The University of Iowa

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of History

**Twentieth Century China  
HIST:3652 / ASIA:3652**

Spring 2020, 3 s.h.

TTh 9:30-10:45am

Schaeffer Hall 60

ICON site: <https://uiowa.instructure.com/courses/126275>

Zoom class meeting ID: 758-670-654

**Matthew Noellert**

Office location: Schaeffer Hall 272; Drop-in hours: W 1:00-4:00pm and by appointment

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DEO:Landon Storrs, Schaeffer Hall 276

Any revisions to this syllabus will be posted on the course website. Students are responsible for periodically checking the course website and course announcements.

# Course Description

This course surveys the transformation of mainland China – one fifth of the world’s population – from a traditional agrarian empire in the first decade of the twentieth century to one of the largest industrial economies in the world in the first decade of the twenty-first century. We will take a bottom-up perspective on this revolutionary century, and draw global comparisons between the social, economic, and political experiences of China and the rest of the world. No previous knowledge of China or Chinese is required.

The course is divided into three units of roughly 30-40 years each: the Republican era, the Maoist era, and the Reform era. The first era was a time of contention and division as Chinese intellectual and political elite searched for new forms of legitimacy and the right path towards building a strong nation. The second era begins at the end of World War II, when Marxist-Leninist communism emerges as a dominant path, and focuses on the transformation of the traditional foundation of the Chinese state – rural society. The third era is characterized by globalization and its discontents, a time of rapid growth and expansion together with equally growing instability and conservatism.

The twentieth century history of China is inherently a global history. What happened in China over the past century happened in many other societies; the only difference is the social and historical contexts. As such, the goal of this course is to not only gain a deeper understanding of China, but of ourselves.

# Required textbooks

The following two books areon reserve at the Main Library and available for purchase at Prairie Lights:

Spence, Jonathan D. 2013. *The Search for Modern China.* 3rd edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Chen, Janet, Pei-kai Cheng, and Michael Lestz, eds. 2014. *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*. 3rd edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Other supplemental readings will be posted on the course ICON site for fair use.

# Course Format

We meet twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the first week, students will be organized into 6 groups. Starting from week two, Tuesday classes will be lecture-based, and Thursday classes will be group presentation-based.

Before we meet each **Tuesday,** you are expected to complete the weekly reading assignment from our textbook, Jonathan Spence’s *The Search for Modern China* (Blue Book), and submit one reflective question about the reading (1-3 sentences) by Monday night at 9pm. Each week I will post a list of key terms and concepts on ICON to guide your reading. Each Tuesdayclass will be a lecture that expands on and/or challenges Spence’s narrative history.

Before we meet each **Thursday**, each group must read and discuss their assigned document(s) from the *Documentary Collection* (Red Book), a book of primary source materials translated from the Chinese and designed to supplement the Spence text, or other supplementary reading. For each selection you read, discuss the following:

1. What is the context (who, what, where, when, why) in which this document was produced, and/or what is the context of the events it describes?
2. List any important people, places, things, events, and ideas mentioned in the document that the author takes for granted but that you are unfamiliar with.
3. How is this document related to the Spence reading and/or the class lecture? Compare and contrast.
4. Why is this document important? What can it teach us about Chinese history/society?

You are expected to meet together as a group to discuss your assigned document each week, prepare a critical 5-minute introduction to the document to submit in writing online (1 page) by Wednesday night at 9pm, and then present your introduction to the class on Thursday. Each Thursdayclass, groups will present their documents, to be followed by class discussion of all the documents as a whole. Please bring your textbooks to class on Thursdays so that we can examine the texts directly as we discuss them.

# Course Objectives and Grading

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Assessments and % of course grade** | **Activities** |
| Engage in comparative and applied learning of Chinese history. | * Attendance 10% * Unit quizzes 20% | * Reading assignments * Lectures * Discussions |
| Learn from each other, and produce collaborative work. | * Peer assessments 10% * Group writing assignments 15% * Group presentations 15% | * Group meetings * In-class presentations |
| Learn analytic thinking through effective writing. | * Reading questions 10% * Final exam 20% | * Weekly writing assignments |

This course will use the plus or minus grading system. A+ grade(s) are given only in extraordinary situations. Below is a detailed breakdown of grade ranges:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A+ (100%)  A (93-99)  A- (90-92) | B+ (87-89)  B (83-86)  B-(80-82) | C+ (77-79)  C (73-76)  C- (70-72) | D+ (67-69)  D (63-66)  D- (60-62) | F (<60%) |

### Attendance (10%)

Attending both Tuesday and Thursday classes is mandatory. Beginning from week 2, your first two absences will be automatically excused to allow for routine illness and other unavoidable or important events like accidents, job interviews, etc. Excluding week 1, spring break, and these two free absences, there is a total of 26 scheduled days of class, or 26 possible attendance points. Arriving 15+ minutes late or leaving 15+ minutes early will count as half a point.

