

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

The Basics

Time and Place: T-TH 4:00-5:15; Humanities 1651

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Introduction to the Class

There are few conflicts that have been as carefully studied and discussed as World War II. Yet, in the United States and Western Europe historians have tended to focus their attention on the major American theaters of war, particularly the Pacific, Western Europe, and to a lesser extent North Africa. The war in continental Asia has for too long been viewed as a footnote in this larger conflict. This class seeks to correct this misperception and reveal the lasting resonances of the war in China and continental Asia.. Are you interested in understanding the American postwar role in the Pacific? Learning more about the rise of Mao Zedong? Understanding the roots of the rise of China? Wanting to comprehend the rise of Asian nationalism? Then this class is for you!

This course is intended to help you understand the impact of World War II from the perspective of Asia and from China in particular. Over the course of the semester we will study not only the diplomatic, political, and military situation of wartime Asia, but also perceptions and experiences of the war from those most heavily affected by it: those experiencing it on the ground. The foundations of the Cold War and the post-Cold War world that we live in today were forged on battlefields in mainland China, Burma, small islands in the Pacific, and in the skies over the archipelago of Japan. In order to provide the background and understand the legacies of the conflict, this course covers an extended time frame, beginning in the 19th century with the arrival of the West in Asia and ends with the beginning of the Cold War.

One final note: there are no specific pre-requisites for the class and there are no language requirements for the class. So if you know absolutely nothing about China or Chinese language - **DON'T WORRY!**

Books and Readings

The readings for the course are a combination of textbooks (secondary readings) and primary resource materials. Some of the primary sources assigned in this course are gory, callous, or racist. I did not choose them to shock you. Instead, the readings for this class are intended to help understand the motivations of historical actors and illustrate the context within which the drama of the war played out. The only way to understand history

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

is to understand the actions of actors even if we choose to them condemn them for the choices they make.

One final note on readings: we will often discuss readings in lecture in short discussions, so students are expected to stay up to date with the readings.

Required Texts:

Pa Chin, *Cold Nights* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978)

Nakae Chomin, *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* (New York: Weatherhill) 1984

Diana Lary, *The Chinese People at War: Human Suffering and Social Transformation, 1937-1945* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

-All other course readings are available on the Canvas course page

Grading:

1. Midterm exam: 20 percent. The questions for the midterm will be drawn from readings and lectures from the first half of the course and will be conducted in class.

2. Final exam: 20 percent. The questions for the final will be drawn from readings and lectures from the second half of course and will be conducted in class. Note: the **final exam is not cumulative!**

3. Final Project: 25 percent You will complete a final analytical project for this class. The grade for this project will be a combination of three preliminary assignments (15 percent – 5 percent each) and the final project (85 percent) itself. In order to give you the opportunity to pursue your own specific interests, you can choose one of three different types of projects. 1. Analyze cultural products related to the war in China. This could an analysis of Chinese songs, performances by Chinese traveling opera troupes; or an analysis of American films (documentary or Hollywood films) on the war in China. 2. An essay based largely on oral histories from people who participated in the war in China in some capacity. This could include soldiers who were stationed in China (there are a number of oral histories from Americans stationed in China in the Wisconsin Veterans Museum), or could include Chinese or non-Chinese foreigners experiences during the war in China. Please note that you must interview at least four different people (or uncover four to five oral histories), and supplement these accounts with primary source research). 3. A more traditional research project which relies on a set of 5 or more primary resources. The catch for all of these projects is that they must rely on *primary source* research (including anything from government documents, to newspaper articles to diaries, to films). You are welcome to do a project that does not culminate in a written essay (this could include a website, a documentary film, or an exhibition of some kind), but please contact me before beginning this type of project. For those who do choose to do an essay, this project should be between 8-10 pages, must have an argument, a beginning middle and end, and should rely on at

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

least 5 primary sources. In order to make sure students are on track, there are three assignments over the course of the semester. The first is a one to two paragraph project proposal with a list of sources (**due Feb. 22**). The second is an annotated bibliography that includes all of your sources – both primary and secondary as well as a short description of each source and how it will fit into the project (**due March 22**). The third is a short description of the historical context for your project as well as your larger argument (**due April 12**). The due-dates for these assignments are clearly noted in bold in the course schedule below. If you need help on this or are confused, do not hesitate to get in touch with me early in the semester. The project is due in class on **Tuesday April 28** (late papers will not be accepted without a verified excuse).

4. Group Project: 20 Percent In order to help students engage more deeply with the readings and course material, we will hold two group discussions/debates this semester – one at the beginning of the semester (Topic: “Early 1941: Chinese Leaders debate whether or not they should make peace with Japan”) and the other at the end (Discussion Topic: “1944: American policymakers debate the future of America’s China policy). Each student will be divided into a group, and each group will be assigned a position to advocate for in either the first debate or the second (to be clear, **you will only participate in one of the two debates during the semester!**). There will be at least two class sessions where we will use some of the time for groups to meets. Prior to the discussion, each group will jointly research and write up a 7-9 page position paper. These positions will be based on books, research articles, and primary sources that James and I will provide, as well as other sources that you all uncover. Each group will present their position in an open discussion/debate in front of the whole class, and students not participating in that group discussion will ask questions and, based on the arguments vote for an outcome.

5. Discussion Section/Reading Response Grade: 15 percent. There is a discussion section for this course and students are required to attend and participate. Students are also expected to submit a weekly source analysis paper for 10 out of the semester’s 15 weeks. This paper, which should be around one pages will be due in section. In this paper, students will analyze between one and two of that week’s primary source readings. Attendance and reading responses will be assessed by James.

