

HUMA 2440 / CORE 2523  
**Twentieth-Century China in Documentary Films**

2023 Spring  
Tuesday 3:00–5:50 pm  
Room 1409

INSTRUCTOR: David Cheng CHANG  
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OFFICE: 2350  
OFFICE HOURS: TBD

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course presents the turbulent history of twentieth-century China through texts and documentary films. In addition to reading a textbook and articles, we will closely study several films made by journalists and filmmakers of the time and in recent years. Major themes include the 1911 Revolution, China's role in WWII, the Communist Revolution, the Korean War, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, reform and opening up, and Tiananmen in 1989. Some of the films are in English and some in Chinese with English subtitles.

### **Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):**

- Grasp major historical events and general trends in 20th-century China
- Think historically and critically about history and films
- Understand history as personalized and lived experiences
- Produce a short documentary film using primary and secondary sources

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

- Jonathan D Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990, 1999, 2013)
- John Pomfret, *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2016)
- Chang, *The Hijacked War: The Story of Chinese POWs in the Korean War* (Stanford, 2020)
- Li Jie, *Utopian Ruins: A Memorial Museum of the Mao Era* (Duke University Press, 2020)  
[\[muse.jhu.edu/book/78745\]](https://muse.jhu.edu/book/78745)

Multiple copies of the textbook have been placed in the library on 2-hour reserve. [DS754 .S65 1990/1999/2013]

\* All other assigned readings are available as PDFs on CANVAS.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Please be forewarned:** This class is a history class, NOT a film enjoyment class. It requires a substantial amount of reading and other assignments, which will keep you busy every weekday and some weekends as well.

**Before each class**, you are expected to have completed all readings assigned for the session and watched the film, if it is available online (most of them are). Lecture and film attendance is required, as the lectures and films include materials not covered by textbook or readings.

### **ASSESSMENTS**

1	Global China Humanities talk attendance and 1-page report x5	10%
2	Timeline and biographies or film summaries x 10	20%
3	Film reviews x 2	30%
4a	Oral history interview OR research paper outline & timeline	5%
4b	Oral history interview report OR final research paper	25%
5	Short film based on oral history interview or final research	10%

1. **Global China Humanities talk attendance and 1-page reports x5.** The Global China Center invites internationally renowned scholars and young, first-book authors—most of whom are on the reading list below—to discuss their latest works related to Cold War history. Several talks are scheduled during our class time, several others at other times. You are required to attend at least five talks. For each talk, you will submit a one-page report and critique with one or two questions for the speaker. See the full list of lectures: <https://globalchinacenter.shss.ust.hk/events/global-china-humanities-series>
  2. **Ten timelines/chronologies, film summaries, and/or short bios of historical figures.** Before each class, you should have completed all readings assigned to the week and watched the film. You should hand in a timeline with at least **TEN events** and short **biographies of THREE individuals** covered in the film (other than Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong). You can draw from the readings, films, Wikipedia, and other sources. The timeline can help bring some order to the complex sequence of events we will be studying. By the end of the semester, you should have combined all timelines into one file.
  3. **Two film reviews.** Choose one of the films listed in the syllabus and write a short review essay (700-1000 words, Times New Roman, 12-point). You should summarize the main message of the film, analyze the background and process of the production, and offer your critique.
    - use timestamps (like page numbers in book reviews) to make specific references, for example:
      - A former Nationalist general-turned-professor Ge Peiqi was severely criticized by students in a struggle session during the Anti-Rightists Campaign (*The Mao Years*, 00:24:45)
  4. **Option 1: Oral history interview project.**
    - (1) Each student is required to conduct an oral history interview on a topic of your choice. You are responsible for locating the interviewee and conducting the interview.
    - (2) Audio or video-record the interview with the interviewee's consent, as you may need the video recording for film production.
    - (3) The final oral history interview report should situate your interviewee's story into a larger historical context, and you should explain how it will shed light on the history of twentieth-century China or the broader world.
    - (4) For the final report, while you will draw upon the oral history account as the primary source, you should cite at least **one scholarly monograph, one article** from a scholarly journal, and **one documentary film** as secondary sources, in addition to the textbooks and readings.
    - (5) Format and length: 4 to 6 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point.
- Option 2: final research paper.**
- (6) You will first identify an issue, a puzzle, a theme, an interesting person, or an event in history that has been poorly understood, misunderstood, or understudied.
  - (7) You ask a question, explain why it is important or interesting, and develop a thesis or make an argument.
  - (8) You will search for primary sources to assemble evidence that will support your thesis/argument.
    - **Primary sources** are records left by people (or groups/organizations) who participated in or witnessed the events you are studying or who provided a contemporary expression of the ideas or values of the period under examination. Examples of primary sources include letters, autobiographies, diaries, government documents, minutes of meetings, newspapers, or books written about your topic at that time. Non-written sources include interviews, films, photos, recordings of music, clothing, buildings, or tools from the period.
  - (9) You will use both primary and secondary sources (later scholars' works) to analyze how our (or your) understanding of this historical person, issue, theme, event, and period evolved.
    - **Secondary works** are accounts written by people who were not themselves involved in the events or in the original expression of the ideas under study. Written after the events/ideas they describe, they are based upon primary sources and/or other secondary works.
  - (10) Demonstrate that your thesis/new understanding helps you better understand the issue at hand.
  - (11) Draw a conclusion.
5. **A team-produced documentary film based on your research paper.**

