COLONIALISM AND CHINA

This class is designed with two goals in mind: 1) navigating various theoretical approaches to colonialism and interrelated processes, and 2) examining the diverse features of colonialism in Chinese historical experience.

Colonialism, according to Jurgen Osterhammel, is “a phenomenon of colossal vagueness.” For the purposes of this class, we will interpret colonialism broadly, together with imperialism. If colonialism commonly refers to foreign settlement and direct governance, and imperialism generally conveys foreign administration of territories without significant settlement and by means of indirect forms of domination, these distinct usages are not always consistent, nor are the historical differences they signal always significant in practice. In the case of China, we are confronted with a gamut of colonial and semi-colonial formations, ranging from true colonies to treaty-ports, to “spheres of influence,” each term describing distinctive local enclaves that were superimposed upon the considerably larger—and largely sovereign—territorial body of China. These colonial and semi-colonial “contact-zones” were dominated by various and frequently multiple foreign powers, including Portugal, Britain, France, the U.S., Italy, Japan, and Germany. Each followed a different chronology and encompassed a constellation of distinctive political regimes and social and economic practices.

Theorists of colonialism have variously portrayed colonies as sites of exploitation, through which European powers extracted land, labor, and resources; as domains of fantasy, economic and sexual opportunity, where imagined Others facilitated the construction of the European bourgeois self; and as laboratories of modernity. In recent decades, historians have tended to shift from a primary focus on subjugated peoples that assumed that “what it meant to be European, Western and capitalist was one and the same,” to a more nuanced approach that questions the dichotomy of colonizer/colonized and examines instead interactions of engagement, intimacy, inequality, and opposition.

This class begins with recent comparative consideration of Qing empire and European colonialism. We will then consider the 19th and 20th century colonial encounters that shaped China’s modern interactions with Europe, the U.S. and Japan. We will consider the specificity of individual encounters—the way particular groups appropriated, resisted or shaped the categories, institutions, and networks created by colonizing practices—as well as the ways in which the colonizing projects of different states at different times may have influenced each other, giving rise to common colonial structures. We will approach these diversities and commonalities through a variety of thematic and analytic lenses.
**REQUIREMENTS:**
The emphasis of this class is on collective examination and discussion of readings. Your engaged and thoughtful participation in class discussion, accordingly, will account for 50% of your grade, including brief presentations and facilitation of discussion. Three written papers are also required.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS**
Please note that you should take care to leave yourself sufficient time for critical digestion of the readings (all readings other than those marked “reference” are required). The number of assigned pages may be deceptive, particularly when the readings consist of a variety of articles. In every case you should plan to come to class ready to discuss each author’s theoretical approach and analysis. Additionally you should try to consider how each reading may complicate and be integrated into our ongoing discussions of colonialism and China.

**Week I (Jan. 5): Thinking about Colonialism, Imperialism, Orientalism, and China**

Readings (for discussion at January 5 meeting):


Karl Marx, Selections from *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), and “On Imperialism in India,” [Blackboard]

Sun Yat-sen, “San Min Chu I (The Three Principles of the People): Lecture 2 (1924) [Blackboard]


*Reference:*

**Week 2 (January 12): Qing Empire and Comparisons with European Colonialism**


William Rowe, “Education and Empire in China’s Southwest: Ch’en Hong-mou in Yunnan,” in Benjamin Elman, et. al., eds., *Education in Late Imperial China*, pp. 417-48. [Blackboard]


Reference:
*China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* pp. 1-11; 270-299; 409-461; 518-557 (2005)


**Week 3 (January 19): The Changed Global Order of the late 19th Century: Translingual and Human Circulations**

Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity*, preface and pp. xv-76.


Reference:

**Week 4 (January 26): Semi-Colonial and Colonial Encounters**


John M. Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* [at bookstore]
Week 5 (February 2): Precoloniality, Ethnography, and Colonial Formations


Week 6 (February 9) Steinmetz, pp. 243-518

Week 7 (February 16) Material Circulations II: Opium


Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952*. 1-266. [At bookstore]

Week 8 (February 23) Colonialism and Regimes of Modernity


Sabine Fruhstuck, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*, Chapter 1: “Erecting a Modern Health Regime”

Reference:
Timothy Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts: Egypt, Technopolitics and Modernity*

Week 9 (March 2): Colonialism, Gender and Anti-Imperial Nationalism

Franz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled” [Blackboard]


Week 10 (March 9): Nationalism, Colonialism, and Sovereignty: Manchukuo, Colony or Nation-state?