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Weekly Schedule:

Week 1

January 25: Introductions

Readings: Textbooks: Lary, The Chinese People at War, 1-14

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

January 27: Modernity and the West

Readings: Textbooks: Charles Holcombe, *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the 21st Century* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017) 217-235; *Primary Sources:* “Yung Wing: Interview with Zeng Guofan, 1863” and “Prince Gong on the Tongwen College: Three Memorials, 1861, 1865, 1866” in Pei-kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, eds *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: WW Norton, 1999) 151-156

Week 2

February 1: The “Meiji Model”

Readings: Textbooks: Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 240-255; *Primary Sources:* Start *Discourse of Three Drunkards*

February 3: An Introduction to Finding Primary Sources: MEET IN THE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Week 3

February 8: Chinese Nationalism

Readings: Textbooks: Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 259-273; *Primary Sources:* Lu Xun, “A Madman’s Diary” in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press 1995) 8-15; Keep reading *Discourse*

February 10: The Japanese Empire

Readings: Textbooks: Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 278-283, 288-295; *Primary Sources:* “Japan on the Mukden Incident”, “Japan’s Expansion: A satirical poem”, “Japan defended at the Chamber of Commerce” in the *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 279-286;

Week 4

February 15: Individual Meetings with me to talk about your ideas for a final project **[Make an Appointment on Canvas]**

Readings: Keep reading *Discourse*

February 17 : Facing Japan

Readings: Textbooks: Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 295-304; *Primary Sources:* “The Students Demonstrate, December 16, 1935”, “Xi’an 1936: the Generals’ Demands and Chiang Kai-shek’s Reply”, in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 304-313; Finish reading *Discourse*

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

Week 5

February 22: The Outbreak of the War [Assignment Due: FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL]

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *The Chinese People at War*, 15-43; **Primary Sources:** “Prince Konoë’s Address”, “The Japanese Ambassador Explains”, “Chiang Replies” in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 314-324

February 24: The Making of ‘Free China’

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *The Chinese People at War*, 44-77; **Primary Sources:** “Chungking, a Point in Time” in White and Jacoby eds *Thunder Out of China*, 3-19

Week 6

March 1: Resistance v. Collaboration

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *The Chinese People at War*, 78-111; **Primary Sources:** “Wang Jingwei : On Collaboration” in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 330-333

March 3: Group Debate #1

Week 7

March 8: Confronting Imperialism

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *The Chinese People at War*, 112-145; **Primary Sources:** “The Justification for War”, “The Declaration of War”, “The War Goal” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2, 288-298

March 10: Race War

Readings: **Textbooks:** “Patterns of a Race War” in John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996) 3-14; **Primary Sources:** Richard Kim, *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 58-86

Week 8

March 15: SPRING BREAK

March 17: SPRING BREAK

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

Week 9

March 22: Women and Violence [Assignment Due: Annotated

Bibliography]

Readings: **Textbooks:** Iris Chang, “Introduction” *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997) 3-16; **Primary Source:** Ding Ling, “When I was in Xia village” *Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*; Begin *Cold Nights*

March 24: MIDTERM: IN CLASS

Week 10

March 29: Film: Nanjing: Memory and Oblivion

Readings: **Primary Sources:** Continue with *Cold Nights*

March 31: The Rise of US-Chinese Relations

Readings: **Textbooks:** Warren I. Cohen, *A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) 128-147; **Primary Sources:** Continue with *Cold Nights*; watch Frank Capra, dir *Why We Fight: the Battle for China* (1944) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4Ebv-FzP60>

Week 11

April 5: The Chinese Communist Party

Readings: **Textbooks:** Immanuel CY Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000) 591-599; **Primary Sources:** “Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Methods of Leadership” (June 1, 1943) in Timothy Cheek, ed. *Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents* (New York, Bedford St. Martins, 2002) 117-123; “First Formal Impression of the North Shensi Communist Base” in Joseph Esherick, ed. *Lost Chance in China: the World War II Dispatches of John S. Service* (New York: Random House 1974) 178-182; Continue with *Cold Nights*

April 7: NO CLASS

Readings: **Primary Sources:** Continue *Cold Nights*

Week 12

April 12: Demoralization (Assignment Due: Historical Context + Argument)

History 363: China and World War II in Asia

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *the Chinese People at War*, 146-168; **Primary Sources:** “The Honan Famine” in Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby *Thunder out of China*, 166-178; *Finish Cold Nights*

April 14: Group Debate #2

Week 13

April 19: The Japanese Home Front

Readings: **Textbooks:** “Living in the Shadow of War” in Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009) 215-219 **Primary Sources:** “The Burning Skies” in *Japan at War*, 343-353

April 21: The Surrender of Japan

Readings: **Textbooks:** “Ending the War” in Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 219-222; “Shattered Lives” in John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: WW Norton, 1999) 33-45; **Primary Sources:** “Reversals of Fortune” in *Japan at War*, 407-419

Week 14

April 26: The Question of Guilt

Readings: **Textbooks:** “Shattered Lives” in Dower, *Embracing Defeat* 48-64; **Primary Sources:** “Death Row at Changi Prison” in *Japan at War*, 420-427

April 28: Peace and War [**Assignment Due: Final Project**]

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *The Chinese People at War*, 169-193; **Primary Sources:** Watch Cai Chusheng and Zheng Junli, dirs, *A Spring River Flow East* (1947)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFDqzTOpD1c>

Week 15

May 3: Legacies

Readings: **Textbooks:** Lary, *The Chinese People at War*, 194-211

May 6: FINAL EXAM: IN CLASS