

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History

HISTORY 342: HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA,  
1949 TO THE PRESENT

Spring 1989  
Tuesday and Thursday  
2:25-3:40  
discussion section times TBA

Meisner  
Office: 5117 Humanities  
Office Hours:  
Tuesday 3:45-5:00  
Wednesday 2:00-3:30  
or by appointment  
263-1848  
TA: C. K. Kung

In the 1930s and 1940s, Mao Tse-tung and other Chinese Communists organized tens of millions of Chinese peasants into what was certainly the most massive, and perhaps the greatest, revolution in world history. The Chinese revolution took the historically unique form of harnessing the forces of peasant revolt in the rural areas to surround and overwhelm the cities. The political result was the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This course is an inquiry into the post-revolutionary history of Chinese Communism, from the formal establishment of the Communist state in 1949 to the current post-Maoist era of the "Four Modernizations". The inquiry will focus on the successes and failures of Chinese Communists in power, particularly with respect to their proclaimed aim of building a socialist society in the world's most populous land. In a broader sense, the course is concerned with the nature and social results of 20th-century socialist revolutions in general, addressing the question of whether it is possible to carry out a genuine socialist reorganization of state and society under conditions of economic scarcity. The question is relevant to the history of the Soviet Union and to a variety of contemporary Third World societies and revolutionary movements. The examination of the Chinese Communist historical experience hopefully will prove helpful for understanding the dilemmas which today confront other revolutionary movements and societies in various areas of the world.

No prior knowledge of Chinese history is presupposed. The first two weeks of the semester will be devoted to a survey of the history of Marxism and Communism in China from the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the victory of the Maoist revolution in 1949. This will serve as a review for those who have some familiarity with modern Chinese history, and, for those who do not, as a brief introduction to the history of the People's Republic.

The course is divided into five parts. Part I, as noted above, will be a brief survey of the Chinese Communist Revolution (1919-1949). Part II will be concerned with the consolidation of Communist state power (1949-52) and the period of the First Five Year Plan (1953-57), focusing on the social and political consequences of Soviet-style industrialization. Part III will examine one of the great utopian episodes in world history, the Great Leap Forward campaign of 1958-60 and its aftermath. Part IV will reassess the Cultural Revolution and the end of the Maoist era (1966-1976). Part V will

consider the deradicalization of the Chinese revolution in the years since the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976. In pursuing inquiries into these various eras, comparisons between Chinese history and the histories of other post-revolutionary societies (especially the Soviet Union) will be suggested in both lectures and readings.

In addition to the lectures and readings outlined below, there will be weekly one-hour discussion sections beginning with the third week of the semester. Readings for the discussion sessions will be drawn from portions of the following books:

Chinese Stories from the Fifties (Beijing, 1984)

David and Nancy Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China, 1964-69 (Pantheon, 1976)

Gao Yuan, Born Red (Stanford, 1987)

Orville Schell, To Get Rich is Glorious (Pantheon, 1984)

William Hinton, Shenfan (Vintage, 1983)

These books, along with the Riskin and Meisner volumes noted below, are available for purchase in paperback editions at The University Bookstore and People's Bookstore. The latter offers a discount.

For those with a special interest in theoretical and ideological questions, a discussion section with Meisner on Maoism and its relationship to the Marxist tradition will be organized at a time to be determined.

#### Course Requirements:

1. A final take-home examination based on the lectures and readings listed below. You will be asked to write two short essays, selected from six (or more) questions or topics. The exam questions will be distributed on May 11 and your essays will be due on May 16.
2. A paper (about 10-12 typewritten pages) selected from one of the topics suggested on the appended pages. Other topics may be chosen in consultation with Mr. Kung. Papers are due on Thursday May 4, which, as it happens, is the 70th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement.
3. Participation in discussion sessions on a reasonably regular basis.

