

**History 172/ASLC 146: MODERN CHINA**  
**Amherst College, Spring 2013**

Professor Jerry Dennerline

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Office hours: Tues/Thurs 1:30-2:00

Wed. 1:00-3:00

And by appointment

**Course Materials**

Available for purchase at Amherst Books and on reserve:

Jonathan Spence. *The Search for Modern China*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1999, ONLY.

Pei-kai Cheng and Michael Lestz. *The Search for Modern China: Documentary Collection*. 1999

Additional required readings are either included in a Course Packet, parts I and II, available at the History Department office in Chapin 11, on reserve at Frost Library, or on line as indicated in the syllabus. The documentary videos are streamed and can be viewed from computers on the Amherst campus; DVD and cassette versions are also on reserve at Frost Library.

**Course Description and Requirements**

This course will survey the history of China from 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century through lecture, reading, and discussion. No familiarity with China or previous experience in the study of history is required. Students will develop skills in reading and using documents, interpretive articles, and documentary videos. Class meetings include lectures, which supplement *The Search for Modern China*, and discussions of primary sources, articles, and videos. The **first requirement** is to read the assigned material (and view videos) before class in preparation for lecture and discussion. If you know that you will be unable to attend a class, inform me of the reason in advance. **Regular attendance and completion of all writing assignments is required; repeated absence will lower the grade; and plagiarism or other serious violation of the honor code will result in failure of the course.** Students will prepare questions and responses to sources and articles for discussion. Regular contributions to discussion will raise the grade; repeated unexcused absence will lower it. In addition, the grade will be based on the following writing assignments:

**Four brief (1 page, double-spaced) responses to readings (10%)**, based on prompts in the syllabus in **preparation for class discussion, due before the class** in which the material is discussed. Each student will complete **one individual response by Feb 7**, and **three in collaboration with small groups by Feb 28, April 4, and May 2**.

**Three 5-page papers (60%)** on assigned topics, due **Feb 11, Mar 4, and Apr 8**.

**One 7-page paper (30%)** on a topic designed by the student in consultation with the instructor, due **May 13**.

**All responses (before class) and papers must be delivered to the appropriate drop box on the course Moodle site on the due date by the time specified.**

## Syllabus

Thurs, Jan 24           **Introduction: Time and Space**

Tues, Jan 29           **Ming Decline and Qing Conquest**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 1-2  
Timothy Brook, "Vermeer's Hat," *Vermeer's Hat*, ch 2:26-53 (E-reserve)  
*Documentary Collection*, 1.1-1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 2.10

**Response:** Choose two documents by different authors. Compare and contrast the perspectives of the authors. What question does the comparison raise in your mind?

Thurs, Jan 31           **Confucian Learning and Imperial Rule**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 3-4  
*Analects, Mencius, Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean* selections (packet);  
*Documentary Collection*, 3.1-3, 3.5, 4.1-3.

**Response:** Choose two passages from two different documents that you think represent consistency or contradiction in the application of Confucian learning. Explain why you think so.

Tues, Feb 5           **China in the World**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 5-6  
Timothy Brook, "School for Smoking," *Vermeer's Hat*, ch 4:117-51 (E-reserve)  
Mark Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong*, ch 8: "Qing China and the World," pp 125-42.

**Response:** Brook and Elliott are both historians of China who seek to revise the conventional view of "encounter" between East and West by rethinking the world historical context. How would you compare the two approaches? Choose one point in each narrative that best serves as evidence for your comparison.

Thurs, Feb 7           **The British Lord and the Emperor**

**Read:** *Documentary Collection*, 6.1-6.5

**Response:** Choose two points from the British documents and two from Qianlong's edicts that you think best characterize the conflict between, or misunderstandings of, the two sides and explain why you think so.

**Mon., Feb 11: First paper due to Moodle drop box AND hard copy by 12 noon.**

Tues, Feb 12           **Opium and War**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 7;  
Carl A. Trocki, "Drugs, Taxes, and Chinese Capitalism in Southeast Asia," in  
*Opium Regimes*, pp. 79-101 (packet);  
*Documentary Collection*, 7.1-5

**Response:** Read over the material; then adopt a Chinese perspective and prioritize a short list of points for an argument in favor of legalizing or prohibiting the import of opium.

