History 191: China Past and Present

China has multiple pasts: imperial, republican, and revolutionary. China Past and Present introduces the epic sweep of China’s modern transformations. Grasping these changes provides a key to the uneasy relationship between past and present in contemporary China. Since the end of the nineteenth century, Chinese rulers, intellectuals, reformers, and revolutionaries have attempted to modify, reject, even to eradicate elements of the Chinese past in order to construct a new and modern present. At the same time, they have sought to create a sense of specifically Chinese identity, and to redefine modernity in Chinese terms. The changing understandings of China’s pasts and the meanings of Chinese ethnic and national identity in the present are the themes of this course.

HIST 191 is designed to acquaint you with the historical context for understanding contemporary China. It follows HIST 190, but there are no prerequisites.

Section Discussions: Section assignments give you an opportunity to focus on primary texts. Primary texts are the first-hand sources through which historians understand the past. Among these readings you will find political documents, news articles, and fiction from the past, as well as personal memoirs. Read these sources carefully and critically, taking into account the context in which they were written. Discussion focuses on learning to interpret these primary texts. There is also a required map quiz in section.

Course Objectives:
• develop familiarity with transformations in China and Chinese culture, since late 19th c.
• understand China’s changing engagement with ideas of modernity
• build ability to think critically and analyze primary and secondary sources
• learn to express ideas more clearly and confidently through discussion and writing

Requirements and Grading:
• Lecture attendance, section attendance, and all readings are required. Lecture, section, and course readings will be on quizzes and exams. You should attend the section you are enrolled in. Section (map, attendance, and participation) counts 20% of grade.
• There is a midterm and a final (March 18, 12:30 pm). Each counts 20% (40% total).
• 4 short quizzes (5 points each), count 20% of your grade. These in-class quizzes are marked on the syllabus. Plan to get to class on time—these can’t be made up.
Two short papers (see below for due dates), one on each of the 2 memoirs (*Bound Feet and Western Dress* and *Struggle for Modern Tibet*). Each counts 10%. See guidelines.

**Readings**  The following texts (listed in order of appearance) are at the bookstore:

*a required course packet

**Consideration for your classmates**: Cell phones must be OFF during class. No texting or other phone use in class (or your participation grade may suffer). Computers are only permitted in class for note-taking. ANY internet use in class counts against your grade.

**In Fairness**: Absences or late assignments will only be excused in the event of documented illness. All work that you turn in must be your own. *Any work submitted for credit that includes the words or ideas of anyone else must fully and accurately identify your source in a complete citation*. See UO definitions of academic misconduct: [https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx](https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx) Any plagiarism or cheating will result in a failed grade.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND LECTURES:**

With the exception of the first week, readings in Moise should be completed by the Tuesday lecture. Other readings should be completed for your section meeting (W or Th).

**Week 1: Orientations and Themes**

read:  
- Moise 1-38, maps of China on pp. 5, 15, 65, 150
- Chang, *Bound Feet*, 1-37

1/6  *China’s Pasts and China’s Present* (plus language and territory overview)
Section: Map exercise; discuss readings.
1/8  *The Late Imperial State, Foreign Aggression and Internal Turmoil*

**Week 2: Imperialism and the Problem of Chinese Modernity**

read:  
- Moise 39-53;  
- Chang, *Bound Feet* 37-81; and two documents (on blackboard):  
  - “Placards”;  
  - “Mid-Century Rebels”

1/13  *The Decline of Imperial China*
Section:  
**Map Quiz, Discuss Chang reading and documents**
1/15  *Hong Kong and Colonialism, Past and Present*

**Week 3: Transforming Culture**

read:  
- Moise, review all reading for quiz**  
- PACKET: “The Spirit of the May Fourth Movement”  
- Chang, *Bound Feet* (82-215)

1/20  *The 1911 Revolution: What is Revolution and What Changed? QUIZ #1 (Moise)*
Section:  
Discuss Chang and “Spirit of May Fourth”
1/22  *New Culture, the New Woman, and the New Man*
Week 4: Nationalism, Class and Violence
Read: •Moise, 54-91; •PACKET: Mao Zedong, “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan” (March, 1927); Chiang Kai-shek, “Nationalism and Traditionalism”
1/27 Marxisim, Class and China **FIRST PAPER DUE IN CLASS (on Bound Feet)
Section: Discuss Mao reading.
1/29 The First United Front (GMD-CCP) and its Demise **QUIZ #2 (on Moise, Mao)

Week 5: Chiang Kai-shek’s Republic of China, Mao’s Rural Strategies, and War with Japan
Read: •Moise, 92-121; •PACKET: Shen Congwen, “Staff Adviser”; •Mao Dun, “Spring Silkworms”; Hinton, Fanshen (viii-xiii, 128-141, 147-160)
2/3 Film: "China in Revolution"
Section: Chiang, Shen, Mao Dun, Hinton readings (packet)
2/5 Communist Victory and the Construction of a New State

Week 6: Defining the Socialist State
Read: •Moise, 122-144; •PACKET:; Ding Ling, “Thoughts on March 8” (1942): Mao Zedong, “On Art and Literature” (1942) and “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” (1949)
2/10 **MIDTERM (Covers Weeks 1-5; readings, lectures and sections)
  Remember to bring blue/green books to exam! (available at bookstore).
Section: Discuss Packet readings
2/12 Recovering Stability in the First Decade; Reforming Society

Week 7: Maoist Utopianism
Read: *Moise, 145-196; PACKET: •“Peng Dehuai’s Critique of the Great Leap Forward” (1959); • “Decision of the Central Committee of the CCP in regard to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”; “Quotations from Chairman Mao”
2/17 Maoist Utopianism I: The Great Leap Forward **QUIZ #3 QUIZ #3 (on Moise)Maoist Utopianism II: The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
Section: Discuss Packet readings
2/19 Film: “The Mao Years”

Week 8: The Post-Mao Reaction and Reform Era
2/24 The Character of Reform: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics? Capitalism?
Read: •Moise, 197-240; PACKET: •Deng Xiaoping, “Emancipate the Mind”; Liu Binyan, “A Case of Persecution in Xi’an”
Section: Packet readings.
2/26 Film: Small Happiness **QUIZ #4 (Moise, Packet)

Week 9: Boundary Issues Past and Present: What is China? Who is Chinese?
Read: Tashi Tsering et al., The Struggle for Modern Tibet [2nd paper due 3/10]
3/3 National Minorities I: Tibet in Historical Perspective
Section: Discuss Struggle for Modern Tibet.
Week 10  China, Democracy, and Global Capitalism


3/10  Socialism, Capitalism, and Democracy

*2nd PAPER DUE (on Struggle for Modern Tibet)—bring to class.

Section:  All Readings

3/12  Questions of Culture and Memory in the Present, and REVIEW

(Don’t forget the final exam, 12:30 pm. on March 18. Remember to bring blue books!)