

EAST 303/HIST 328

Borderlands of Modern China

Fall 2023
T/TH 2:35 PM - 3:55 PM
Location: Leacock 210
McGill University

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. David Porter
Office: 680 Sherbrooke, Room 251
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM – available in person OR by Zoom
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OVERVIEW

This lecture course explores how China came to acquire its current shape and population through centuries of imperial conquest, colonial expansion, and cross-ethnic alliance building along its northwestern and southwestern borders. Beginning around 1600, with the rise of the Manchu-dominated Qing dynasty along the Ming state's northeastern frontiers, the course continues to the present day, as the People's Republic of China imposes new forms (but not without historical analogs) of forcible cultural assimilation and policies designed to suppress distinctive forms of ethnic, religious, and linguistic identity in regions like Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and Inner Mongolia. We will first investigate how and why the Qing empire extended its borders far into Inner Asia and deepened control of regions like Guizhou and Taiwan, with close cultural and historical links to Southeast Asia and largely non-Han populations. The course will then explore how Chinese intellectuals and political figures, mostly Han, in the late Qing and Republic of China, transformed territories conquered by the armies of a Manchu dynasty into integral parts of their idea of China. Finally, we will look at the development of the PRC as a self-consciously multiethnic state and the spread of revolutionary ideas under social and economic conditions far different from those that prevailed in the Han-dominated center. Throughout the course, students will learn how Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Dai, Miao, Zhuang and other non-Han groups from the outlying zones of China-based states have contributed to, resisted, and experienced their incorporation into those states. Conversely, we will consider how Han settlers in these regions and writers from outside them have made sense of their relationship to China. Moreover, we will see how distinct forms of Han identity have developed in borderlands like Taiwan and Hong Kong.

COURSE GOALS

You will leave this course with an understanding of the immense diversity of the contemporary People's Republic of China and the imperial roots (both historical and present) of that diversity. You will be able to explain the historical roots of issues of immense importance today, from the question of Taiwan's political status to the internment of hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs to the protest movement in Hong Kong. And you will have an appreciation for the tension that exists, both now and in the past, between two visions of China: as a nation-state for the Han people and as a multi-ethnic polity that incorporates different peoples as partners in a shared political project.

In addition, you will gain experience working with both reading academic scholarship and a range of primary sources, from government documents to art to fiction to film. You will learn how to make sense of a scholarly argument, how to extract reliable information from documents produced with by authors with agendas very different from yours, and how to use literary and cultural products as historical sources.

READINGS

All readings will be available online via MyCourses.

COURSE STRUCTURE

We will meet two days per week and class sessions will include both lecture and discussion. Students are expected to have read the assigned readings (or watched the assigned film) for each class session in advance, in order to be well-prepared to discuss those readings during class.

ASSESSMENT

Map Quiz (5%)

We will have a quiz on **September 14** to ensure that you have basic familiarity with the geography of China. This is aimed at helping you contextualize the information that you encounter during the entire course. A guide to the quiz will be posted on MyCourses one week in advance – you will be expected to have familiarity with the names and locations of the provinces, important cities, and major features of the physical geography of contemporary China and its borderlands.

Class Participation (10%)

You will be expected to make thoughtful contributions to class discussions that show clear evidence of having done the required readings. Your contributions should be responsive to your classmates' comments and should always be respectful to everyone else in the room. Quality is more important than quantity – of course, if you don't say anything, you aren't participating – but one or two excellent comments will impress me far more than dominating the conversation with ideas that suggest that you haven't actually done the reading. You should also be an active contributor to small group discussions when you are asked to work in groups. Attendance is not

graded explicitly, but since it is impossible to participate without being present, you will receive no credit for participation if you are absent without a valid excuse.

Midterm Essay (25%)

You will write a take home mid-term essay, **due on October 13**. The topic will be distributed on September 29, allowing you the time to choose whether to work on the essay during the Fall Break or to use the break entirely for relaxation. This essay will NOT be a research paper – rather, you will be asked to respond to a broad question on the basis of the readings, lectures, and class discussions. Your essay should be around 4-5 double-spaced pages; there will be a strictly-enforced **maximum of 1500 words**.

Paper (30%)

You will write a final paper, **due on December 3**. For this assignment, you should identify a current event/issue relevant to the topic of our course and write a paper of **1500-2000 words** in length in which you provide a historically-grounded explanation of that event or issue. You will be expected to do reading that goes beyond what was assigned in this course. To that end, you will have to submit a description of your topic and a list of additional readings that you plan to complete as part of the project by **November 3**. Completion of this preliminary step will be worth 10% of your paper grade (3% of your overall course grade).