Additional excused absences must be requested using the UI’s [absence form](https://registrar.uiowa.edu/sites/registrar.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/absence_explanation_form2019revised.pdf) at least 48 hours prior to the beginning of the class to be missed. In the case of sudden illness or other extreme circumstances that occur within 48 hours, appropriate documentation must be submitted within three days of the absence. I have the final say in judging whether or not an absence is excusable. For any absence, you will still be responsible for the work missed.

### Unit Quizzes (20%)

The class schedule is divided into three basic units: The Republican era, the Maoist era, and the Reform era. At the end of each unit there will be a 30-minute take-home ICON quiz on the essential content and themes of the unit. Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice questions and one short essay question.

Quiz rules:

1. Take the quiz by yourself. No collaboration is allowed.
2. Do not share questions or answers with your classmates during or after the quiz.
3. You are free to use any resources during the quiz, including textbook, notes, ppts, and the web. Keep in mind, however, that once you open the quiz you only have 30 minutes to complete it.
4. Take the quiz on a PC with a full keyboard, in order to properly answer the short essay question.
5. No make-up quizzes allowed.

Any student who fails to follow these rules will be reported for academic misconduct.

### Peer Assessments (10%)

At the end of each unit, each student will be asked to complete a group peer assessment form, which consists of a self-evaluation and peer evaluation of group work. The purpose of these forms is to help you reflect on your own contributions to group work and to make sure everyone's group participation is evaluated fairly. These forms will be kept strictly confidential.

### Group Writing Assignments (15%)

Each group must submit online a collaborative text about their assigned primary document every Wednesday night at 9pm. This text should function as a detailed outline or notes for the 5-minute group presentations on Thursdays and be a maximum of one page long. See “Course Format” above for more information. This text should be more detailed than a bullet-point outline, but less detailed than a full speech transcript. In general, the text should answer the basic question, “Why is this document important?” The objective of the group writing is to practice thinking analytically through both collaboration and writing.

### Group Presentations (15%)

Every Thursday in class each group must give a 5-minute critical introduction to their assigned primary document and be prepared to answer questions about it. See “Course Format” above for more information. The objective of the group presentations is to practice verbal communication skills.

### Question Submissions (10%)

Each student must submit online one reflective thought/question every Monday night at 9pm. The question must identify a specific conceptual or analytical problem that you found in the assigned reading, and be a maximum of three sentences long. Your question should not be overly abstract or narrowly factual. For example, “Why did Chinese farmers support communism?” is overly abstract, and “When did communist land reform begin in Sichuan Province?” is a factual or empirical question. In contrast, a more specific and analytical question could be, “Did any landlords in Sichuan Province support early communist land reform policies? If so, why?” The objective of the question assignment is to make you think about the reading assignments and express your ideas clearly and effectively in 1-3 sentences.

### Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be a take-home cumulative essay exam, due online May 15th. The format of the exam will be two 1,000-word essay questions.

### Extra Credit

Extra credit will be given for every course-related outside event during the semester that you attend and then report to me in due time (by the next class following the event). For students who did not grow up in a Chinese family, this also applies to attending informal gatherings related to Chinese holidays (e.g. Chinese New Year). Conversely, for students from China, you can also get extra credit for inviting your classmates to any such gatherings. Events will be announced over the course of the semester as they become known to me, and there are typically only about three per semester. The extra credit will be applied to the following unit quiz on the calendar.

### Late Policy

Any assignment that is submitted within one week after the stated due date will receive half credit. Any assignment that is more than one week late will not be counted (0 points).

