

**History 600 – “Rebel Youth in 1960s China: Sex, Violence, and Youth Culture in the Cultural Revolution”**  
**Spring 2006**  
**T 1:20-3:20, 5257 Humanities**

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### **Course Description**

During the Cultural Revolution, Chinese adolescents and youth were encouraged to adhere to a radical revolutionary ideal and to attack (both figuratively and literally) figures in authority such as parents, teachers, and government officials. Eventually, they also attacked each other, and finally they were sent to the countryside (and sometimes to jail) as a means of curbing the violence. This course will use the startling and dramatic events of the Cultural Revolution in China to analyze the nature of youth participation in the movement and, simultaneously, teach the writing of historical papers based on primary evidence.

**Readings:** (Available in the University Book Store or on reserve at College Library)

Please note some of these readings include graphic violence and sexual content. If you are offended by such material, you should consider dropping the class. If you are taking the course only to read about sex and violence, there probably will not be enough to keep your interest and you should consider dropping the class.

Read carefully. These readings will provide you with the bulk of the evidence and inspiration you need to complete your writing assignments. You should consider taking notes as you read. You will need to be able to produce specific quotes and cite examples as evidence in later papers.

Course Reading Packet (available in the copy center on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of humanities)

Dietrich, Craig, *People's China*, Oxford, 0-19-510629-6

Cao, Guanglong, *The Attic: Memoir of a Chinese Landlord's Son*, University of California Press, 0-520-20406-9

Gao Yuan, *Born Red: A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution*, Stanford University Press, 0-8047-1369-3

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Knopf, 0679422714

Ma Bo, *Blood Red Sunset*, Penguin, 0-14-015942-8

Min, Anchee, *Red Azalea*, Berkeley Books, 0-425-14776-2

Nanchu, *Red Sorrow: A Memoir*, Arcade, 1-559-70638-4

Yang, Rae, *Spider Eaters*, University of California Press, 0-520-21598-2

### **Assignments:**

#### **Participation in Discussion (50 points, or 25% of the grade)**

Learning to express your views in small group settings is an important skill and we will practice it every week. Reading the course materials in advance of class is essential for participation in discussions. In addition, don't be shy. Your thoughts and comments are as valuable as anyone else's, perhaps more so. Be bold! You may have one absence from class without penalty. After that each absence will result in a ½ grade deduction from your participation grade. Perfect attendance will result in a ½ grade increase.

#### **Writing Assignments (150 points or 75% of your grade)**

There will be a writing assignment almost every week. It is important to take each one seriously and learn from previous mistakes. All writing assignments should be typed, double-spaced, have one-inch margins and a

typeface no smaller than 10 points and no larger than 12. Every time you use the thoughts or words of others you must provide a citation, even if you are not quoting directly. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Formal footnotes are not necessary. If you need to cite a text, just put a brief reference in parentheses. For example (*Born Red*, 142).

Good Writing Is Rewriting You should leave time for each assignment to reread and evaluate your writing before handing it in.

Original Thinking and Historical Evidence Most, if not all, of the papers you will write in this class, will derive “from precepts not from concepts. [They] draw [their] initial strength from contact with the evidence, not from stimulation by the world of ideas... [Such] papers are hard to write because they require an idea, an inspiration, a light bulb switching on above your head.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Titles All papers should have titles. A good title suggests an argument. Some examples of good titles: “No Pain No Gain: Maintaining the Social Order Through Zhou Mourning Rituals”; “Teenage Wasteland”; “Late-Neolithic China: a Quiet Shift to Male Domination?”; “What Goes Up Must Come Down: The Law of Dynasties”; “Squeezing the Orange Until the Pips Squeak: The Tax Policy of the Qing Dynasty and Its Implications for Local Governance.” Some examples of bad titles: “The Role of Women in the Cultural Revolution” or “Death and Society in Chinese History.”

## **Analytical Writing:**

### ***One-Paragraph Response Papers (10 papers at 5 points each for a total of 50 points or 25% of your grade)***

The paragraph is a fundamental unit of prose so we will practice writing paragraphs often. Each paragraph-long paper should make a claim that you think is significant about that week’s assigned readings and that claim should be stated in your paragraph’s topic sentence. Everything else in the paragraph should relate to that sentence. Your paragraphs may be no longer than one typed page.

### ***Analytical Papers:***

#### ***2-Page Analytical Paper (15 points for a total of 7.5% of your grade)***

Making arguments with primary sources is an important part of understanding and processing information. We will practice making such an argument with a 2-page analytical paper on the “models of behavior” as contained in the opera “Red Lantern” and the “Biography of Lei Feng.”