Take-Home Final Examination (30%)

You will have **72 hours** for a take-home final examination during the exam period, consisting of **2 essays, each of no more than 1000 words**. One essay question will focus on material covered since the midterm essay, while one will be relevant to the entire course. These questions will be broad, requiring you to synthesize material from both readings and lecture from multiple weeks.

COURSE POLICIES

Absences and Late Work

You are expected to attend all class meetings and to submit all work on time. Missed class will result both in failing to learn the material covered (which can affect your success in other assignments) and in a failure to participate in discussion, directly lowering your participation grade. I recognize that there will be situations that make it impossible (or unwise) for you to attend class or to submit a paper on time, including illnesses (if you're sick, please rest and recover; don't come to class). I treat my students as responsible adults; if you are genuinely unable to come to class or submit a paper on time for a legitimate reason, I simply ask that you inform me **IN ADVANCE** (no extensions are offered if they are requested after an assignment's due date) and let me know the reason. The length of extension you are offered will depend on the nature of your excuse and is at my discretion. I reserve the right to request documentation of your excuse.

Unexcused late assignments will be marked down by 5% for each day late, though in no case will a paper that would otherwise receive a passing grade receive a failing grade (which is to say, you won't drop below a D), as long as it is submitted by the end of the semester. Note that I have

a grading deadline – in no case will assignments be accepted for credit after December 21. Students with serious extenuating circumstances may contact me about arranging a grade of K (incomplete), but these will only be granted in very rare situations, and requests must be made as far in advance as possible.

Office Hours

I will hold regular office hours on Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM in my office in 680 Sherbrooke, Room 251 (and will be simultaneously available over Zoom). You may either make an appointment in advance (via the link on MyCourses) or simply drop by – though students with appointments will be prioritized. I will also be available for appointments outside my regular office hour times if they are incompatible with your schedule (but please do not stop by without an appointment outside of office hours). I encourage you to come by early in the semester to chat so that I can get to know you a bit better, as well as to visit whenever you have questions about the course material or assignments or simply wish to talk about Chinese history or your academic goals.

Academic Integrity

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).” (See McGill’s [guide to academic honesty](#) for more information.)

« L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#)).»

Language of Submission

“In accord with McGill University’s [Charter of Student Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

« Conformément à [la Charte des droits de l'étudiant](#) de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté. »

STUDENT FEEDBACK

I encourage you to complete a Mercury evaluation for this course upon its conclusion. Your experiences and observations will help me make this class, and all classes I teach, better for future students.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability that requires accommodation, please register with Student Accessibility and Achievement (<https://www.mcgill.ca/access-achieve/>) and inform me of the

accommodations you require during the first week of class (or the first week after the disability arises). Anything you tell me will be kept confidential.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction

August 31 – Course Introduction and the Manchu Conquest

Reading:

Peter Perdue, *China Marches West*, pp. 109-127

Week 2 – Manchuria and the Manchus

September 5 – Manchuria as Manchu Homeland

Reading:

Mark Elliott, "The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies," *Journal of Asian Studies* 59.3 (2000), pp 603-646

September 7 – Manchuria as Borderland

Reading:

Loretta Kim, *Ethnic Chrysalis: China's Orochen People and the Legacy of Qing Borderland Administration*, ch. 3 "Multipurpose Specialists," pp. 107-158

Week 3 – The Southwest and Taiwan in the High Qing

September 12 – Qing Colonialism

Reading:

1. John Herman, "From Land Reclamation to Land Grab: Settler Colonialism in Southwest China, 1680-1735," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 78.1 (2018), pp. 91-123

2. Jodi Weinstein, *Empire and Identity in Guizhou: Local Resistance to Qing Expansion*, ch.3 "The Consolidation of Qing Rule" (pp. 37-58).

September 14 – Qing Views of Indigenous Peoples

MAP QUIZ - In Class September 14

Reading:

Emma Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*, ch. 5, "The Raw and the Cooked" (pp. 122-148), ch. 7 "An Island of Women" (pp. 173-193) and Appendix B, "Excerpts from Ding Shaoyi's Brief Record of the Eastern Ocean" (pp. 281-284). Be sure to pay attention to the color plates that follow p. 186.