# Class Schedule

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Topic** | **Class (Date)** | **Homework Before Class** | **Classwork** |
| 1 | Introduction and Background | 1/21 | - Read: course syllabus | - Introductions and course overview |
| 1/23 |  | China to 1911 |
| **Unit 1: The Republican Era (1911-1949)** | | | | |
| 2 | The Early Republic: Political and Social Fragmentation | 1/28 | - Read: Blue book, pp.267-295 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 1/30 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 3 | Communists and Nationalists | 2/4 | - Read: Blue book, pp.295-300, 310-21, 327-36, 348-55, 365-75 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 2/6 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 4 | The Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945 | 2/11 | - Read: Blue book, pp.381-87, 397-432 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 2/13 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 5 | Civil War and Communist Victory | 2/18 | - Read: Blue book, pp.375-81, 433-39, 451-59 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 2/20 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion - Unit 1 Quiz |
| **Unit 2: The People's Republic: Maoist Era (1949-1978)** | | | | |
| 6 | Land Reform and Collectivization | 2/25 | - Submit: Unit 1 group assessment - Read: Blue book, pp.439-45, 460-65, 484-93 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 2/27 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 7 | The Politics of PRC State Building | 3/3 | - Read: Blue book, pp.465-83, 493-513 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 3/5 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 8 | Socialism in Crisis: The Great Leap Forward | 3/10 | - Read: Blue book, pp.514-28 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 3/12 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 9 |  |  | SPRING BREAK |  |
| 10 |  |  | ONLINE PREP BREAK |  |
| 11 | Socialist Education | 3/31 | - Read: Blue book, pp.529-41 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 4/2 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 12 | The Cultural Revolution | 4/7 | - Read: Blue book, pp.541-55, 565-86 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 4/9 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion - Unit 2 Quiz |
| **Unit 3: The People's Republic: Reform Era (1978-present)** | | | | |
| 13 | De-Collectivization and Market Reform | 4/14 | - Submit: Unit 2 group assessment - Read: Blue book, pp.587-638 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 4/16 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 14 | Socialism in Crisis, Again: The June Fourth Incident | 4/21 | - Read: Blue book, pp.639-65 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 4/23 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 15 | Globalization and Its Discontents | 4/28 | - Read: Blue book, pp.666-707 - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 4/30 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing | - Group presentations and discussion |
| 16 | Twenty-First Century China: Toward a New Era | 5/5 | - Read: The New York Times “China Rules” series, parts 2-5: Pt. 2 - Qin and Hernandez (2018)  Pt. 3 - Goodman and Perlez (2018)  Pt. 4 - Bradsher and Li (2018)  Pt. 5 – Landler (2018)  - Submit: Reading question | - Lecture and discussion |
| 5/7 | - Read: Group document (see ICON page) - Submit: Group writing  - Submit: Unit 3 group assessment - Work on final exam essays  - Final Exam DUE online May 15 | - Group presentations and discussion - Unit 3 Quiz |

# References

Bradsher, Keith and Li, Yuan. 2018. “China’s Economy Became No. 2 by Defying No. 1.” *New York Times,* November 25, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/25/world/asia/china-economy-strategy.html>

Chen, C.S., ed. 1969. *Rural People’s Communes in Lien-Chiang.* Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.

Esherick, Joseph W. ed. 1974. *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service.* New York: Random House.

Goodman, Peter S. and Jane Perlez. 2018. “Money and Muscle Pave China’s Way to Global Power.” *New York Times,* November 25, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/25/world/asia/china-world-power.html>

Hinton, William. 1966. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Hinton, William. 1983. *Shenfan*. 1st ed. New York: Random House.

Landler, Mark. 2018. “The Road to Confrontation.” *New York Times,* November 25, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/25/world/asia/china-us-confrontation.html>

Qin, Amy and Javier C. Hernandez. 2018. “How China’s Rulers Control Society: Opportunity, Nationalism, Fear.” *New York Times,* November 18, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/25/world/asia/china-freedoms-control.html>

U.S. Department of State. 1967. *The China White Paper, 1949: United States relations with China, with special reference to the period 1944-1949.* Volume One. Department of State publication 3573, Far Eastern series 30. Stanford University Press.

Xi, Jinping. 2017. *The Governance of China.* Volume II. Beijing: Foreign Language Press.

# College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Information and Policies for Undergraduates

### Absences and Attendance

Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All [absence policies](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences), however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities. Students may use this [absence form](https://registrar.uiowa.edu/sites/registrar.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/absence_explanation_form2019revised.pdf) to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused.

### Academic Integrity

All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code) [Honesty.](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code)  Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

### Accommodations for Disabilities

UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with [Student Disability Services (SDS)](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor.

### Administrative Home of the Course

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. See [CLAS policies](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook) for more information.

### Communication and the Required Use of UI Email

Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI ([Operations Manual, III.15.2](https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/human-resources/professional-ethics-and-academic-responsibility#15.2).k).

### Complaints

Students [with a complaint](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities) about a course should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to CLAS in 120 Schaeffer Hall.

### Final Examination Policies

The [final exam](https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies) schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals.

### Nondiscrimination in the Classroom

UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. [Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](https://diversity.uiowa.edu/office/equal-opportunity-and-diversity).

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance contact [OSMRC](https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/).