

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

The Basics

Instructor: Professor Judd C. Kinzley

- Office Hours (Humanities 4121): Tuesdays, 1-2:30 and Thursdays, 9:30-11 and by appointment
- Email: kinzley@wisc.edu

TA: John Tobin

- Office Hours (Humanities 4268), TBD
- Email: jtobin@wisc.edu

Introduction and Format

How should we think about China's "rise" in the years following the death of Chairman Mao Zedong in 1976? There is a general assumption that China's emergence as a global economic, political, and military power in recent decades is a product of the rejection of Maoism along with the revolutionary ideals propagated by the Chinese Communist Party after their 1949 revolution. While on some level this is certainly true, it is worth considering the ways in which modern China remains rooted in and shaped by Mao's China. This course seeks to provide students with a deeper understanding of contemporary China by focusing on the country's history since the Chinese Communist Party's 1949 revolution. After a very brief history of the pre-1949 period, this course will dive into China's history in the years following the CCP's successful revolution, discuss the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolutions, and end by addressing the changes in China following Mao's death and the rise of Deng Xiaoping.

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!** This class is not intended to test your abilities to pronounce the names of Chinese historical actors or know unfamiliar Chinese place names. Rather, I hope that this class will give you the tools to understand China's wider historical context. I will not penalize or make fun of you for mispronunciations and neither will your classmates. I am happy to suggest additional readings if you would like more background on Chinese history – please don't hesitate to reach out. Some understanding of Chinese history in the years preceding 1949 might be helpful for context. So for those who have not taken the course History 341 (which covers Chinese history from 1800-1949) and are interested in gaining a bit more context, I would recommend that you peruse Jonathan Spence's *Search for Modern China* textbook. But again, this is not necessary for the class.

Textbooks and Readings

The readings for the course are a combination of a textbook and primary resource materials. If you want a hardcopy of the Tanner book, there are multiple copies available for purchase online. In addition, the Tanner book is also available in full-text, online hosted by our library. Ji Xianlin's *The Cowshed* is also available for purchase online. All additional readings for the course will be provided on the course Canvas page. Readings available on Canvas are marked with a " * " in the syllabus.

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

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

- Harold Tanner, *China: A History*, Vol. 2 (Hackett Publishing, 2010)
- Ji Xianlin, *The Cowshed: Memories of the Cultural Revolution* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2016)

Grades and Assessments

1. Exams: 40 percent (20 percent for the midterm and 20 percent for the final). The midterm exam will be held in class on **March 10**. The final exam will be on the class' exam day, **May 6** (10:05-12:05). Each exam will be worth 20 percent of your final grade. The questions for the midterm will be drawn from readings and lectures from the first half of the course. The questions for the final exam will be drawn only from material in the second half of the class. A study guide for each exam will be circulated at least one week in advance.

2. Final Project: 20 percent (15 percent for the final project and 2.5 percent each for the two preliminary assignments)

The final project for the course asks students to analyze 2-3 documentary films from the early 2000s. This period was a critical moment for Chinese documentary films and a small but dynamic community of independent Chinese filmmakers documented the challenges and struggles of individuals as they navigated the turn from Mao-era Socialism to Deng and post-Deng capitalism. Many of these films were banned in China when they came out and remain banned today.

In the final paper, students should analyze these films as historical documents in an 8-10 page final paper. In the paper, students should go beyond summarizing the plot and instead should draw in the source analysis skills that you have developed over the course of the semester to make an argument about how these films and the lives being documented in them should be considered in a longer narrative of Chinese history. In order to receive full credit, the paper must have an argument, a beginning middle and end, and should include some of your own research. In order to help make sure that you are on track, there are two assignments related to the final paper. The first, which is due on **April 9** consists of a synopsis of the films you have chosen as well as a preliminary argument. The second, which is due on **April 28**, consists of an updated argument and a historical narrative that frames your analysis of the films. The final paper is due on Monday, **May 4** by noon. The grade for this project will be a combination of two preliminary assignments (2.5 percent each) and the final project (15 percent) itself.

I am open to students choosing whichever documentary films they want to analyze, as long as the film they choose covers the period from 1995 to 2016. But to get you started here is a brief list of films: "Umbrella" (2007), "1428" (2009), "A Young Patriot" (2015), "Stone Mountain" (2006), and "Along the Railway" (2000) all by Du Haibin; "Under the Dome" (2015) by Chai Jing; "Useless" (2007) and "Dong" (2000) both by Jia Zhangke; "Last Train Home" (2009) by Fan Lixin; "Petition" (2009) and "Behemoth" (2015) both by Zhao Liang, "Plastic China" (2016) by Wang Jiuliang, and "Fallen City" (2011) by Qi Zhao. I am open to considering other films if you come across some that you would prefer to analyze. Please just make sure that you clear it with me first.