Each student will be assigned to a three-person team to produce a 5–8-minute film, based on one team member’s oral history interview or research paper. You are required to use the following components to make the film:

- Oral history interview footage and/or historical documentary film footage downloaded from the Internet.
- Historical photographs, letters, writings, and other primary sources obtained from the Internet and your interviewee.
- Original archival documents.
- Historical maps and/or Google Map/Earth.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A WARNING ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas or research results without proper acknowledgment, and passing them off as one’s own. The most common forms of plagiarism include the following<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) verbatim copying of words, sentences, paragraphs or entire sections or chapter without quotation and proper attribution. This is the most obvious form of plagiarism. You must use quotation marks even if you only borrow several words in sequence from a source. If you cite a specific term that encapsulates an author’s original idea, you must use quotation marks even if you only cite one word.
- (2) paraphrasing (i.e. changing some of the wording) of a passage without acknowledging the source. Even if you change all of the words but retain the author’s basic idea, you must cite the original source.
- (3) properly citing a source in an earlier note and then continuing to use the source without citing. You must **cite the source every time** you adopt an idea or a specific wording. This may mean a footnote at the end of every sentence, or if the other author’s ideas are uninterrupted by yours for a whole paragraph (generally not a good idea for a paper), you may have a footnote at the end of the paragraph.
- (4) citing a primary source as if you have looked at it yourself, when you simply **found the primary source quoted or cited in a secondary work**. If you have not seen the primary source yourself or if you found the source only because you saw it referenced elsewhere, you also must cite the secondary work in which it was cited originally. Example: Julius Caesar, *The Gallic Wars*, p. 12, **cited in** Gerbil Munchkin, *Caesar’s Life and Times*, p. 2345. (轉引自)
- (5) common knowledge: You do not need to cite information that is part of common knowledge, i.e. information that an educated person can be reasonably expected to know before engaging in research. If you are in doubt about what qualifies as common knowledge, consult your instructor.

You must use quotation marks even if you only borrow **several words in sequence** from a source. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is covered by university policy on academic dishonesty. If I suspect that you have used another person’s (including another book, article, or website’s) words without proper footnoting, we will notify you and require that you submit an electronic copy of your paper to turnitin.com, so that we can use available electronic means to check for plagiarism. Just as the Web makes plagiarism easier, it also makes the detection of plagiarism easy. Students found guilty of plagiarism will at the least get a failing grade on the paper, and at worst fail the course and be taken to the University for disciplinary action. Consider this fair warning. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE**. It’s just not worth it. The consequences can be extremely serious. Refer to the university web site: <http://www.ust.hk/provost/integrity/student-4.html>Links for definitions and university procedures in dealing with plagiarism.

## LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 (2/7) Introduction

Film: *China: A Century of Revolution*. Part I “China in Revolution 1911–1949” (1989) (114 min)

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<sup>1</sup> UC San Diego Department of History, “Academic Integrity Policy,” accessed 2 Feb 2023, <https://history.ucsd.edu/undergrad/resources.html#Academic-Integrity-Policy-and-I>.

## WEEK 2 (2/14) The End of the Dynasty and the 1911 Revolution

### Readings:

- Spence, Chs. 11–12 (End of the Dynasty; New Republic)
- Li Jie, *Utopian Ruins*, Ch. 5 (Foreign Lenses)(150–191)

### Film:

- Theodore H. White, *China: The Roots of Madness* (1967) (77 min)

## WEEK 3 (2/21) The Rise of Chinese Nationalism and Communism

### Readings:

- Pomfret, Ch. 16 A Red Star (222–233); 18\_Bloody Saturday (245–260)
- Li Jie, *Utopian Ruins*, Ch. 5 (Foreign Lenses)(150–191)

### Film:

- Joris Ivens with Robert Capa, *The 400 Million* (1939) (54 min)

## \*2/22 (WED), 4:30–6 pm. Global China Humanities Lecture (in-person)

“Chinese Wars in the American Archives: Research Strategies and Resources for Historical Inquiry from the Sino-Japanese War to the Cold War”

**Speaker:** Evan Taylor, archival research specialist for the Modern History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Science

**Time:** Wed, Feb 22 | 4:30–6:00 pm

**Venue:** Room 5583 (Lift 29–30)

## \*2/24 (FRI), 9–10:30 am. Global China Humanities Lecture (Zoom)

“經濟漩渦：冷戰發生的另一個解釋框架”

**Speaker:** 沈志華，華東師範大學

**Time:** Friday, Feb 24 | 9–10:30 am

Zoom

## WEEK 4 (2/28) The War of Resistance (1937–45), China as America’s Ally in WWII (1942–45)

### Readings:

- Pomfret, Ch. 20, *Burmese Days* (280–291); 21, *Dangerous Liaisons* (292–305)

### Film:

- Frank Capra (US Office of War Information), *Why We Fight: The Battle of China* (1944) (65m)

## WEEK 5 (3/7) The Civil War (1945-1949) and the Early PRC

### Readings:

- Spence, Chs. 18-19 (Fall of KMT; birth of the PRC).
- Chang, *The Hijacked War*, Chs. 1 (pp. 19–42), \*3.

