

History 53: Revolutionary China

Brooklyn College, *The City University of New York*
Study Abroad in China Program

Instructor(s): Andrew Meyer, Ph.D. (History) and/or
Shuming Lu, Ph.D. (Communication)

Textbooks:

Required:

Jonathan Spence. (1999). The Search for Modern China. Publisher: Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-97351-8

(Students must complete reading the first 6 chapters of the text, up to page 137, before arriving in Beijing.)

Recommended:

Pei-kai Cheng & Michael Lestz, with Jonathan Spence. (1999). The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection. Publisher: Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-97372-3

Field Trips:

Relevant historical sites in the following cities: Beijing, Xi'an, Nanjing and Yangzhou

Course Objectives

This course will cover the history of China from the 18th century through the founding of the People's Republic and recent transformations, with special emphasis on the role of the city of Nanjing in the events that shaped modern Chinese history. Course lectures and readings will be supplemented by field trips to the historical sites relevant to the period under study week-by-week.

Course Outcomes

1. Students should be familiar with the important names, dates, and places of modern Chinese history
2. Students should be able to identify the most important institutions that structure Chinese society and government
3. Students should understand some of the most distinctive aspects of Chinese culture and how they inform Chinese social, political, and economic life
4. Students should be able to think critically about historical events and reason through different explanations for causes and effects on the basis of evidence
5. Students should be able to read historical documents with a sensitivity to their temporal and cultural context
6. Students should be able to analytically distinguish between social, economic, cultural, and other types of forces that motivate human history

Class Format

Fifteen class sessions will be scheduled, with each session for 3 hours. Most sessions will take place in physical class settings, and some will be delivered on the blackboard website and during field trips to historical sites in the Chinese cities. Students will be put into smaller groups to facilitate chapter discussions in class and online.

If you are a CUNY student, a Blackboard account has been reserved for you. Before using it, you must first set the account up. You need to create an account in Blackboard at <http://portal.cuny.edu>. If you have problems with the Blackboard site or portal, call the ITS for help at 718-677-6180. You are required to complete the above process one week before departure for China.

Schedule of the class meetings and the location may not be announced until the group's arrival in China and may be subject to change, sometimes at short notice. The class may meet on weekend and evenings if necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make necessary adjustments in the class schedule and evaluation in response to the changing situation during the course of the program in China.

If we occasionally choose to meet in a café, you should note: (1) when the class is in session, all must turn off the internet access (unless otherwise instructed); and (2) each is expected to purchase a meal/snack (about \$5).

Written Submissions

All written submissions must be typed and documented in accordance with the APA style requirements. Written submissions will be evaluated by the instructor for responsiveness to the assignment, theoretical sophistication, rigor, coherence, and ingenuity of the position developed, organization, and correctness as well as clarity of expression. As regards evaluation of the mechanics of expressive correctness, students are advised that for every ten errors in spelling, grammar (including capitalization and punctuation), and documentation, the overall evaluation of a submission will be lowered by one grade. All submissions are due as specified in the syllabus and late submissions will be penalized with one grade lowered for each day late.

Evaluation

1. Participation	20%
2. Group projects	20%
3. Two Interpretive papers	30%
4. Final exam	30%

Details of participation requirements and the group projects will be announced in separate documents before or upon arrival in China.

As this course is part of the study abroad program, students are advised that their behavior during the program may affect their final grade for the course.

Non-Brooklyn College students are required to keep a course portfolio of all work and assignment submissions for this course, to be evaluated by the appropriate office and committee for equivalent credits at the home institution.

Written Assignments:

1. There will be two short interpretive papers (3-5 pages each) on assigned questions. Each will count for 20% of your final grade. The first paper is due at 5:00 pm on the 7th day after our arrival in Nanjing and the second due at 5:00 pm on the 12th day after our arrival in Nanjing.
2. At the end of the course, there will be a final exam combining questions on the content for the final section of the course and comprehensive questions covering the whole course. This will be worth 30% of your grade. The final exam may be a take-home which should be at least 5 pages in length and is due 10:00 pm the day before the group departs Nanjing.

Questions for Interpretive Papers:

Choose one question and write a well-reasoned answer in response, drawing upon primary evidence from the sourcebook and other sources. You can argue either side of the case, and you will be graded on how well you back up your position with evidence. Each answer should have a clear thesis and draw upon at least three pieces of evidence. You may use evidence gathered from your field trips to answer any of the questions.

Paper #1

1. Was the Opium War an inevitable consequence of fundamental differences between British and Chinese systems of government and trade, or could it have been avoided?

2. Can the Taiping Rebellion be viewed as an example of “Western” influence on China?
3. Was the Qing imperial system in decline by the year 1870?
4. Does the history of Nanjing in the 19th century evidence the growing regional power of southern China in the imperial system?

Paper #2

1. Did the Qing empire initiate any effective modernization programs in its last decades of rule?
2. Was the 1911 Revolution a genuine “revolution,” or did it effect little fundamental change?
3. Should Dr. Sun Yat-sen be viewed as a traditionalist or a radical?
4. Should the New Culture Movement be viewed as a victory of Western values over Chinese?
5. Did the Nanjing regime of 1927-1937 represent a complete break with the Chinese political systems that had preceded it?

Schedules and Topics of Class Activities

Students must complete reading the first 6 chapters of the text (up to page 137) before landing in Beijing.