Thurs, Feb 14           **Rebellion and Restoration**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 8;  
*Documentary Collection*, 8.1-6;  
"Mid-century Rebels," in *Chinese Civilization and Society*, Document #56  
(packet);  
C.A. Curwen, *Taiping Rebel: The Deposition of Li Hsiu-ch'eng* (excerpts, packet);  
Franz Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents*, #347, 354, 366,  
H and L (packet).

**Response:** In class we will discuss perceived causes and effects of the mid-century rebellions. Find three points in the documents that you would like to connect as you try to explain the perceived causes or effects. How would you connect them?

Tues, Feb 19           **Restoration and Pragmatic Confucian Reform**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 9;  
*Documentary Collection*, 9.1-3;  
Feng Guifen, *On the Reform of Local Offices* and *On the Reform of the Clan System* (packet);  
Feng Guifen, *On the Manufacture of Foreign Weapons*, and *On the Adoption of Western Learning* (packet).

**Response:** In class we will discuss the politics of the Tongzhi Restoration and the thinking of the Restoration reformers. Read over the material; then find at least three points in the documents that you think best explain what was on the reformers' minds. How would you connect these points?

Thurs, Feb 21           **Self-strengthening, Imperialism, and Radical Reform**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 10;  
*Documentary Collection*, 9.4-8, 10.2-4;  
Richard Howard, "Japan's Role in the Reform Program of K'ang Yu-wei," pp.  
280-302 (packet).

**Paper Topic:** Read over the material; then, with reference to evidence from the documents, compare and contrast the historical circumstances and the reform efforts of the 1860s and the 1890s. What factors seem most important to you in making this comparison? Why?

Tues, Feb 26           **Constitutional Reform and Republican Revolution**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 11;  
*Documentary Collection*, 11.1-5

**Response:** In class we will discuss problems of consistency and contradiction in revolutionary thought and action. Adopt a Chinese perspective and prioritize a list of points for an argument favoring constitutional reform over republican revolution or vice-versa.

Thurs, Feb 28           **The Republic's Failure and Disunion**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 12;  
Schiffirin, Harold Z., "The Enigma of Sun Yat-sen," in *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913*, ed. by Mary C. Wright, pp. 443-74 (packet);  
*Documentary Collection*, 12.1-3, 12.5.

**Response:** In class we will discuss the roles of individual leaders versus larger historical circumstances in explaining the Republic's successes and failures. Find at least three points that might support an argument for or against the significance of Sun Yatsen or Yuan Shikai in the outcomes. Show how you would connect these points.

**Mon, Mar 4: Second paper due to Moodle drop box AND hard copy by 12 noon.**

Tues, Mar 5           **New Culture, Liberalism, and the Leninist Turn**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 13;  
*Documentary Collection*, 13.1-3;  
Jerome Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance*, excerpt (packet);  
Lu Xun, "My Old Home" and "A Madman's Diary" (E-reserve)  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lu-xun.htm>

**Response:** In class we will discuss what Lu Xun and Hu Shih do and do not have in common. Find at least two points of comparison that you think would be good evidence to use in such a discussion and explain why you think so.

Thurs, Mar 7           **Nationalist-Communist Split**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 14;  
*Documentary Collection*, 14.1-9;  
Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor*, Part II:  
Chapter 4, pp 65-87 (E-reserve).

**Response:** Drawing on the sources, prioritize a short list of points for an argument explaining the Nationalist-Communist split.

**Mar 10: Video for this week: "China in Revolution: Battle for Survival, 1911-1936"**

Tues, Mar 12           **Nationalist Regime and Urban Mobilization**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 15;  
*Documentary Collection*, 15.1-3, 6-7;  
Brian Martin, "Du Yuesheng, the French Concession, and Social Networks in Shanghai," in *At the Crossroads of Empires*, pp 65-83, notes pp 234-237;  
Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor*, Chapter 5,  
pp 88-108 (E-reserve);  
Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919-1949*, Introduction and ch. 6: "The Working Day" (packet).

**Response:** Could social mobilization in Shanghai provide an alternative path to national salvation? Draw on the documents for a short list of points for or against the proposition.

Thurs, Mar 14           **Nationalist Regime and Rural Mobilization**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 16;  
Peng Pai, "The Hai-feng Peasant Association," *Chinese Civilization and Society*,  
Doc. #67 (packet).  
*Documentary Collection*, 16:5-7.

**Response:** Could rural mobilization for reform provide an alternative path to national salvation? Draw on the documents for a short list of points for or against the proposition.

