

HIGR 210
History and Historiography of Modern China

Fall 2014

Karl Gerth

Location: H&SS 3086

Time: Mondays, 9 am-Noon

Welcome to our graduate colloquium on secondary sources on modern China. This is a stand-alone seminar on PRC history, particularly on the Mao era (1949-76). Previous work on Chinese history and Chinese language skills are not required. However, you should already have a general understanding of modern Chinese history. Even if you have previously taken surveys, read several textbooks and memoirs before and during the term to refresh your memories. Throughout the term, we will ask: How do the assigned monographs challenge established views?

This term we will focus on recently published secondary sources covering the Mao era. We only have ten weeks, so we will be highly selective. In addition to my choices, students will have the opportunity to select the books (in consultation with me) and lead the seminar for the final two weeks. I have provided a few possible choices at the end.

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF THE TERM:

1. Talk with other graduate students. This will be the first seminar for new graduate students in modern Chinese history. In addition to the academic dimension, the seminar will also cover “professionalization” topics, starting with how to get the most out of graduate seminars.
2. Start the conversation before you arrive at class. Perhaps meet with one or two of your classmates for tea beforehand. Arrive mid-conversation and ready to drive the discussion agenda.
3. Speak. Take chances. It is okay to have completely different opinions from everyone else, especially if you can justify those opinions with specific references.
4. The Bare Minimum. Be able to summarize the author’s main argument(s), best examples, and the types of sources used. Develop a procedure for digesting books and articles.
5. The Better Still. Have your own agenda. What did you like best about the book(s) you read? What did you find least convincing? How good were the sources? What do you wish the author also had covered? There are unlimited questions to pose and discuss.
6. Writing Matters. Improve your writing by any means necessary, including trying extensive revisions, asking friends for feedback, and reading books on writing.
7. Follow and Contribute to the Community. Follow dissertation reviews, join H-Asia and H-PRC and any other list serves you think interesting (I find MCLC very helpful for keeping up with current social/cultural happenings).

ASSIGNMENTS

A. INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

DUE: END OF FIRST WEEK OF TERM (FRIDAY).

If this is your first seminar with me, please write a brief intellectual autobiography. What are your intellectual interests and how have you developed them? Include general biographical information and the highlights of your intellectual development. Approximate length: three-four pages (more is better but unnecessary). There is no right or wrong way to do this assignment.

B. BOOK REVIEW BY YOU & INDICES

DUE: TWICE IN TERM THE FRIDAY BEFORE CLASS.

To augment our discussions, each week several students will write a two-page book review of a *supplemental* reading and circulate them to all seminar participants. Rather than summarizing the pro's and con's of the book, organize your review around a provocative question such as: Which book should have been assigned reading and why? See below. Everything you write should include an argument/thesis/opinion.

INDEX. In addition to your review, on a separate page, provide three additions to the index of one of the books you read and a brief paragraph describing why the index should have included these terms or concepts. Suggestion: use a book you have electronic access to.

C. PUBLISHED BOOK REVIEWS BY OTHERS

Each week one or two students will find as many reviews as possible. Read them, rank them, and circulate them. During class the student(s), will report on common praise/criticism of the assigned text(s). Let's save each other a lot of work by using the same file-naming conventions: BOOKTITLE YEARPUB SURNAME OF REVIEWER LOCATION OF REVIEW RANK. For example, "China Learns from Soviet 2010 Smith in JAS Best Review" (refers to the most useful review you found online: a review of *China Learns from the Soviet Union* written by Smith and published in the *Journal of Asian Studies*).

I prefer to form my own opinions before reading reviews. But that's up to you. Try different ways and learn the limits of relying on reviews. As I think you will discover, reviewers only have the space to scratch the surface. Learn to appreciate what makes a good review. Then try to incorporate those qualities in your own reviews.

D. WEB ASSIGNMENT (NEW WAYS TO DISSEMINATE HISTORY)

DUE: Friday before our ninth seminar.

1. Identify 3-5 websites that promote historical knowledge on any topic. Only 1-2 should be primarily about China (see examples below).
2. Rank the sites from best to worst.
3. Review what your predecessors did:
<http://ucsdmodernchinesehistory.wordpress.com/文章-reviews-and-essays/book-reviews/>

4. In a few paragraphs, justify your ranking and think about what we might do. What makes one site better than another? Can you think of more effective ways to organize the information?

Here are a few to consider (use no more than one of these):

1. A model that has had millions of hits: <http://depts.washington.edu/civlr/>
2. http://www.vcea.net/index_en.php
3. The MIT Visualizing Cultures project
<http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/home/index.html>
4. The University of Bristol-managed Visualising China interactive resource
<http://visualisingchina.net/>
5. The Wilson Center's Digital Archive (<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/>) has several hundred translations of documents from the PRC Foreign Ministry Archives online.

E. TERM PAPER / WEB FOUNDATIONS

This is the most important assignment. Details to be discussed in class.