#### Grading:

Final take-home exam: 40%  
Paper: 40%  
Participation in discussion sessions: 20%

Lectures and Required Readings:

(Note: The schedule of topics and readings for discussion sections will be distributed during the first week)

Part I: The Chinese Communist Revolution, 1919-1949 (Jan. 24-Feb. 7)

Problems in the Study of Contemporary Chinese History

The Making of a Revolutionary Situation, China 1839-1919

The Introduction of Marxism and the Revolution of the 1920s

Maoism and Yanan Communism

Marxism, Leninism and Maoism

The Nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution

The Theory of "Peasant Nationalism": its implications for understanding post-1949 Chinese history

Bourgeois and Socialist Aspects of the Chinese Communist Revolution

Readings:

Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After (The Free Press, 1986), chapters 1-4 (pp. 3-51).

Carl Riskin, China's Political Economy (Oxford, 1987), chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-37).

Part II: The New Regime and the First Five Year Plan, 1949-57 (Feb. 9-Feb. 28)

Modernization, Revolution and Socialism

State and Class in the People's Republic

Repression, Terror and the Korean War

The Bourgeois Phase: Land Reform and National Capitalism

The First Five Year Plan: Economic Results and Social Consequences

The Agricultural Collectivization Campaign of 1955-56 and the Post-Maoist Critique of Collectivization

The Era of the "Hundred Flowers" (1956-57)

The Anti-Rightist Witchhunt

Socialism and Democracy

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chs. 5-11 (pp. 55-203).

Riskin, China's Political Economy, chs. 3-5 (pp. 38-113).

Part III: Late Maoism: The Great Leap (March 2-9)

Maoist Utopianism and the Theory of Permanent Revolution

The Great Leap Forward Campaign, 1958-60

Economic and Political Consequences of the Great Leap

The Liuist Interlude

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chs. 12-17 (pp. 204-306).

Riskin, China's Political Economy, chs. 6-7 (pp. 114-183).

Part IV: The Cultural Revolution Decade, 1966-76 (March 14-April 4)

The Concept of "Cultural Revolution" in Marxism, Leninism and Maoism

Class Struggles and Political Conflict, 1966-69

Results and Consequences of the Cultural Revolution

"Ultra-Leftism" and Deradicalization: The Rise and Fall of the "Gang of Four"

Maoism and Stalinism

Successes and Failures of the Maoist Era

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chs. 18-21 (pp. 309-432).

Riskin, China's Political Economy, chs. 8-10 (pp. 184-256).

Part V: Post-Mao China (April 6-May 11)

The Third Plenum and the Ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping

The Promise and the Fate of Socialist Democracy: the case of the Democracy Movement

The Post-Mao Critique of Mao and Maoism

The Ideology of Reform

The Decollectivization of Agriculture

The Reorganization of Industry and the Urban Working Class

The Meaning of Political Reform

Social Conservatism: the social consequences of economic reform

Chinese Marxism in the Post-Maoist Era

The Debate on Alienation

Sexual Inequality in Post-Revolutionary China

Marxist Cultural Policy in the Maoist and Post-Maoist Eras

The Future of Chinese Socialism

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chs. 22-23 (pp. 435-489).

Riskin, China's Political Economy, chs. 11-15 (pp. 257-379).

Suggested Paper Topics and Readings

Essays should be reasonably concise (about 10 typewritten pages), well-argued, and based on the critical reading of two of the listed books. Most of the books should be available on reserve in Helen C. White Library. Other topics can be chosen in consultation with Mr. Kung.