**SPRING BREAK**

**Mar 24: Video for this week:** "China in Revolution: Fighting for the Future, 1936-1949"

Tues, Mar 26           **War and Communist Revolution**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 17-18;  
*Documentary Collection*, 17.1-3, 17.6: "Wang Jingwei on collaboration" (NOT  
"The Nanjing 'murder race'");  
Lucien Bianco, "Peasant Responses to CCP Mobilization Policies, 1937-1945," in  
*New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, pp. 263-294  
(packet).

**Response options:** 1) Identify the key points in Bianco's argument; now might you use one or more of these points to revise the understanding of rural mobilization that you got from Peng Pai? 2) Choose one episode or image in the film that you find most significant for the narrative; how might you use some piece of evidence in the documents or in Bianco's review to support or revise the narrative?

Thurs, Mar 28           **War and Communist Revolution**

**Read:** *Documentary Collection*, 17.7: Liu Shaoqi, "How to Be a Good Communist;"  
Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol III (E-reserve) [http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3\\_08.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm))  
Wang Shiwei, "Wild Lilies" (packet);  
Timothy Cheek, "The Honorable Vocation: Intellectual Service in CCP Propaganda Institutions in Jin-Cha-Ji, 1937-45," in *New Perspectives*, pp 235-56 (packet).

**Response options:** 1) Identify the key points in Mao's argument about the place of art and literature vis-a-vis the revolution; how might you draw on Liu or Wang, or on Cheek's intellectuals to explain the political significance of Mao's argument? 2) Choose an episode or image in the film dealing with the place of intellectuals in Yan'an during the war; how might you use the other sources to revise the impression you got from the film?

**Mar 31: Video for this week:** “The Mao Years,” first hour.

Tues, Apr 2                   **People’s Republic and Cold War**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 19-20  
*Documentary Collection*, 18.2, 18.4-6; 19.2, 19.4-5

**Response:** Read over the documents; how might a critical reading of them help to explain the Communist Party’s claim to legitimacy in 1949? What are the implications?

Thurs, Apr 4                   **People’s Republic and Socialism**

**Read:** *Documentary Collection*, 20.3-5;  
Fei Xiaotong (Fei Hsiao-t’ung), “Kaixiangong Revisited, ” in *Chinese Village Close-up*, pp. 158-96 (packet).

**Response:** Does Fei Xiaotong’s critique of rural collectivization go beyond the parameters of criticism for the “Hundred Flowers” campaign outlined by Lu Dingyi (Doc. 20.3)? If so, how? If not, why not? What are the implications?

**Mon., Apr 8: Third paper due in Moodle drop box AND hard copy by 12 noon.**

**Apr 8: Video for this week:** “The Mao Years,” second hour

Tues, Apr 9                   **Maoism and Continuing Revolution**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 21-22  
*Documentary Collection*, 21.1-5.

**Response options:** 1) Read over the documents. How might a critical reading of them help to explain the Great Leap Forward? What are the implications? 2) Choose two or more voices in the documentary film to compare and contrast. What questions do they raise about Maoist policy.

Thurs Apr 11                   **Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution**

**Read:** *Documentary Collection*, 22.4-5

**Additional reading and viewing options:**

Anita Chan, et al., *Chen Village: The Recent History of a Peasant Community in Mao’s China* (interviews, 1984), ch 3-4.

Yue, Daiyun, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Chinese Revolutionary Woman* (memoir, 1985), ch 7-10.

Joseph Esherick, *Autumn Leaves: A Family Journey through Chinese History* (family history, 2011), Preface and ch 12-13.

Liu, Binyan. *A Higher Kind of Loyalty: A Memoir by China’s Foremost Journalist* (memoir, 1990), ch 6-9.

Carma Hinton, et al, “Morning Sun” (film, 2003), 117 min DVD.

**List continues on next page**

**Additional reading and viewing options, continued:**

Yang, Rae, *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*, (memoir, 1997).

Ye, Weili, and Ma Xiaodong, *Growing Up in the People's Republic: Conversations between Two Daughters of China's Revolution* (memoirs, 2005), ch 4-5.

Huang, Shu-min, *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village Through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader* (interviews, 1989), ch 1 (Prologue) and ch 6.

**Response:** Choose one of the optional readings. What question does the particular perspective of the source raise in your mind about the impact of Cultural Revolution more generally?