#### ***5-8 Page Final Analytical Paper (35 points for a total of 17.5% of your grade)***

The final paper will give you a chance to expand on the skills learned in the class. In essence, it will be of the same form as the 2-page analytical paper, but it will be on a topic of your choosing and may (in fact must) include evidence from a large variety of class readings. This paper should be 5-8 pages.

In your analytical writing assignments, you may write on any theme of significance suggested by the readings. Themes might involve: (1) the nature of the state and political culture; (2) the nature of kinship; (3) gender roles; (4) hero worship; (5) religion; (6) sexual practices; (7) violence; (8) the conception of the role of the individual; (9) peer pressure, etc. This list is not exhaustive, but you may find it useful.

Analytical papers focus narrowly on a few pieces of evidence, but should have a larger import. They are **not descriptive, but explanatory, arguing from specific evidence to general conclusions. Above all, keep your argument simple and clear.** These papers will be an analysis of **primary sources**. You must deal with specific evidence from the class readings. Secondary sources (Dietrich) will be helpful to put these primary sources in context, but these secondary sources will not be the focus of the paper. Good papers will be specific and place the evidence at hand in context: who, when, where, what?

Your first paragraph should include a statement of your thesis. The body of the essay contains the supporting arguments and evidence. In the conclusion you may draw out the implications of your argument, but do not introduce new ideas in a way that distracts the reader and takes the punch out of your argument.

Your papers will be graded on what you say and how you say it. **Avoid repetition, sweeping and unsupported**

**generalizations and loose logic. Make sure transitions from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph flow smoothly and are logical.** Pay attention to organization, prose style and proofreading.

***Creative Projects (25 points each for a total of 25% of your grade):***

Analytical writing is not the only way to approach history. In order to give you an opportunity to spread your wings a little, you will be required to submit two creative projects on any topic relevant to the course. Normally these projects will be text of about 5 pages, but the form and length can be flexible. Be sure to discuss your ideas with the professor.

The creative projects should be inspired by the activities of youths in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Try as hard as possible to make them consistent with the times. Most importantly, they should bring new insights that the reader/viewer might not otherwise have. Even though you may not be quoting directly in the creative paper, it will most likely be inspired by one or more of the class readings. You still need to provide citations when you draw on specific primary or secondary sources whether or not you quote.

**Week 1 (1/17) – Understanding the Communist Revolution**

Dietrich, 1-82; Jung and Halliday, 1-336

**Response Paper One Due**

**Week 2 (1/24) – Understanding Socialist China**

Dietrich, 83-178; Jung and Halliday, 337-502

**Response Paper Two Due**

**Week 3 (1/31) – Understanding the Cultural Revolution – The View from the Top**

Dietrich, 178-235; Jung and Halliday, 503-624

**Response Paper Three Due**

**Week 4 (2/7) – Models of Youth Behavior**

“Red Lantern” and “Lei Feng,” course reading packet; Reading on Hitler Youth

**2-page paper due**

**Week 5 (2/14) – Growing up in Mao’s China in Shanghai**

*The Attic*

**Response Paper Four Due**

**Week 6 (2/21) – The Early CR in an Interior High School I**

Born Red (first half)

**Response Paper Five Due**

**Week 7 (2/28) – The Early CR in an Interior High School II**

Born Red (second half)

**Response Paper Six Due**

**Be prepared to discuss ideas for creative projects**

**Week 8 (3/7) – A Tour of Town and Country I**

Red Sorrow (first half)

**1<sup>st</sup> Creative Project Due**

**Week 9 (3/21) – A Tour of Town and Country II**

Red Sorrow (second half)

**Response Paper Seven Due**

**Week 10 (3/28) – Another view**

Spider Eaters (first half)

**Response Paper Eight Due**

**Week 11 (4/4) – Another view**

Spider Eaters (second half)

**Response Paper Nine Due**

**Week 12 (4/11) – A Tour of Town and Country Redux I**

Red Azalea

**2<sup>nd</sup> Creative Project Due**

**Week 13 (4/18) – A Tour of Town and Country Redux II**

Red Azalea

**Response Paper Nine Due**

**Week 14 (4/25) – Down to the Countryside I**

Blood Red Sunset

**Response Paper Ten Due**

**Week 14 (5/2) – Down to the Countryside II**

Blood Red Sunset

**Final Paper Due May 8<sup>th</sup>, noon in my mailbox**

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[1] This quote and some of the following is adapted from Keightley's History 9A *Handbook*, University of California, Berkeley.