1. The Nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution; a nationalist or a social revolution?

Chalmers Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power  
Mark Selden, The Yanan Way in Revolutionary China

2. The Character of the Kuomintang Regime--and why it collapsed.

Lloyd Eastman, The Abortive Revolution

Suzanne Pepper, Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-49

3. Maoism as a Variant of Marxism-Leninism.

Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao

Stuart Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung

Maurice Meisner, Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism

4. China and the Korean War.

Bruce Cummings, The Origins of the Korean War

Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War

5. The Nature of the Chinese Communist State.

Vivienne Shue, The Reach of the State

Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolution

V. Nee and D. Mozingo (eds.), State and Society in Contemporary China

6. Industrialization during the Maoist Era.

Stephen Andors, China's Industrial Revolution

Barry Richman, Industrial Society in Communist China

Thomas Rawski, China's Transition to Industrialism

7. Industry in the Country Side.

Dwight Perkins (ed.), Rural Small-Scale Industry in the People's Republic of China

Jon Sigurdson, Rural Industrialization in China

8. Women in China: Chinese Communism and Sexual Inequality.

Delia Davin, Woman-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China

Elisabeth Croll, Feminism and Socialism in China

Marilyn Young (ed.), Women in China

Kay Ann Johnson, Woman, The Family and Peasant Revolution in China

Judith Stacey, Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China

Phyllis Andors, Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949-80

9. The Land Reform Campaigns.

William Hinton, Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village

C.K. Yang, A Chinese Village in Early Communist Transition

- John Wong, Land Reform in China: Institutional Transformation of Agriculture
10. Agricultural Collectivization.
- Vivienne Shue, Peasant China in Transition  
William Hinton, Shenfan (1983), parts 1 and 2 (pp. 5-166)
11. Intellectuals in Communist China.
- Jerome Grieder, Intellectuals and the State in Modern China  
Merle Goldman, China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent  
James McGough (ed.), Fei Hsiao-tung: The Dilemma of a Chinese Intellectual
12. The Hundred Flowers Campaign.
- Roderick MacFarquhar, The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. I: Contradictions Among the People, 1956-57  
Roderick MacFarquhar (ed.), The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals
13. The Chinese Communist Bureaucracy.
- Harry Harding, Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy  
Richard Kraus, Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism
14. The Chinese Army (PLA).
- John Gittings, The Role of the Chinese Army  
Ellis Joffe, Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps  
Livio Maitan, Party, Army and Masses in China
15. The Cultural Revolution: Leaders and Masses.
- Hung Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution  
Byung-joon Ahn, Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution  
Neale Hunter, Shanghai Journal
16. Results of the Cultural Revolution.
- Charles Bettelheim, Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China  
Bill Brugger (ed.), China: The Impact of the Cultural Revolution  
Anne Thurston, Enemies of the People
17. The Red Guards: Social Composition and Political Aims.
- Klaus Mehnert, Peking and the New Left: At Home and Abroad  
Hong Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution

Stanley Rosen, Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou (Canton)

18. The Sino-Soviet Dispute.

John Gittings, The World and China, 1922-1972  
Klaus Mehnert, Peking and Moscow  
Donald Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-61  
Mark Mancall, China at the Center

19. "Sent-Down" Youth.

Thomas P. Bernstein, Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China  
Stanley Rosen, The Role of Sent-Down Youth in the Chinese Cultural Revl.

20. Education in the Maoist and Post-Maoist Eras.

Jonathan Unger, Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960-1980  
Suzanne Pepper, "Chinese Education After Mao: Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back and Begin Again?" China Quarterly, pp. 1-65.

21. The Democracy Movement of 1978-81.

James D. Seymour (ed.), The Fifth Modernization: China's Human Rights Movement, 1978-79  
Chen Erjin, China: Crossroads Socialism  
Roger Garside, Coming Alive, chs. 10-13  
Gregor Benton (ed.), Wild Lilies, Poisonous Weeds: Dissident Voices from People's China

22. Post-Maoist Chinese Marxism.

Su Shaozhi, Marxism in China  
Bill Brugger (ed.), Chinese Marxism in Flux, 1978-84  
William Joseph, The Critique of Ultra-Leftism in China

23. Rural China.

Anita Chan, R. Madsen, and J. Unger, Chen Village  
Richard Madsen, Morality and Power in a Chinese Village  
Jan Myrdal, Report from a Chinese Village and Return to a Chinese Village