### Films:

- *China: A Century of Revolution*. Part I “China in Revolution 1911–1949” (1989) (114 min)
- *China: A Century of Revolution*. Part II “The Mao Years 1949–1976” (1994) (115 min)
- *Mao in Color* (Discovery, 2015) (44 min)

## \*3/7 (TUE), 9–10:30 am. Global China Humanities Lecture (Zoom)

“Developing Mission: Photography, Filmmaking, and American Missionaries in Modern China”

**Speaker:** Joseph W. Ho, Albion College

**Time:** Friday, Feb 24 | 9–10:30 am

Zoom

### Readings:

Joseph W. Ho, *Developing Mission: Photography, Filmmaking, and American Missionaries in Modern China* (Cornell University Press, 2021), Introduction, Ch. 4-5.

**WEEK 6 (3/14) NO CLASS**

**WEEK 7 (3/21) The Korean War**

Readings:

- Chang, *The Hijacked War: The Story of Chinese POWs in the Korean War* (2020)
  - Introduction (pp. 1–18), Ch. 9 (pp. 209–240).

Films: VOA 解密时刻: 志愿军战俘 1-5 集 <https://www.voachinese.com/a/2998979.html>

**WEEK 8 (3/28) Anti-Rightist Campaign**

Readings:

- Spence, Ch. 20 (Deepening the Revolution)
- Li Jie, *Utopian Ruins*, Ch. 1 (Blood Testaments)(25–67).
- \*Philip P. Pan, “Searching for Lin Zhao’s Soul” and “Blood and love,” in *Out of Mao’s Shadow: The Struggle for the Soul of a New China* (2008), pp. 21–79.
- \*La Frances Hui, China Through An Independent Lens: Six Experts Recommend Their Favorite Chinese Documentary Films [\[http://www.chinafile.com/china-through-independent-lens\]](http://www.chinafile.com/china-through-independent-lens)

Film: Hu Jie 胡杰, *Searching for Lin Zhao’s Soul* 尋找林昭的靈魂 (2004) (115 min)

**WEEK 9 (4/4) The Great Leap Forward and the Great Famine**

Readings:

- Spence, Ch. 20 (Deepening the Revolution)
- Frank Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine: The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–1962* (NY: Walker & Co, 2010), i–xxiii, 324–337.

Film: Patrick Cabouat, *Mao’s Great Famine* (2012) (52 min)

- <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/mao-s-great-famine?context=channel:world-history-in-video>

**(4/11) SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS**

**WEEK 10 (4/18) 7–10 pm. The Cultural Revolution**

**\*4/18 (TUE), 7–10 pm. Global China Humanities Film & LecturE (in person)**

Film screening: *A Life in Six Chapters* 《蕭軍六記》

Speaker: Louisa Wei 魏時煜, Associate Professor, School of Creative Media, City University

Time: 7-10 pm

Venue: TBD

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7FMjGpMlqw>

Readings:

- [Wang Shiwei: The Buried Writer \(Directed by S. Louisa Wei\) 王實味：被淹沒的作家（紀錄片全片） | S. Louisa Wei 魏煜格 \(a.k.a. 魏時煜\) -](#)

**\*4/19 (WED), 4:30–6:00 am. Global China Humanities Lecture (in person)**

“Improbable Diplomats: How Ping-Pong Players, Musicians, and Scientists Remade US-China Relations”

**Speaker:** Pete Millwood, Hong Kong University

**Time:** Wed, April 19 | 4:30–6:00 pm

**Venue:** TBD

**WEEK 11 (4/25) The Cultural Revolution II**

Readings:

- Spence, Ch. 20 (Deepening the Revolution)
- Christ Buckley, “Bowed and Remorseful, Former Red Guard Recalls Teacher’s Death,” *New York Times*, Jan. 14, 2014.
- Xiao Han, “Confessions of the Cultural Revolution,” trans. Stacy Mosher, *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 2014.
- Chris Berry and Lisa Rofel, “Alternative archive: China’s independent documentary culture,” in *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement*, pp. 135–154.
- Wu Wenguang, “DV: Individual filmmaking,” in *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement*, pp. 49–54.

Film: Hu Jie 胡杰, *Though I am Gone 我雖死去* (2007) (68 min)

**WEEK 12 (5/2)**

**1970s Sino-American Rapprochement**

Readings:

- Pomfret, Ch. 34 (Out of Bad Things) (442-451); 35(Not because we love them) (452-461)

Films:

- *Assignment China: The Week That Changed the World* (58 min)
- \*Isaac Stern, [\*From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China\*](#) (1981) (84 min)

**WEEK 13 (5/9) 1980s “Reform and Opening Up”**

Readings:

Film: Carma Hinton, *Tiananmen: The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1995) (180 min)

**WEEK 14 (5/15) Student-produced short documentary film competition**