HISTORY 657: History of Revolution in Modern China, 1850-1949

Meisner

The course is offered to provide a general survey of revolutionary movements in China from the mid-19th century Taiping Rebellion to the victory of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949 -- and to examine and interpret the social nature and historical significance of such movements. The first half of the semester will deal with the revolutionary consequences of the disintegration of the traditional Chinese socio-political order under the impact of foreign imperialism in the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century -- and the forces that went into the making of a modern revolutionary situation. The latter half of the course will be devoted to an examination of the history of the Chinese Communist Revolution from 1921 to 1949.

Although no prior knowledge of Chinese history is presupposed, students wholly unfamiliar with the history of China might find it helpful to begin by reading pp. 1-194 of John K. Fairbank, The U.S. and China (Harvard paperback, 3rd revised and enlarged edition, 1971) for a general overview of traditional Chinese history and society and the impact of 19th century imperialism.

There will be a final take-home examination based upon the readings and lectures listed below. The exam questions will be distributed on May 20 and your response is due on May 25. In addition, you are asked to write two short essays (about 8-10 double spaced typewritten pages each), one dealing with the revolutionary movement of the 1920s and based on a critical analysis of two books selected from those in Section IV of "Readings" listed below, the second on the Kiangsi and/or Yenan periods of the Communist revolution based on two books selected from Section V. The mid-semester examination is optional; you may or may not wish to take it, and you may or may not choose to have it counted in determining your course grade. Assuming you do not, final grades will be determined on the following basis:

50% for the final take-home exam
50% for the two essays
History 657: Lecture Schedule (Spring, 1976)

Jan. 27: Introduction: Revolution in China

Jan. 29: Traditional Chinese Peasant Rebellions and Rebel Ideologies

Feb. 3: The Taiping Rebellion, 1850-65

Feb. 5: The Revolutionary Character of the Taipings

Feb. 10: Counter-revolution: The T'ung-chih Restoration

Feb. 12: The Revolutionary Consequences of the Failure of "Conservative Modernization"

Feb. 17: The Desertion of the Intellectuals from the Old Order

Feb. 19: The "Hundred Days" of Reform

Feb. 24: The Boxer Rebellion and the Anti-Revolutionary Implications of Anti-Foreignism

Feb. 26: Imperialism and the Disintegration of the Confucian Order

Mar. 2: Capitalism in China and the Nature of the Modern Chinese Bourgeoisie

Mar. 4: The Revolutionary Potentialities of Modern Chinese Nationalism

Mar. 9: Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Kuomintang

Mar. 11: Socialism and Anarchism in the Early Revolutionary Movement

Mar. 16: The Revolution of 1911 and the Failure of Bourgeois Revolution

Mar. 18: The Emergence of a Modern Intelligentsia: The New Culture Movement of 1915-1919

Spring Recess

Mar. 30: The May Fourth Movement and the Politicization of the Intellectuals

Apr. 1: The Introduction of Marxism and the Birth of the Chinese Communist Party

Apr. 6: Optional Mid-semester Exam

Apr. 8: Early History of the CCP and the Kuomintang-Communist Alliance

Apr. 13: The Revolution of 1925-27
History 657: Lecture Schedule (Cont'd)

Apr. 15: Social Classes and Political Power in China: historical consequences of the failure of bourgeois and proletarian revolution

Apr. 20: Social and Ideological Nature of the Nationalist Regime, 1928-37

Apr. 22: Marxism-Leninism and the Peasantry

Apr. 27: The Kiangsi Era of Chinese Communism, 1928-34

Apr. 29: The History of the Yenan Period of the Revolution, 1935-45

May 4: Maoist Theory and Revolutionary Strategy

May 11: The Theory of "Peasant Nationalism"

May 13: The Third Revolutionary Civil War (1946-49) and the Birth of the People's Republic

May 18: Maoism and the Marxist-Leninist Tradition

May 20: The Chinese Revolutionary Heritage and the Chinese People's Republic

The "take-home" final will be distributed on May 20; it is due on Tuesday, May 25.
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READINGS

I. Jan. 27 - Feb. 5

Franz Michael, The Taiping Rebellion (Vol. I)

II. Feb. 12 - March 16

Mary Wright (ed.), China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913
Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, pp. 159-187

III. March 16 - May 20


IV. March 18 - April 15

Two of the following:

Harold Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution
Maurice Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism
Jean Chesneaux, The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-1927
Leon Trotsky, Problems of the Chinese Revolution
Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao
Conrad Brandt, Stalin's Failure in China, 1924-27

V. April 20 - May 20 (The Kiangsi and Yenan Eras)

Two of the following:

Mark Selden, The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China
Chalmers Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power
Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China
John Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition
Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung
Jerome Ch'en, Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution