

HISTORY 342: HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA,  
1949 TO THE PRESENT

Spring 1985  
Tuesday and Thursday  
2:25-3:40

Meisner  
Office: 5117 Humanities  
Office Hours:  
Tuesday & Thursday  
3:45-5:00  
or by appointment  
263-1848

In the 1930s and 1940s, Mao Tse-tung and other Chinese Communists organized tens of millions of Chinese peasants into what was certainly the most massive, and perhaps the greatest, revolution in world history. The Chinese revolution took the historically unique form of harnessing the forces of peasant revolt in the rural areas to surround and overwhelm the cities. The political result was the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This course is an inquiry into the post-revolutionary history of Chinese Communism, from the formal establishment of the Communist state in 1949 to the current post-Maoist era of the "Four Modernizations". The inquiry will focus on the successes and failures of Chinese Communists in power, particularly with respect to their proclaimed aim of building a socialist society in the world's most populous land. In a broader sense, the course is concerned with the nature and social results of 20th-century socialist revolutions in general, addressing the question of whether it is possible to carry out a genuine socialist reorganization of state and society under conditions of economic scarcity. The question is relevant to the history of the Soviet Union and to a variety of contemporary Third World societies and revolutionary movements. The examination of the Chinese Communist historical experience hopefully will prove helpful for understanding the dilemmas which confront other revolutionary movements and societies which today proceed under Marxist and socialist banners.

No prior knowledge of Chinese history is presupposed. The first four weeks of the semester will be devoted to a survey of the history of Marxism and Communism in China from the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the victory of the Maoist revolution in 1949. This will serve as a review for those who have some familiarity with modern Chinese history, and, for those who do not, as an introduction to the history of the People's Republic.

The course is divided into five parts. Part I, as noted above, will be a brief survey of the Chinese Communist Revolution (1919-1949). Part II will be concerned with the consolidation of Communist state power (1949-52) and the period of the First Five Year Plan (1953-57), focusing on the social and political consequences of Soviet-style industrialization. Part III will examine one of the great utopian episodes in world history, the Great Leap Forward campaign of 1958-60 and its aftermath. Part IV will reassess the Cultural Revolution and the end of the Maoist era (1966-1976). Part V will consider the deradicalization of the Chinese revolution in the years since the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976. In pursuing inquiries into these various eras, comparisons between Chinese history and the histories of other post-revolutionary societies (especially the Soviet Union) will be suggested in both lectures and readings.

Lectures usually will be confined to about 45 minutes, followed by a half-hour of general discussion.

REQUIREMENTS

1. A final examination based on the lectures and readings listed below.
2. A paper (about ten typewritten pages) selected from one of the topics suggested on pages 6-8 below. Other topics may be chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Grading: Final exam: 60%  
Paper : 40%

Paperback editions of the following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and elsewhere:

Lucien Bianco, The Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949 (Stanford University Press)

William Rosenberg and Marilyn Young, Transforming Russia and China (Oxford University Press)

Maurice Meisner, Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic (The Free Press)

David and Nancy Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China, 1964-69 (Pantheon)

Roger Garside, Coming Alive: China After Mao (Mentor)

Lectures and Readings:

Part I: The Chinese Communist Revolution, 1919-1949

- January 22: Problems in the Study of Contemporary Chinese History
- January 24: The Making of a Revolutionary Situation: China, 1839-1919
- January 29: The Introduction of Marxism and the Origins of the Chinese Communist Party
- January 31: The Revolution of 1925-27
- February 5: The Origins of Maoism
- February 7: Yen-an Communism (1935-45)
- February 12: The Nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution: the theory of "peasant nationalism"
- February 14: A Comparison of the Chinese and Russian Revolutions

Readings:

Lucien Bianco, The Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949 (Stanford paperback) or Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung (Penguin paperback), chs. 1-8.

William Rosenberg and Marilyn Young, Transforming Russia and China (Oxford paperback), chs. 1-6

Maurice Meisner, Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic (Free Press paperback), chs. 1-4.

NOTE: Schram's Mao Tse-tung is out of print. If you can find a used copy (or use library reserve), it is to be preferred over the Bianco book.

Part II: The Establishment of Communist Political Power and the Era of the First Five Year Plan, 1949-1957

- February 19: Revolutionaries Turned Rulers: The New State and its Ideology
- February 21: Repression, Terror and the Korean War
- February 26: Urban China: The Era of National Capitalism

Part II, continued

- February 28: Rural China: The Land Reform Campaign  
March 5: The First Five Year Plan and its Social Consequences  
March 7: Agricultural Collectivization  
March 12: The Hundred Flowers Campaign

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China, chs. 5-11.

Rosenberg and Young, Transforming Russia and China, ch. 7.

Part III. The Great Leap Forward Campaign and Its Aftermath, 1958-65

- March 14: The Maoist Strategy of Development and the Theory of Permanent Revolution  
March 26: The Great Leap (1958-60)  
March 28: Economic and Political Consequences of the Great Leap  
April 2: The Liuist Regime (1961-65)

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China, chs. 12-17.

Rosenberg and Young, Transforming Russia and China, ch. 8.