In brief: A ten-page historiographical essay plus an accompanying annotated bibliography are **due on the first day of exam week**. Start to contemplate the assignment by having a look at these: <http://ucsdmodernchinesehistory.wordpress.com/文章-reviews-and-essays/book-reviews/>

ADDITIONAL ISSUES & SUGGESTIONS

1. **Computers/electronics** use in class is detrimental to conversation. Use only for presentations or by permission.
2. **File Names.** You may submit your assignments electronically but only if you adhere to this format for your attachments: [YOUR SURNAME GIVEN NAME YEAR AND TERM AND ASSIGNMENT NAME.docx] Smith Jane 2014 Fall XXX Assignment.docx
3. **Title.** Give your assignments a title. Aim for succinct titles that capture both the subject of your work and, more importantly, the thesis/argument. For instance, rather than "Great Leap Forward" or "The Influence of Marx on the Communist Revolution in China" (topics), try "An Avoidable Disaster: Mao and the GLF" or "The Ideology that Ended Socialism in China" (arguments/theses).
4. **Clarity.** It's a myth that complex ideas require convoluted prose. If your writing is convoluted, readers may assume your argument is.
5. Avoid **wordy** constructions. Proofread. Read your essay aloud. Or record your essay and listen to the recording—how clear is it? Can you explain your subject and thesis to an educated non-academic?
6. **Recommended.** Please obtain a copy of this book: Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* (also sold under *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*). Any edition. This is the single best book on writing I have encountered. It'll give you many simple tricks to improve your prose. Please read, re-read, and implement its suggestions.
7. **Read the relevant sections of this site:**
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html>.

A BRIEF LIST OF TEXTBOOKS / MEMOIRS / DOCUMENTARIES

1. Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (2007).
2. Susan Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern China* (2011).
3. Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization* (2009).
4. Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 3rd Edition (1999).
5. Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (1985).
6. Li Zhensheng, *Red-Color News Soldier* (2003).
7. Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (1996).
8. Nien Cheng, *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1986).
9. Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 3rd Edition (2012).
10. R. MacFarquar and J.K. Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 14, The People's Republic: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1949-65* (1987); *vol. 15, Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution, 1966-82* (1991) [available in abridged form as Macfarquar, R., (ed.), *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng* (2nd edn. 1997)].
11. Watch one of the documentaries on this period such as <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkt6O4QW45s> or the ones that Prof. Pickowicz consulted on/ produced: *China: Born under the Red Flag, 1976-1992*, two hours (1997) and *The Mao Years, 1949-1976*, two hours (1994).

SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS

WEEK 1: WHAT IS PRC HISTORY?

Everyone reads:

Jeremy Brown and Paul Pickowicz, eds., *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (2010).

AND one or more of the textbooks/memoirs listed above.

Supplemental (everyone this week, with no writing assignment)

Have a look at: *China Quarterly* No. 188 (Dec. 2006). Special issue on PRC history. Try to read Strauss' Introduction, Kirby, Pickowicz, and others that interest you and the abstracts of the others. Note you can see this on-line via UCSD at JSTOR and other electronic databases.

WEEK 2: EARLY POLITICAL CULTURE

Everyone:

Chang-tai Hung, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic* (2011).

Supplemental:

Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with The Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (2011).

OR

Michael Schoenhals, *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967* (2013)

WEEK 3: ENVIRONMENTAL

Everyone reads:

Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War on Nature* (2003).

Supplemental:

Edward Friedman, Paul Pickowicz, and Mark Selden *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (1991).

WEEK 4: GENDER AND MEMORY

Everyone:

Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (2011).

Supplemental:

Zhong Xueping, Wang Zheng and Bai Di, eds., *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era* (2001).

WEEK 5: YOUTH, SENT-DOWN AND OTHERWISE

Everyone:

Michel Bonnin, *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China's Educated Youth (1968–1980)* (2013).

Supplemental:

Helena K. Rene, *China's Sent-Down Generation* (2012).

OR

Thomas Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China* (1977).

WEEK 6: CLASS FORMATION

Everyone:

Joel Andreas, *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origins of China's New Class* (2009).

Supplemental:

Andrew Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism* (1986).

[**Everyone have a look at:** Andrew Walder, A., "Organized Dependency and Cultures of Authority in Chinese Industry," *Journal of Asian Studies* 1983, 43.1, pp. 51-72.]

WEEK 7: CULTURAL REVOLUTION POLITICS

Everyone:

Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis* (2014).

Supplemental:

Roderick MacFarquar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (2006).

OR

Roderick MacFarquar, *The Origins of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 3 vols. (1974, 1984, 1999).

WEEK 8: MATERIAL CULTURE OF MAO ERA

Everyone:

Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (2011).

AND KARL GERTH

"Compromising with Consumerism in Socialist China: Transnational Flows and Internal Tensions in 'Socialist Advertising,'" *Past & Present* 218: 203-232 (Spring, 2013).

OR

"社会主义中国与消费主义的妥协" (*Shehui zhuyi Zhongguo yu xiaofei zhuyi de tuoxie*) (The contradictions between socialist China and consumerism), *Journal of East China Normal University*, No. 4 (Winter) 2013 (Request copy from author).

Supplemental

Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (2009).

OR

Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (2013).

STUDENT CHOICE: SOME OPTIONS FOR THE FINAL TWO WEEKS

EXTRA WEEK OPTION 1: GREAT LEAP FORWARD / FAMINE

Everyone:

Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962* (2008)

Supplemental:

Frank Dikotter, *Mao's Great Famine* (2011).

OR

Zhou Xun, *The Great Famine in China, 1958-1962* (2012).

EXTRA WEEK OPTION 2: CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Everyone:

Andrew Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (2009)

[[Next term: Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz, and Andrew Walder, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History* (2006).]]

AND

Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited" *Modern China* 29.2 (2003).

Supplemental:

Melvyn Goldstein et al., *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet: The Nyemo Incident of 1969* (2009).

EXTRA WEEK OPTION 3: MAO ZEDONG

Everyone:

Rebecca Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World* (2010).

AND

Lin Chun, ed., *Was Mao Really a Monster? The Academic Response to Chang and Halliday's "Mao: The Unknown Story"* (2009).

Supplemental:

Maurice Meisner, *Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait* (2007).