

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 1990-91

History 341

History of Modern China, 1800-1949

Mr. Meisner

Office: 5117 Humanities
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4-5 or by appt.
263-1848

The course is a survey of the major social, political and intellectual developments in China from the time of the Opium War until the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Its main (but not sole) aim is to understand the historical conditions that yielded the Chinese Communist Revolution and to understand the nature of that revolution. The course is divided into three parts. Part I examines the decay of the old Chinese imperial order in the 19th century and the impact of Western imperialism on traditional Chinese society. Part II, dealing with the period 1895-1927, is concerned with the emergence of modern revolutionary movements, especially the Guomindang (Kuomintang) of Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese Communist Party, which culminate in the great revolutionary upsurge of 1925-27. Part III examines Republican China in the Chiang Kai-shek era and especially the origins and history of the Maoist phase of the Chinese Communist revolution, 1927-49. You are required to read five books over the course of the semester. Two books will serve as texts to be read in conjunction with the lectures and discussions. These are:

Frederic Wakeman, The Fall of Imperial China (Free Press)
Lucien Bianco, The Origins of the Chinese Revolution (Stanford)

Assignments in the Wakeman and Bianco books are listed below. Both volumes are available for purchase in local bookstores, as are limited numbers of copies of the books by Mary Wright, Andre Malraux, Edgar Snow and Emily Honig (see below).

You are required to read one additional book (more if you wish) for each of the three parts of the course. At the conclusion of Parts I, II, and III, you will be asked to write a short interpretive essay (about 5 double-spaced typewritten pages) based upon the volume you have selected from those listed below under section "B" of "Required Readings" for each of the three parts into which the course is divided. The three essays, the form and nature of which will be discussed in class, are due (respectively) on October 15, November 17, and December 10. To satisfy particular interests which you may have or acquire, you may substitute books other than those listed below with the consent of the instructor.

There will be a final examination based on lectures and required readings on Friday December 18 at 7:45 a.m.

No prior knowledge of Chinese history is presupposed.

Grading:

The three short essays -- 50%

The final exam -- 50%

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

Part I: The Decay of the old Regime, 1800-1895 (Sept. 3 -- Oct. 3)

Feudalism and Capitalism in Chinese History

State and Society in Traditional China: The Gentry as a Ruling Class

Confucianism as a Conservative Ideology

Early Sino-Western Relations and the Opium Wars

Traditional Peasant Rebellions and the Taiping Rebellion

The Revolutionary Character of Taiping Christianity

"Self-Strengthening": The Failure of Conservative Modernization

The Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95

Imperialism in Modern Chinese History

The Origins and Nature of Modern Chinese Capitalism

Required Readings for Part I

A) Frederic Wakeman, The Fall of Imperial China, chapters 1-10.

B) One of the following:

1. Franz Michael, The Taiping Rebellion

2. Mary C. Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism

Essay #1 due Oct. 15

Part II: The Rise of the Modern Revolutionary Movement, 1895-1927 (Oct. 8 - Nov. 7)

The Defection of the Intellectuals

The Hundred Days Reform

The Transition from Culturalism to Nationalism: Yen Fu and Liang Qichao

Nationalism versus Anti-Foreignism: The Case of the Boxer Rebellion

Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Guomindang

The Revolution of 1911 and the Failure of Bourgeois Democracy

Socialism and Anarchism in the Early Revolutionary Movement, 1900-1919

The Modern Chinese Intelligentsia and the New Culture Movement, 1915-1919

The Modern Women's Liberation Movement

The May Fourth Movement and the Politicization of the Intelligentsia

The Tension between Nationalism and Cultural Iconoclasm

The Introduction of Marxism

The Chinese Labor Movement

The Birth and Early Years of the Chinese Communist Party

The Soviet Union and the Guomindang-Communist Alliance

Nationalism and Social Revolution, 1925-1927

Required Readings for Part II

A) Wakeman, chapter 11

Lucien Bianco, Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949, chapters 1-3

B) One of the following:

1. Harold Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution
2. Andre Malraux, Man's Fate
3. Maurice Meisner, Lita-chao and The Origins of Chinese Marxism

Essay #2 due Nov. 19

Part III: The Chinese Communist Revolution, 1927-1949 (Nov. 12 - Dec. 12)

The Significance of 1927

Maoism as a Variant of Marxism

The Kiangsi Soviet and the Long March

Guomindang China, 1927-37

Bureaucratic Capitalism in Traditional & Modern China

Yenan Communism, 1935-45

On Interpreting the Chinese Communist Revolution: the theory of "peasant nationalism"

The Civil War, 1945-49

Capitalist and Socialist Features of the Chinese Revolution

Required Readings for Part III

A) Bianco, Origins of the Chinese Revolution, chs. 4-7 and Conclusion

B) One of the following:

1. Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China
2. William Hinton, Fanshen: Documentary of Revolution in A Chinese Village
3. Emily Honig, Sisters and Strangers
4. Mark Selden, The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China.

