**Modern Chinese History**

Dr. Emily Matson

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:50 AM

Class Location: Blow Memorial Hall Room 332

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Office: James Blair Hall 313

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11 AM - 12 PM, and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In the past 200 years, “China” as we know it has undergone tremendous changes in its social fabric, political identity, and position on the world stage. From crumbling dynasty to fledgling republic to increasingly powerful socialist nation-state, China’s rapid transformation has arguably been unprecedented in world history. In this course, we will examine how China’s identity has evolved throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing in particular on the contested meanings and applications of nationalism, communism, and modernization. The first part of the course will focus on the crumbling Qing dynasty and how various Qing reformers and anti-Qing revolutionaries grappled with the choices before them as the world order they had known crumbled. Next, we will focus on the Republic of China from 1911 to 1949, noting external threats, internal disputes over legitimacy, and the different schools of thought on what “China” was and how it should best develop. Finally, we will examine the People’s Republic of China and how it has transformed from an underdeveloped socialist nation to the second largest economy in the world.

Although this is principally a history course, we will engage with a wide variety of source material, including short stories, films, governmental edicts and treaties, intellectual essays, and eyewitness accounts of key events. This will be to expand our views on what “history” is and how it is studied, as well as to challenge some of our preconceived notions on Chinese culture and society. Equal emphasis will be placed on examining Chinese state-sponsored narratives, dominated today by the Communist Party of China, and other, alternative narratives that may be overlooked or suppressed. In addition to readings from the Schoppa textbook, most sessions will include a range of primary sources. Students are expected to spend approximately 3 hours outside of class to prepare for each session. This syllabus is subject to minor revisions throughout the course.

**COURSE FORMAT**

This course is based on lectures and discussion. Generally, the instructor will start off sections with a lecture on Chinese history and historiographical trends to frame each day’s readings. After the lecture, most sections will also include an interactive discussion centered on the readings for the day. Daily attendance is mandatory, and participation in class discussion, which includes active listening as well as speaking, is also expected.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

* Understand the factors involved in shaping contemporary Chinese society over the past 200 years and key themes such as revolution, nationalism, communism, and modernization.
* Discuss how the historical discipline can contribute to a greater understanding of Chinese society, what methodology it uses, and how it is unique among the social sciences.
* Improve skills of critical reading, persuasive writing, and crafting original arguments.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Students are required to purchase copies of the following books for this course:

1. *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History,* Fourth Editionby R. Keith Schoppa (London: Routledge, 2019).
2. *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, Third Edition by Janet Chen, et. al. (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).
3. *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun.* Lu Xun (trans. Julia Lovell) (New York: Penguin Classics, 2009).
4. *Mao Zedong: A Life*. Jonathan Spence. (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).
5. *Young China: How the Restless Generation Will Change Their Country and the World.* Zak Dychtwald. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2018).

All other written course materials will be scanned and uploaded onto Blackboard. Students are required to bring reading materials to class with relevant sections noted and ready for discussion. Copies of films can all be found online.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

**Map Assignment** 5%

**Participation** 10%

All students are expected to attend class regularly. The instructor will take attendance at the beginning of each class period. If students are absent for more than 3 class periods, their grades will be penalized accordingly, and each additional absence will cost the students 2 points (out of 100) on his/her final course grade.

Students are required to come to class prepared with notes and questions on the day’s readings. Participation is mandatory and speaking in class is highly encouraged. However, active listening is also a critical part of participation, and this class is intended to be an open forum for discussion amongst students. If any student is uncomfortable with speaking during section, please see me early in the semester so that we can come up with other ways to actively contribute.

As part of your participation grade, you will have to post on Blackboard discussion every 2-3 weeks by midnight on Wednesday before Thursday’s class (dates are specified in the syllabus). By Monday evening, I will post a series of questions on the readings that you will need to respond to. You can also choose to respond to a classmate’s post. In either case, your posts should be around 250 words each.

**Midterm Exam** (10/14)15%

**Final Exam** (12/14)25%

The midterm exam will be an in-class exam, and the final exam will take place at the end of the semester during finals week. These exams will be based both on lectures and on required reading and be a combination of ID questions and short essays. The final exam may contain a longer essay as well. Study guides will be provided for students several weeks in advance of each exam.

**Paper 1** (due 10/21)20%

**Paper 2** (due 12/02) 25%

The papers should each be about 1200 words in length, and will be based on a combination of assigned readings and outside research. **Papers are due in class on the assigned date. Students will be deducted 1/3 of a grade each day the paper is late, and papers not handed in within 2 weeks of the due date will not be accepted.** Two forms of the paper should be submitted: 1) a hard copy in class, on the due date; 2) an electronic copy on Blackboard, also to be submitted on the due date.