1. Introduction to the Course
2. Review of Chinese Dynasties in history
 - a. Pre-imperial China: Xia, Shang and Zhou
 - b. The early empire and middle empire dynasties: Qin to Tang
 - c. Later empire: Song to Qing
 - d. Post-imperial China: ROC & PRC
 - e. Modern China and its revolutions
 - f. Framework of transformations in Chinese political forms
 - g. Patterns of Chinese economic development over history
3. Transition from Ming Dynasty to Qing Dynasty: Late Ming
 - a. Field trip: the Great Wall in Beijing
 - b. Field trip: The Summer Palace in Beijing
 - c. Field trip: Tiananmen Square in Beijing
 - d. Field trip: The Palace Museum in Beijing
 - e. Field trip: The Forbidden City in Beijing
 - f. Ming Dynasty from Glory to Collapse
4. The Manchu Conquest
 - a. China under a new foreign rule
 - b. Adapting to China
5. Emperor Kangxi’s Consolidation & Emperor Yongzhen’s Authority
 - a. Taiwan and maritime China
 - b. Defining the borders
 - c. A mixed legacy
 - d. Center and channels of power
 - e. Moral authority
6. Chinese Society and the Reign of Emperor Qianlong
 - a. Confucianism
7. Ancient China and start of imperial rule
 - a. Field trip: Terra Cotta Army and Horses Museum in Xi’an
 - b. How does the structure influence of this Qin Emperor influence/represent the imperial structure of subsequent dynasties and Chinese understandings of imperial rule? Any impact on modern Chinese politics?
8. China and the 18th Century World
 - a. Managing the foreigners
 - b. Aliens and Chinese law
 - c. China’s First Clash with the West
 - d. The Opium Wars
 - e. Field trip: The site of the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing
 - f. Field trip: Yangzhou
 - g. How does the memory of this event play into the consciousness of modern PRC citizens?

9. The Crisis Within
 - a. The Taiping Rebellion
Field Trip: The Taiping Tianguo museum (next to the Confucius Temple). How has the historical memory of the Taiping changed over time? How did the city of Nanjing help shape that movement?
 - b. Muslim revolts and uprisings by other religious groups
10. The first Interpretive Paper
 - a. Presentation and Discussion
11. Restoration through reform
 - a. Confucian Reform
 - b. Defining foreign policy
 - c. Missionaries in China
 - d. Overseas Chinese
12. New Tensions in the Last Qing Dynasty
 - a. Self-strengthening movement and the Japanese war
 - b. Reform movement of 1898
 - c. Three sides of nationalism
 - d. Emerging forces
13. The End of the Dynasty
 - a. The Qing Constitution
 - b. New railways, new army
 - c. Nationalists and socialists
 - d. Fall of the last dynasty
 - e. Field trip: A trip to the tombs of the first Ming emperor, Taizu, in Nanjing
 - f. What does the design of an imperial tomb teach us about the philosophical and religious underpinnings of the Chinese empire? Note how Dr. Sun's tomb combines modern iconography with imperial designs and symbols. What message does his tomb project?
14. The New Republic
 - a. Field trip: Dr. Sun Yat-sen, first provisional president of the Republic of China
 - b. Experiment in democracy
 - c. Militarists in China and Chinese in France
15. Envisioning State and Society
 - a. The warning voice of social Darwinism
 - b. Marxist stirrings
 - c. The May Fourth Movement: Nanjing and Peking University
 - d. The Comintern and Birth of CCP- the Chinese Communist Party
 - e. Field Trip: The Presidential Palace in Nanjing. What does the design of the Presidential Palace teach us about the political culture of the Nationalist Guomindang (GMD)? How is the memory of those years being presented?
 - f. Fractured alliance between GMD and Communist CCP
 - g. The GMP in power
 - h. The CCP in survival
16. The Nanjing Decade & World War II
 - a. Field trip: The Nanjing Massacre memorial. Is there any way to make sense of such a tragic event? What does the memorial teach us about nationalism as a cultural force?
 - b. China divided
 - c. End of Wars
 - d. Fall of the GMD
 - e. Japanese surrender
 - f. Land reform
17. The Founding of the PRC –People's Republic of China
 - a. Countryside and town
 - b. Structure of the new government
 - c. The Korean war
18. The Second Interpretive Paper
 - a. Class Presentation and Discussion

19. Planning the New Society and Deepening the Revolution
 - a. Mass campaigns: The hundred flowers; anti-rightist; great leap forward; socialist education; the cultural revolution
 - b. Foreign policy and the national minorities
 - c. The Sino-Soviet rift
20. Modern Transformations & Re-entering the World
 - a. Re-opening the doors
 - b. United States and Nixon's visit
 - c. The Old Guard dies: 1976
 - d. Assessing the roles of Mao Zedong in modern Chinese history
 - e. Re-defining revolution
 - f. The fifth-modernization: Pro-democracy movement and its crack-down in 1989
 - g. Taiwan and special economic zones
 - h. Seeking truth from facts and pragmatism by Deng Xiaoping and his successors
21. China's modernizations
 - a. Levels of power: new structure and system
 - b. Problems of prosperity
 - c. Democracy's chorus
 - d. Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau
 - e. Rebuilding the law
 - f. Into the sea
22. Summary and review
 - a. How do we see China now?
 - b. Understanding the modern China in its historical context
 - c. Understanding the new rising China and its role in the current world context
 - d. Field trip: CCP museum in Shanghai
 - e. Field trip: the Bund and Pudong in Shanghai
23. Final exam