5: Oppression of Women

Readings: 陳東原, 中國婦女生活史, pp.221-291; Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han* (中譯本: 漢家女)

Optional: Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers, *Women & Chinese Patriarchy*, pp. 1-15; 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

Weeks 6 & 7: Women Lives from Different Angles

Readings: Elizabeth Johnson's "Hakka Women"; 楊步衛, 一個女人的自傳, Parts 1-2; 吳麗娥, 命運的雲沒有雨, pp.1-64.

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

Weeks 8 & 9: Prostitution

Readings: 康素珍, 青樓恨, chapters 1,2,3,5; 平襟亞, '舊上海的娼妓'; Sidney Gamble, *Peking*, chapter X; 廣州民國日報 (II), '廢娼問題'等, pp.468-70, 527-36.

Optional: Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*; 蘇童, 紅粉; V.K.Y. Ho "To laugh at a penniless man rather than a prostitute" in *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol.1, no.1 (2001).

Weeks 10 & 11: Opium Smoking

Readings: 平襟亞, '舊上海的煙'; 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'

Weeks 12 & 13: Workers, Peasants, and the Issue of Exploitation

Readings: Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers* (Stanford: 1986), "Chapter Six: The Working Day"; '英商公共汽車'

周谷成, '農村中貧富懸殊之風險'; Fei Hsiao-tung, *Peasant Life in China*, chapters 11 & 15 (中譯本: 江村經濟);

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