**CLASSROOM POLICIES**

*Electronic devices:* Cell-phones and other hand-held electronic devices must be turned off during class. Laptops are allowed for taking class-related notes and accessing assigned readings online. However, there is to be no web surfing during class. If the instructor catches a student web surfing during class, that student will be marked as absent for the day. The instructor also reserves the right to revoke laptop use at any time for all students (except those who require laptops for notetaking and can provide documentation from the Coordinator of Disability Services stating this).

*Student athletes:* Please let me know your sports schedule ahead of time, and you will be able to miss up to two classes for athletic competitions with no penalty. However, you are still responsible for any missed work. If your sports schedule conflicts with more than 3 class meetings, please meet with me during my office hours early in the semester to make alternate arrangements. In accordance with NCAA regulations, you are not allowed to miss class for practices. If you must miss class for a competition you are advised to minimize any further absences from this class.

*Plagiarism*: Plagiarism is a serious honor violation for which there are severe penalties. In short, in your papers you must provide notes giving credit for all ideas of other authors that you use. In addition, when you use direct quotation from a source, you must both include a note citing your source and enclose the quoted matter in quotation marks (unless you are dealing with a long quotation, in which case the quote is put in blocked form, indented from the left margin, without quotation marks). Most of the time you should avoid quotation, instead paraphrasing the source you are using—and, of course, giving credit to your source in a note. It is not enough to substitute a few words or change them around in order to make a paraphrase; a paraphrase must be in your own words—and sentence structure. A true paraphrase does not require quotation marks, but it does require a note. Please feel free to ask me if you have questions about any of this.

**SUPPORT**

*Dean of Students Office:* If you have a personal crisis of any kind during the semester, the Dean of Students Office can provide support. They will also notify your professors while maintaining privacy. The office is located in Campus Center 109. You can also reach staff via telephone at (757)221-2510 or by email at deanofstudents@wm.edu.

*Student Accessibility Services:* The College of William and Mary is committed to providing learning experiences that are accessible for all students and will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities.  If you have a learning difference or a disability – mental health, medical, or physical impairment – please contact the Student Accessibility Services staff at (757)221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please visit [www.wm.edu/sas](http://www.wm.edu/sas).

*Counseling Center:* For mental health concerns (including stress, anxiety, and depression), the Counseling Center (WMCC) can provide consultations and connect you with support to resources both on and off campus. The center is located in Blow Hall 240, and can be reached at (757)221-3620.

*Writing Centers:* The A&S Writing Resource Centers are available to work with students on their writing and communication assignments. These include the Writing Resources Center (WRC) and the History Writing Resources Center (HWRC). You can find more information on each center on their individual websites: [www.wm.edu/as/wrc](http://www.wm.edu/as/wrc) and [www.wm.edu/as/history/undergraduateprogram/hwrc](http://www.wm.edu/as/history/undergraduateprogram/hwrc).

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

The topics and readings listed on this syllabus are tentative, and the instructor may modify readings and topics at any time. Students should pay attention for any such changes. Students should come to class having read the materials listed for that date.

**September 2, Session 1 – Introduction**

**September 7, Session 2 – All Under Heaven: China’s Dynastic System**

* Schoppa Chapter 1
* **Map assignment DUE**

**September 9, Session 3 – The Manchu Conquest and the High Qing**

* Schoppa, Chapter 2
* Chen, *The Manchu Conquest* (2.5-2.7), *Kangxi’s Consolidation* (3.4), *Yongzheng’s Authority* (4.1-4.2), *Chinese Society and the Reign of Qianlong* (5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6)
* **Discussion Board Post #1 DUE**

**September 14, Session 4 – External Challenges: The Opium Wars**

* Schoppa, Chapter 3
* Chen, *China and the Eighteenth-Century World* (6.1-6.5), *The First Clash with the West* (7.1-7.5)

**September 16, Session 5 – Internal Challenges: The Taiping and Other Rebellions**

* Schoppa, Chapter 4
* Chen, *The Crisis Within* (8.1, 8.3-8.5)

**September 21, Session 6 – The Self-Strengthening Movement and Additional Challenges**

* Schoppa, Chapter 5
* Chen, *Restoration through Reform* (9.2-9.6)

**September 23, Session 7 – Late 19th Century Imperialism and China**

* Schoppa, Chapter 6
* Chen, *New Tensions in the Late Qing* (10.1-10.2, 10.4-10.6)
* **Discussion Board Post #2 DUE**

**September 28, Session 8 – Reformers and Revolutionaries: The Qing’s Last Gasp**

* Schoppa, Chapter 7
* Chen, *The End of the Dynasty* (11.1-11.4)