Essay #3 due Dec. 10

Final Exam: Friday December 18 - 7:45 a.m.

Suggested Supplementary Readings

1. The Nature of the Gentry Class

Fei Hsiao-t'ung, China's Gentry
F. Wakeman, Fall of Imperial China, ch. 2
Chang Chung-li, The Chinese Gentry
Max Weber, The Religion of China

2. The Taiping Revolution

Franz Michael, The Taiping Rebellion
Vincent Shih, The Taiping Ideology
Philip Kuhn, Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China

3. Traditional Society and the Failure of Modernization

Mary C. Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism
Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, ch. 4

4. The Decay of Confucianism

Joseph Levenson, Confucian China and Its Modern Fate (3 vols)
Benjamin Schwartz, In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West
Joseph Levenson, Lian Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China

5. The Early Revolutionary Movement

Edward Friedman, Backward Toward Revolution
Mary Rankin, Early Chinese Revolutionaries
Michael Gasster, Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911
Harold Schiffrin, Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution
Arif Dirlik, Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution

6. The May Fourth Movement

Lin Yu-sheng, The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Anti-Traditionalism in the May Fourth Movement
Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement
Jerome Grieder, Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance
Vera Scharcz, The Chinese Enlightenment

7. The Origins of Marxism and Communism in China

Lee Feigon, Chen Duxiu: Founder of the Chinese Communist Party
Maurice Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism
Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao
Arif Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism

8. The Urban Working Class

Jean Chesneaux, The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-27
Lynda Shaffer, Mao and the Workers

9. The Revolution of the 1920s as Reflected in Western Literature

- Andre Malraux, Man's Fate
 Andre Malraux, The Conquerors
 Richard McKenna, The Sand Pebbles
10. The Kuomintang in Power
- Lloyd Eastman, The Abortive Revolution
 Sterling Seagrave, The Soong Dynasty
 James Sheridan, China in Disintegration
11. Marxism in China: Theories of History and Literature
- Arif Dirlik, Revolution and History: Origins of Marxist Historiography in China
 Paul Pickowicz, Ch'u Chiu-pai and the Origins of Chinese Marxist Literary Criticism
12. Chinese Women in an Era of Revolutionary Change
- Marilyn Young (ed.), Women in China
 Helen F. Snow, Women in Modern China
 Elisabeth Croll (ed.), The Women's Movement in China
 Agnes Smedley, Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution
 Ida Pruitt, A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman
13. Mao Tse-tung
- Mao's autobiography in Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China
 Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung
 Jerome Chen, Mao and the Chinese Revolution
14. Maoism as a Variant of Marxism-Leninism
- Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao
 Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung
 Maurice Meisner, Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism
 Raymond Wylie, The Emergence of Maoism
15. Social and Economic Origins of Rural Revolution
- R.H. Tawney, Land and Labour in China
 Fei Hsiao-tung, Peasant Life in China
 Robert Marks, Rural Revolution in South China: Peasants and the Making of History in Haifeng County, 1570-1930
16. The Nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution: Nationalism and Social Revolution
- Chalmers Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power
 Mark Selden, The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China
17. The Kuomintang-Communist Struggle; the Last Phase
- Suzanne Pepper, Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-49
 Jack Belden, China Shakes the World
18. Other Aspects of the History of Chinese Communism
- Angus McDonald, Urban Origins of Rural Revolution
 Dick Wilson, The Long March

Agnes Smedley, The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh
William Hinton, Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village

Periodization of the History of China

Ancient China

Hsia (?) 2200-1750 BC
Shang 1750-1100
Chou 1100-221 BC
 Western Chou, 1100-770
 Eastern Chou, 770-221
 (Spring and Autumn period, 722-481)
 (Warring States period, 403-221)

Imperial (traditional) China

Ch'in 221-207 BC
Former Han 206 BC-8 AD
Later Han 25-220
Period of Disunity 221-589
 (Three Kingdoms 221-264)
Sui 589-617
Tang 618-906
Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms 907-959
Northern Sung 960-1126
Southern Sung 1127-1275
Yuan (Mongol) 1276-1367
Ming 1368-1644
Ch'ing (Manchu) 1645-1911

Republican China, 1912-1949
 Kuomintang era, 1928-49

People's Republic of China, 1949 --
 Maoist era, 1949-76
 Post-Mao period, 1976 --

Conventional Chinese Marxist Characterizations:

Shang and early Chou -- slave society

Late Chou -- transition from slavery to feudalism

221 BC - 1842 AD -- feudalism (or "feudal-bureaucratic")

1842 - 1949 -- semi-colonial and semi-feudal (i.e., partly capitalist)

1949 - 1955 -- "new democratic"

1956 -- -- socialist