

Yale University
HIST 871/EAST 571: The History of the People's Republic of China
Fall 2015
Denise Y. Ho

Class Hours: Monday, 1:30-3:20

Course Description: Can the recent past of the People's Republic of China be studied *as* history? This graduate seminar is an introduction to recent scholarship on the People's Republic of China, primarily focusing on the Mao era. In their readings students will consider scholarship in the social sciences, examine the questions that are currently being asked (and what sources are available to ask them), and evaluate historical work published in the last ten years.

Course Structure: Readings will be assigned both chronologically and thematically. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all of the assigned reading, as well as to lead discussion (by providing discussion questions) four times in the semester (pending enrollment). Students are encouraged to read as writers, to analyze the scaffolding as well as the argument of the work, and to use the readings to think about the shape of their own future research. Students will write two book reviews and one final historiographical review essay OR one short essay plus prospectus/syllabus.

Course Readings: The books for this course are on reserve at the university library. Other course readings will be posted to the course website.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Discussion leading (including four sets of discussion questions)	20%
Discussion participation	20%
Book reviews (two)	20%
Review essay (Or shorter essay plus prospectus/syllabus)	40%

- **Discussion Leading/Questions:** There will be assigned readings for each class session, and students are expected to come to class having done the readings and ready to participate in class discussion. For each class discussion, two students will be assigned to lead discussion, and will be required to email **ten discussion questions (typically five on each reading)** to the instructor by **9:00 a.m.** on the day of the discussion (Monday). At least one question should be about sources. Based on course enrollment, students will submit questions up to four times per semester.
- **Discussion Participation:** will be assessed on the basis of regular attendance and engagement with class discussion.
- **Book Reviews:** Students will choose two books from the course assignments and write short (750-word) books reviews, to be shared with other participants in the seminar. If students choose, they may wish to coordinate their book reviews with the weeks they will be leading discussion. If students wish to review books not on the list of course assignments, they should clear their choices with the instructor.
- **Review Essay:** Students will write one historiographical essay on a topic of their choosing, using the assigned readings to build a list, or creating an independent list of

their own. Students may opt for an alternate assignment, which will include one shorter review essay AND either a primary source prospectus or an undergraduate syllabus on post-1949 history.

Week 1: Introduction (Friday, September 4)

- Strauss, Julia, “In Search of PRC History.”
- Brown and Pickowicz, “The Early Years of the People’s Republic of China: An Introduction.”
- Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder, “The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History: An Introduction.”
- Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Susanne, “In Search of a Master Narrative for 20th Century Chinese History.”
- Above readings posted to ClassesV2

Week 2: Dilemmas of Victory (Monday, September 14)

- Dikotter, Frank. *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-1957*. Bloomsbury Press, 2015.
- Gao, James Z. *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre, 1949-1954*. University of Hawai’i Press, 2004. (Available as an online book)

Week 3: Making the People (Monday, September 21)

- Smith, Aminda. *Thought Reform and China’s Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.
 - Read this with excerpts from Kiely, Jan. *The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1901-1956*. Yale, 2013. At least Chapter 1, “Architects of Penal Reformation in the Late Qing Empire and Early Republic of China.” Posted to Classes V2.
- Mullaney, Thomas S. *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. (Available as an online book)
- **CHOOSE**: One book review on one of the three books. Be ready to discuss the review in class and explain why it is/isn’t useful as a review.

Week 4: City and Countryside (Monday, September 28)

- Brown, Jeremy. *City Versus Countryside in Mao’s China: Negotiating the Divide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Hershatter, Gail. *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China’s Collective Past*. The University of California Press, 2014. (Available as an online book)
- **READ**: The Gender of Memory roundtable discussion: <https://networks.h-net.org/node/3544/discussions/27977/roundtable-discussion-gail-hershatters-gender-memory-prc-history>. Be ready to discuss: Which review was the most comprehensive? Which review spoke best to your own interests and concerns?

Week 5: Science and Knowledge (Monday, October 5)

- Eyferth, Jacob. *Eating Rice from Bamboo Roots: The Social History of a Community of Handicraft Papermakers in Rural Sichuan, 1920-2000*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009. (Available as an online book)

- Schmalzer, Sigrid. *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-Century China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. (Available as an online book)

Week 6: Famine (Political Scientists) (Monday, October 12)

- Yang, Dali. *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change Since the Great Leap Famine*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Thaxton, Ralph A. *Catastrophe and Contention in Rural China: Mao's Great Leap Forward Famine and the Origins of Righteous Resistance in Da Fo Village*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Week 7: Famine (Historians) (Monday, October 19)

- Manning, Kimberley Ens and Felix Wemheuer, eds. *Eating Bitterness: New Perspectives on China's Great Leap Forward and Famine*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2012. (Available as an online book)
- Dikotter, Frank. *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe*. Walker & Company, 2011.
- **LOOK AT:** Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013. (At least: Chapter 11, "China's Population Loss," and Chapter 14, "The Systemic Causes," posted to Classes V2).

Week 8: Mao Cult (Monday, October 26)

- Leese, Daniel. *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Cook, Alexander C. *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Week 9: Cultural Revolution and the Problem of the Faction (Sociologists) (Monday, November 2)

- Chan, Anita, Stanley Rosen, and Jonathan Unger. "Students and Class Warfare: The Social Roots of the Red Guard Conflict in Guangzhou." *The China Quarterly*, 1980.
- White, Lynn T. *Policies of Chaos: The Organizational Causes of Violence in China's Cultural Revolution*. Princeton University Press, 1989. (Available as an online book)
- Walder, Andrew G. *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009. (Available as an online book)

Film Screening: Xu Xing, *Summary of Crimes* (Tuesday, November 3) Details TBD

Week 10: Cultural Revolution and the Problem of Class (Sociologist/Anthropologist) (Monday, November 9)

- Andreas, Joel. *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origins of China's New Class*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Wu, Yiching. *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Week 11: Cultural Revolution and Culture (Monday, November 16)

- Clark, Paul. *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Mittler, Barbara. *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. Read the Introduction, the Conclusion (posted on ClassesV2), and at least ONE chapter.

Week 12: Cultural Revolution and Violence (Monday, November 30)

- SU Yang. *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- **BRAINSTORM:** Choose either the Famine or the Cultural Revolution, and brainstorm the outline for a review essay using ONLY the books we have read.

Week 13: The Mao Era and the World (Monday, December 7)

- Chen Jian. *Mao's China & the Cold War*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001. (Available as an online book)
- Luthi, Lorenz. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton University Press, 2008. (Available as an online book)

Week 14: Reckoning, Remembering (Monday, December 14)

- Jing Jun. *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village*. Stanford University Press, 1996.
- READ “The Mao Era in Retrospect” in Walder, Andrew G., *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed*. Harvard University Press, 2015 (posted on Classes V2). RE-READ and BRING IN: at least one other chapter from a book we have read that also examines the Mao era in retrospect. Possible examples might be Hershatter, “Narrator,” or Wu Yiching, “Coping with Crisis” or “From Revolution to Reform.”

Review essay DUE Monday, December 21

- Students may write one long historiographical paper (15-20 pages) OR
- Students may write one shorter review essay on several works(8-10 pages) AND either:
 - A primary source prospectus
 - An undergraduate syllabus on post-1949 history
- Guidelines will be distributed and students will choose their topic in consultation with the instructor