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

3. Group Projects: 25 percent (15 percent for the debate and 10 percent for the in-class exercise) In order to help students engage more deeply with the readings and course material, we will hold two group debates and a group exercise this semester.

- **Debate:** The first debate will be held on **March 26** (1971: The Party debates China's Relationship with the United States) and the second on **April 21** (1989: The Party Debates How to Resolve the Crisis in Beijing). 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 meet. 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 John 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.
- **Land Reform Game:** We will also hold a **group in-class exercise on February 12** that will simulate the Chinese Communist Party's Land Reform campaign in a rural village in North China. For this exercise, everyone will be assigned a character in advance. Students are expected to prepare for the role by studying materials you are given by John and I and by having completed all of the readings. Students will be assessed based on their performance in the exercise as well as on a 3 page reflection on the exercise which will be handed in on **February 19**.

4. Discussion Section/Source Analysis Grade: 15 percent (10 percent for response papers and 5 percent for participation in discussion section).

There is a discussion section for this course and students are required to attend and participate. Section grades will be assessed solely by John Tobin (the TA for this course).

Students are also expected to submit five source analysis papers over the course of the semester. Source analysis exercises are intended to help you develop the skills needed to understand and evaluate primary sources and to help you learn to make historical arguments. These source analysis papers, which should be 2-3 pages will be **due on the Friday of the week** that we read that source. In this paper, students will deeply analyze a course reading from the list of 14 below. Students should focus their analysis on three major things: determining who the author was and how who they are shaped their perspective, what the motivation of the author was for writing this particular source, and what this source can tell us about China and/or the Chinese Communist Party.

- **Week 2:** Mao Zedong, "Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (1927) in *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions*, 41-76
- **Week 3:** Mao, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" (June 30, 1949)
- **Week 5:** Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (1957)
- **Week 5:** Wang Meng, "A New Young Man Arrives at the Organization Department" (1956) in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 429-434
- **Week 5:** Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People"
- **Week 6:** Wu Han, "Hai Rui Scolds the Emperor" (excerpt) in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*
- **Week 9:** Wen Jieruo, "Living Hell" in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*, 703-709

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

- **Week 12:** ** Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, “Some Questions on Party History” (1981) in *Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, 216-219
- **Week 12:** Liu Binyan, “Sound is Better than Silence” in *People or Monsters*, 98-137
- **Week 13:** Wei Jingsheng, “The Fifth Modernization – Democracy” (1978) in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 2, 497-500
- **Week 13:** Liu Binyan, “A Case of Persecution in Xi’an in Disregard of Central Instructions” (1984) in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 470-475
- **Week 14:** “Posters Calling for Democracy” (1989) in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 496-500
- **Week 15:** Bourgeois and Socialist Democracies Compared” (1990) *People’s Daily*, in *Chinese Civilization: a Sourcebook*, 501-504
- **Week 15:** Liu Xiaobo “Behind the China Miracle” in *Liu Xiaobo: No Enemies, No Hatred*, 228-239; 223-227

A Note on AI

I am aware that AI exists and that students are using it. We are still beginning to learn how to navigate this post-AI educational world and figure out ways to use AI as a tool without sacrificing the work that students are doing in and out of the classroom. I have tried to tailor class assignments to minimize the ability to use AI. While I will not forbid the use of AI in this class, I do insist that you not use it to write for you. You can use AI to get a general sense of historical narratives (though you should be careful to check these against other sources, considering that AI narratives, particularly for places like China are notoriously flawed). Students can also AI to correct for grammatical and language usage mistakes. If you are found to have submitted AI generated writing for the course, you will receive a zero on that assignment. If you have questions about AI use, please do not hesitate to reach out to John or I for guidance.

=====

Course Schedule

Week 1

Tuesday, January 20: Introductions

Thursday, January 22: The Birth of Modern Chinese Nationalism

Readings:

* Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (Interviews with Mao), 129-149

Week 2

Tuesday, January 27: Revolutions

Readings:

* Mao Zedong, “Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan” (1927) in *Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions*, 41-76

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

Thursday, January 29: War and the CCP

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 160-187

*William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (selection), 3-14

Week 3

Tuesday, February 3: Liberation

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 193-200

*Mao, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" (June 30, 1949)

*William Hinton, *Fanshen* (selection), 17-36

Thursday, February 5: The Return of Class Struggle

Readings:

* William Hinton, *Fanshen* (selection) 37-45

* Ding Ling, *The Sun Shines Over the Sanggan River*, excerpt (1948) in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 416-421

Week 4

Tuesday, February 10: Industrialization and the Soviet Model

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 202-204

* Ji Yun, "How China Proceeds with the Task of Industrialization" (1953) in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 2 455-456

*William Hinton, *Fanshen* (selection), 128-146

Thursday, February 12: Land Reform Game (In Class)

*William Hinton, *Fanshen*, 147-156

Week 5

Tuesday, February 17: What is Maoism?