**September 30, Session 9 – The 1911 Revolution**

* Chen, *The End of the Dynasty* (11.5-11.6)
* Lu Xun: Translator’s Introduction, “Nostalgia,” “Medicine,” “A Minor Incident”

**October 5, Session 10 – The Early Republic and the Failure of Constitutionalism**

* Schoppa, Chapter 8
* Chen, *The New Republic* (12.1-12.6)
* Lu Xun: “Preface,” “Diary of a Madman,” The Real Story of Ah Q,” “Kong Yi Ji”

**October 7, Session 11 – The May Fourth Movement**

* Schoppa, Chapter 9
* Chen, *“A Road is Made”* (13.1-13.3, 13.5)
* Lu Xun: “New Year’s Sacrifice,” “Upstairs in the Tavern,” “Soap,” “The Loner”
* *Mao Zedong: A Life,* Ch. 1-3
* **Discussion Board Post #3 DUE**

**October 12, Session 12 – Russia, the Rerise of the GMD, and the Birth of the CCP**

* Schoppa, Chapter 10
* Chen, *The Fractured Alliance* (14.1-14.7)
* *Mao Zedong: A Life* Ch. 4-5

**October 14, Session 14 – Midterm Exam**

**October 19 – Fall Break, NO CLASS**

**October 21, Session 15 – The Nanjing Decade**

* Schoppa, Chapter 11
* Chen, *The Guomindang in Power* (15.1-15.2, 15.6, 15.8), *Communist Survival* (16.3-16.5)
* **Essay 1 DUE**

**October 26, Session 16 – CCP Survival and the Rise of Mao**

* Schoppa, Chapter 12
* Chen, *Communist Survival* (16.1-16.2, 16.7-16.8)
* *Mao Zedong: A Life,* Ch. 6

**October 28, Session 17 – Sino-Japanese Conflict and the Mukden Incident**

* Schoppa, Chapter 13
* Chen, *The Guomindang in Power* (15.3-15.5), *Communist Survival* (16.6)
* *Mao Zedong: A Life,* Ch. 7
* **Discussion Board Post #4 DUE**

**November 2, Session 18 – China’s World War II**

* Schoppa, Chapter 14
* Chen, *World War II* (17.1-17.8)
* Eileen Zhang, “Love in a Fallen City”

**November 4, Session 19 – The Chinese Civil War**

* Schoppa, Chapter 15
* Chen, *The Fall of the Guomindang State* (18.1-18.2, 18.4-18.6)
* Esherick, “Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution”
* *Mao Zedong: A Life,* Ch. 8

**November 9, Session 20 – The Early Years of the People’s Republic of China**

* Schoppa, Chapter 16
* Chen, *The Birth of the People’s Republic* (19.2-19.3, 19.5), *Planning the New Society* (20.1-20.5)

**November 11, Session 21 – Things Fall Apart: The Great Leap Forward**

* Schoppa, Chapter 17
* Chen, *Deepening the Revolution* (21.1-21.4)
* *Mao Zedong: A Life,* Ch. 9-10
* **Discussion Board Post #5 DUE**

**November 16, Session 22 – Recovery and Continuing Tensions**

* Chen, *Deepening the Revolution* (21.5-21.6)

**November 18, Session 23 – The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution**

* Schoppa, Chapter 18
* Chen, *The Cultural Revolution* (22.1-22.7)
* *Mao Zedong: A Life,* Ch. 11-12

**November 23, Session 24 – The Party Opens Up: Deng Xiaoping’s Economic Reforms**

* Schoppa, Chapter 19
* Chen, *Reopening the Doors* (23.1-23.3, 23.6), *Redefining Revolution* (24.1-24.3)
* *Young China,* Ch. 1-4

**November 25 – Thanksgiving Day, NO CLASS**

**November 30, Session 25 – The Party Clamps Down: Political Dissent in the 1980s**

* Chen, *Levels of Power* (25.1), *Testing the Limits* (26.1-26.5), *Century’s End* (27.1-27.3)
* Marie Claire Bergere, “Tiananmen 1989: Background and Consequences”
* *Young China,* Ch. 5-8

**December 2, Session 26 – After Tiananmen and the Cold War: The PRC in the 1990s**

* Schoppa, Chapter 20
* *Young China,* Ch. 9-12
* **Essay 2 DUE**
* **Discussion Board Post #6 DUE**

**December 7, Session 27 – Post-Reform China and Taiwan**

* Schoppa, Chapters 21 and 23
* Chen, *Century’s End* (27.6), *Breakthrough?* (28.1, 28.4)

**December 9, Session 28 – China Today: What Now?**

* Schoppa, Chapter 22
* “Is Mao Still Dead?” ([www.chinafile.com/conversations/mao-still-dead](http://www.chinafile.com/conversations/mao-still-dead), 2015)
* **Extra Credit Assignment DUE**