Week 4 – Tibetan Buddhism and the Mongols

September 19 – The Zunghar Wars

Reading:

1. Yingcong Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing*, excerpt from ch.2 "A Strategic Turn from the Steppe to Tibet" (pp. 36-54)
2. Perdue, *China Marches West*, excerpts from ch. 6 "Imperial Overreach and Zunghar Survival" (pp. 209-213; pp. 227-249)

September 21 – Qing Tibet

Reading:

1. Max Oidtmann, *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet*, excerpt from introduction (pp. 1-9), excerpts from Act II, "Shamanic Colonialism" (pp. 95-105, 111-117, 126-156), and "Translation of the Qianlong Emperor's Discourse on Lamas" (pp. 239-243)
2. "Qing's 29 Regulations for Reorganizing Tibet (2 pages)"

Week 5 – Muslims and Xinjiang in the Qing

September 26 – The Hui

Reading:

Jonathan Lipman, "A Fierce and Brutal People: On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law" in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (pp. 83-112)

September 28 – Xinjiang and the Uyghurs

Reading:

1. James Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, excerpt from Ch. 3, "Between Islam and China," pp. 95-113.
2. Laura Newby, "The Beggars of Xinjiang: Between Two Worlds," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61.2, pp. 278-297.
3. The Story of Nazugum (7 pp.)
4. Excerpt from the "Song of Lasihiyantu" (4 pp.)

Week 6 – The Muslim Rebellions

October 3 – Hui Rebellion in the Northwest and Yunnan

Reading:

1. Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, "Every Sixty Years a Big Rebellion," (portion of ch. 4, pp.115-138),
2. David Atwill, "Blinkered Visions: Islamic Identity, Hui Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China" *JAS* 62.4 (2003), pp. 1079-1108
3. "Panthay Rebellion Summons to Arms" (2 pp.)
4. "Rumors of a Tungan Massacre" (1 p.)

October 5 – Rebellion in Xinjiang

Reading:

1. Selections from accounts of the Muslim rebellions by Donjina (10 pp.) and Mullah Musa Sayrami (12 pp.)
2. "Robert Shaw's Visit to Yarkand and Kashgar" (2 pp.)

Week 7 – Rethinking Frontier Governance

October 10 – Fall Break, NO CLASS

October 12 – Rethinking Frontier Governance

Reading:

1. Eric Schluessel, *Land of Strangers: The Civilizing Project in Qing Central Asia*, ch. 4 “Bad Women and Lost Children: The Sexual Economy of Confucian Colonialism,” pp. 116-148.

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE – October 13 at 5:00 PM

Week 8 – 1911 and the National Question

October 17 – From Empire to Nation

Reading:

1. Joseph Esherick, "How the Qing Became China," in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, ch. 8 (pp. 229-259)
2. Zhang Binglin (Zhang Taiyan), "Explaining the Republic of China" (pp. 15-40).
3. Zou Rong, *The Revolutionary Army*, Ch.4, "For Revolution, Race Must Be Clearly Distinguished" (pp. 106-110)
4. Sun Yatsen, "The Principle of Nationalism," excerpts from Lecture 2 (pp. 29-37).

October 19 – Frontiers of Republican China

Reading:

1. James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenous Became Chinese*, ch. 2, "Borderlands of State Power: The Nationalists and the Frontier Question" (pp. 51-79)

Week 9 – Competing Political Projects in China’s Borderlands

October 24 – Communism and the Frontier

Reading:

1. Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, ch. 3, "Domesticating Minzu: The Communists and the National Question" (pp. 81-109)
2. Uradyn Bulag, "Good Han, Bad Han: The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China," in Thomas Mullaney, et. al., eds., *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*, ch. 4 (pp. 92-109)

October 26 – Alternatives to Chinese Rule

Reading:

1. Andrew Hall, "The Word is Mightier than the Throne: Bucking Colonial Education Trends in Manchukuo," *Journal of Asian Studies* 68.3, pp. 895-925.
2. Ablet Kamalov, "Birth of Uyghur National History in Semirech'ye: Nüzäryoja AbusemätoV and His Historical Works," *Oriente Moderno* 96.1, pp. 181-196
3. "Are We Turks? Or Chantous?" (1 page).