Assignment due: submit your reflection on the Land Reform Game

Readings

*Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People"

Thursday, February 19: Cleansing the Party

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 204-208 (top of 208)

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

* Wang Meng, "A New Young Man Arrives at the Organization Department" (1956) in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 429-434

* Editorial, *Shenyang Daily*, June 11, 1957

* Deng Xiaoping, "On the Communist Party and the Young Communist League" (1957)

Week 6

Tuesday, February 24: The Great Leap Forward

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 208-211

* Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Beidaihe Conference" (August 1958) in Cheek, ed. *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions*, 160-166

* Yin Zeming, "The Strength of the Masses Is Limitless" (1958) in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 404-406

Thursday, February 26: Rethinking the Soviet Union

Readings:

* "American Imperialism Is Closely Surrounded by the People's of the World" (1964) in *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, 167-168

* "The Origins and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves" (1963) in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 413-416

Week 7

Tuesday, March 3: Debating Maoism

Readings

Tanner, *China: A History*, 211-217

* Wu Han, "Hai Rui Scolds the Emperor" (excerpt) in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 471-474

Thursday, March 5: The Cult of Mao

Readings:

* Yu Hua, "Leader" in *China in Ten Words*, 15-35

Week 8

Tuesday, March 10: MIDTERM (In Class)

Thursday, March 12 No Class

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

Week 9

Tuesday March 17, A New Revolution

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 217-221

- Start reading *The Cowshed*

* Mao Zedong "Bombard the Headquarters" (1966) and "The Sixteen Point Declaration" (1966) in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 426-430

* Wen Jieruo, "Living Hell" in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*, 703-709

□

Thursday March 19, Violence and the Cultural Revolution

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History* 221-225

Keep reading *The Cowshed*

*Chen Jo-hsi, "The Execution of Mayor Yin" in *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories*, 3-36

Week 10

Tuesday March 24, Waging the Global Revolution

Readings:

Keep reading *The Cowshed*

*Yu Hua, "Reading" in *China in Ten Words*, 36-61

Thursday March 26, Debate #1

Assignment due: Position Paper for Participants in Group Debate #1

Readings:

Keep reading *The Cowshed*

*Chen Jo-hsi, "Jen Hsiu-lan" in *Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories*, 115-136

Week 11

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!

Week 12

Tuesday, April 7, March 23 Burying the Cultural Revolution

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History* 225-228

Finish *The Cowshed*

* "Shanghai Communique" (1972) in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 435-440

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

Thursday, April 9 The Future and the Past

Assignment due: Final Project Assignment 1: Film Synopsis + Initial Argument

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 234-242

- * Ba Jin “Remembering Xiao Shan” in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*, 692-702
- * Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, “Some Questions on Party History” (1981) in *Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, 216-219

Week 13

Tuesday, April 14, Reform and Opening

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 242-250

- * Liu Binyan, “A Case of Persecution in Xi’an in Disregard of Central Instructions” (1984) in *Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 470-475
- * Wei Jingsheng, “The Fifth Modernization – Democracy” (1978) in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 2, 497-500

Thursday, April 16 Debating Political Reform

Readings:

- * Fang Lizhi, “Interview with Tiziano Terzani” (1987) in *Bringing Down the Great Wall: Writings on Science, Culture, and Democracy in China*, 207-217
- * Yu Hua, “Revolution” in *China in Ten Words*, 113-141

Week 14

Tuesday, April 21 Debate #2

Assignment due: Position Paper Due for those participating in Group Debate #2

Readings:

- * Yu Hua, *China in Ten Words*, “The People”, 3-14
- “Posters Calling for Democracy” (1989) in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 496-500

Thursday, April 23 Crackdown

Readings:

- Tanner, *China: A History*, 250-256
- * “Official” in Luisa Lim, *The People’s Republic of Amnesia*, 157-181

Week 15

Tuesday, April 28 Exchanging Prosperity for Political Freedom

Assignment due: Final Project Historical Narrative + Updated Argument

Readings:

History 342: History of Modern China, 1949-Today

Tanner, *China: A History*, 256-264

* “The Non-Dissident: A Party Man Betrayed” in *China Candid*, 40-58

*“Bourgeois and Socialist Democracies Compared” (1990) *People’s Daily*, in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 501-504

Thursday, April 30 The Three Pillars of the Modern CCP

Final Project

Readings:

Tanner, *China: A History*, 265-270

Liu Xiaobo “Behind the China Miracle” and “Behind the Rise of Great Powers” in *Liu Xiaobo: No Enemies, No Hatred*, 228-239; 223-227

Final Project Due: Monday May 4th by Noon

Final Exam: May 6, 10:05-12:05