Part IV: The Cultural Revolution and the Close of the Maoist Era, 1966-76

- April 4: The Concept of "Cultural Revolution".  
April 9: Class Struggles and Political Struggles, 1966-69  
April 11: Results and Consequences of the Cultural Revolution  
April 16: The Rise and Fall of the "Gang of Four", 1970-76.  
April 18: Successes and Failures of the Maoist Era

Part IV, continued

Readings:

David and Nancy Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China, 1964-69 (Pantheon paperback).

Meisner, A History of China in the Maoist and Post-Maoist Eras, chs. 18-21  
(mss. available on reserve in History Dept. Library, 4257 Humanities)

Part V: Post-Maoist China, 1976-84

April 23: The Ascendency of Teng Hsiao-p'ing (Deng Xiaoping)

April 25: Politics and Policies in the Teng Era

April 30: Economic Reforms and Social Results

May 2: Chinese Marxism in the Post-Mao Era

May 7: Socialism and Modernization

May 9: China and the Fate of Socialist Revolutions

Readings:

Roger Garside, Coming Alive: China After Mao (Mentor).

Meisner, A History of China in the Maoist and Post-Maoist Eras, Chs. 22-24  
(mss. on reserve in History Dept. Library)

Papers due on or before May 7

Final Exam: to be announced

Suggested Paper Topics and Readings

Essays should be reasonably concise (about 10-12 typewritten pages), well-argued, and based on the critical reading of two of the listed books. Most of the books should be available on reserve in Helen White Library.

1. The Nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution; a nationalist or a social revolution?

Chalmers Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power  
Mark Selden, The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China

2. The Character of the Kuomintang Regime -- and why it collapsed.

Lloyd Eastman, The Abortive Revolution  
Suzanne Pepper, Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-49.

3. Maoism as a Variant of Marxism-Leninism

Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao  
Stuart Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung  
or Maurice Meisner, Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism

4. China and the Korean War

Bruce Cummings, The Origins of the Korean War  
Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War

5. The Nature of the Chinese Communist State

Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolution  
V. Nee and D. Mozingo (eds.), State and Society in Contemporary China

6. Industrialization during the Maoist Era

Stephen Andors, China's Industrial Revolution  
Barry Richman, Industrial Society in Communist China  
or Thomas Rawski, China's Transition to Industrialism

7. Industry in the Countryside

Dwight Perkins (ed.), Rural Small-Scale Industry in the People's Republic of China  
Jon Sigurdson, Rural Industrialization in China

8. Women in China: Chinese Communism and Sexual Inequality

Delia Davin, Woman-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China  
Elisabeth Croll, Feminism and Socialism in China  
Marilyn Young (ed.), Women in China  
Kay Ann Johnson,  
Judith Stacey, Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China



9. The Land Reform campaigns

William Hinton, Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village  
C.K. Yang, A Chinese Village in Early Communist Transition  
or John Wong, Land Reform in China: Institutional Transformation of Agriculture

10. Agricultural Collectivization

Vivienne Shue, Peasant China in Transition  
William Hinton, Shenfan (1983), parts 1 & 2 (pp.5-166).

11. Intellectuals in Communist China

Jerome Grieder, Intellectuals and the State in Modern China  
Merle Goldman, China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent  
or James McGough (ed.), Fei Hsiao-tung: The Dilemma of a Chinese Intellectual

12. The Hundred Flowers Campaign

Roderick MacFarquhar, The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. I: Contradictions Among the People, 1956-57.  
Roderick MacFarquhar (ed.), The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals

13. The Chinese Communist Bureaucracy

Harry Harding, Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy  
Richard Kraus, Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism

14. The Chinese Army (PLA)

John Gittings, The Role of the Chinese Army  
Ellis Joffe, Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps  
or Livio Maitan, Party, Army and Masses in China

15. The Cultural Revolution: Leaders and Masses

Hong Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution  
Byung-joon Ahn, Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution  
Neale Hunter, Shanghai Journal

16. Results of the Cultural Revolution

Charles Bettelheim, Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China  
Bill Brugger (ed.), China: The Impact of the Cultural Revolution

17. The Red Guards: Social Composition and Political Aims

Klaus Mehnert, Peking and the New Left: At Home and Abroad  
Hong Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution  
Stanley Rosen, Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in  
Guangzhou (Canton)

18. The Sino-Soviet Dispute

John Gittings, The World and China, 1922-1972  
Klaus Mehnert, Peking and Moscow  
Donald Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-61

19. "Sent-Down" Youth

Thomas P. Bernstein, Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The  
Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China  
Stanley Rosen, The Role of Sent-Down Youth in the Chinese Cultural Revl.

20. Education in the Maoist and Post-Maoist Eras

Jonathan Unger, Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton  
Schools, 1960-1980  
Suzanne Pepper, "Chinese Education After Mao: Two Steps Forward, Two  
Steps Back and Begin Again?" China Quarterly (  
pp. 1-65.

21. The Democracy Movement of 1978-81

James D. Seymour (ed.), The Fifth Modernization: China's Human Rights  
Movement, 1978-79  
Chen Erjin, China: Crossroads Socialism  
Roger Garside, Coming Alive, chs. 10-13.