**Apr 14: Video for this week:** "Born under the Red Flag," first hour

Tues, Apr 16                    **From Revolution to "Modernization"**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 23-24  
*Documentary Collection*, 23.1-2, 24.1-2

**Response options:** 1) Read over the documents. How might a critical reading of them help to explain what did and did not change with the onset of reform? What are the implications? 2) Choose two or more voices in the documentary film to compare and contrast. What questions do they raise about reformist policy?

Thurs, Apr 18                    **From Revolution to "Modernization"**

**Reading Assignment Options:**

*Chen Village*, select later chapters.

*To the Storm*, chapters 11-14.

Liu, Binyan, "People or Monsters?" in *People or Monsters? and Other Stories of Reportage from China after Mao* (1983).

Huang, Shu-min, *The Spiral Road* (interviews, 1989), ch 1 (Prologue) and ch 8.

**Response:** Choose one of the optional readings. What question does the particular perspective of the source raise in your mind about the end of the Maoist era more generally?

**Apr 21: Video for this week:** "Born under the Red Flag," second hour

Tues, Apr 23                    **Reform and Renewed Mobilization**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 25-26

Huang Shu-min, *Spiral Road*, pp. 162-173, 191-198 (packet);

Thomas Gold, "Urban Private Business and Social Change," in *Chinese Society on the Eve of Tiananmen*, ed. by Deborah Davis, pp. 157-78 (packet).

**Response:** Identify the key similarities and differences between the effects of reform policy implementation on rural and urban society according to these two sources. What do you think are the implications?

Thurs, Apr 25           **Reform and Renewed Mobilization**

**Read:** Wu Guoguang, "The Dilemmas of Participation in the Political Reform of China, 1986-88" (packet);

Ye Ren, "The Democracy Movement in Exile is Trapped by Communist Mentality" and "The Way Out for the Chinese Democracy Movement" (packet);

Fang Lizhi, "The End of Forgetting History," from *Bringing Down the Great Wall*, pp. 267-275 (packet).

**Response:** Read over the three documents. Based on your reading, what do you think were the primary obstacles to democratic reform in 1989? What are the implications?

Tues, Apr 30           **A Changing China in a Changing World**

**Read:** Spence, *Search for Modern China*, ch 27, and ch 28 in *Search for Modern China*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2013), pp 690-707 (packet);

Cheng Li, *Rediscovering China* (1997), ch. 1, 6, and 14 (packet).

**Response:** Based on your reading of Cheng Li, what do you think were the most significant effects of accelerated economic reform in the Lower Yangzi region in the 1990s? What are the implications?

Thurs, May 2           **A Changing China in a Changing World**

**Read:** Elizabeth Perry, "Permanent Rebellion? Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Protest," in *Popular Protest in China*, ed by Kevin O'Brien (Cambridge: Harvard U Press, 2008), pp 205-215 (packet);

Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (Harvard U Press, 2006), 116-29 (packet).

Chen, Guidi, *Will the Boat Sink the Water? The Life of China's Peasants* (2006), ch 3 (E-reserve).

**Response:** Based on these readings, what are the most significant effects of accelerated economic reform in the past decade? What are the implications?

Tues, May 7           **Past, Present, and Future**

**Read:**

"Charter 08" text, tr Perry Link, in *New York Review of Books* 56.1 (Jan 15, 2009) on line (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22210>);

Feng, Chongyi. "Charter 08: The Troubled History and Future of Chinese Liberalism," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 41-5-10, October 11, 2010 (E-reserve).

Cheng Li, "The End of the CCP's Relilient Authoritarianism? A Tripartite Assessment of Shifting Power in China," *China Quarterly* 211 (Sept 2012): 595-623 (E-reserve).

**Discussion:** How has the study of the past contribute to a critical understanding of the present, and vice versa?



**Mon., May 13: Fourth paper due to the Moodle drop box AND hard copy by 12 noon.**

**Final Paper Guidelines:**

1) Choose a topic of your own with reference to what you have been learning in the course.

2) In addressing the topic you should choose one or more primary sources for evidence. You may also want to choose a book (NOT Spence's *The Search for Modern China*), or a combination of documents, films, memoirs, or articles that we have explored in class, focusing in greater detail on the topic of your interest. Consult with me if you want to add to these sources.

3) In your paper you should address **a specific question or set of related questions**, explain the **historical context** in which the question or questions arise, and discuss your understanding of the **significance** of the topic for the history we are studying. Be sure to **cite the evidence** on which your discussion depends.