Week 10 – Southwestern Minorities in the Chinese Nation-State

October 31 – Classifying Minzu

Reading:

Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*, ch. 4, "The Consent of the Categorized," and ch. 5, "Counting to Fifty-Six" (pp. 92-133)

November 2 – Representing Minorities

Reading:

1. Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics*, ch. 4, "Internal Orientalism: Gender and the Popularization of China's Others" (pp. 100-131)
2. Shen Congwen, "Meijin, Baozi, and the White Kid," in Jeffrey Kinkley, trans., *Imperfect Paradise: Twenty-Four Stories* (pp. 81-96)

Film:

Liu Sanjie ("Third Sister Liu"), 1960 (approx. 115 minutes): <https://youtu.be/eZTI0zAhtpU>

Proposed Paper Topic and Preliminary Bibliography due Friday, November 3 at 5 PM

Week 11 – The Taiwan Question

November 7 – The Republic of China on Taiwan

Reading:

1. "Reasons for Requesting the Establishment of a Taiwanese Parliament."
<https://www.japaneseempire.info/post/reasons-for-requesting-the-establishment-of-a-taiwanese-parliament>
2. Stephen Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence: The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945-1950* (Stanford, 2003), ch. 3, "Retrocession and the Debate over Taiwan's Place in China" (pp. 40-63).
3. Ian Rowen, "Tourism as a Territorial Strategy: The Case of China and Taiwan," *Annals of Tourism Research* 46, pp. 62-74.
4. "The 2-28 Incident in Taiwan" (10 pp.)

November 9 – Identity in Taiwan

Reading:

1. Kirk A. Denton, *The Landscape of Historical Memory: The Politics of Museums and Memorial Culture in Post-Martial Law Taiwan*, ch. 1 “Taiwan, China, and the National Imaginary: Museums of Premodern History and Archeology,” pp. 26-47.
2. Scott Simon, “Paths to Autonomy: Aboriginality and the Nation in Taiwan,” in *The Margins of Becoming: Identity and Culture in Taiwan*, ed. Carsten Storm and Mark Harrison, pp. 221-240.
3. Topas Tamapima, "The Last Hunter" in John Balcom, ed., *Indigenous Writers of Taiwan: An Anthology of Stories, Essays, and Poems*, pp. 3-20.

Week 12 – Tibet in the 20th Century

November 14 – Tibetans and the Chinese State

Reading:

1. Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, ch. 5, "The Failure of Racial and Nationalist Ideologies (1928-1932)" (pp. 128-155)
2. "Seventeen Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (2 pp.)
3. Benno Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier*, ch. 4, “Establishing a Foundation among the Masses” (pp. 97-120).

November 16 – Conflicting Views on Tibet's Transformation

Reading:

"Village Life After 1958: War, Collectivization, Famine and the Cultural Revolution" in Robert Barnett, et. al., eds., *Conflicting Memories: Tibetan History under Mao Retold*, Document 9 (pp. 363-387)

Film:

The Serf (*Nongnu*), 1963 (approx. 88 minutes total).

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN70Ms9Yerk>

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ats_Wx9c4LI

Week 13 – Hong Kong

November 21 – Hong Kong under British Rule

Reading:

1. John Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Harvard, 2005), ch. 1, "Colonialism and Collaboration: Chinese Subjects and the Making of British Hong Kong" (pp. 16-36)
2. Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (I.B. Tauris, 2004), ch. 13, "The Rise of the Hong Kongers" (pp. 180-196)
3. 1984 "Sino-British Joint Declaration" (2 pp.)

November 23 – One Country, Two Systems

Reading:

1. Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Vigil: Hong Kong on the Brink* (Penguin, 2020), ch. "Victories," pp. 37-56.
2. Ho-Fung Hung, *City on the Edge: Hong Kong under Chinese Rule*, ch. 8 "Hong Kong as a Political Consciousness," pp. 172-197.
3. Jiang Zemin and Christopher Patten's 1997 speeches at handover ceremony (2 pp.)
4. Hong Kong Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance Legislation (2020) (3 pp.)

Week 14/15 – Xinjiang and the Contemporary Politics of Assimilation

November 28 – The PRC State and Uyghur Culture

Reading:

1. Eset Sulaiman, "The Qoray Rebellion of 1958: An Untold Story of Twentieth-Century Qomul History." (15 pp.)
2. Söyüngül Chanisheff, *The Land Drenched in Tears*, "The Thought Reform Movement," "Years of Hunger," "January 1961," "June 1961," "28 August 1961" pp. 19-21, 26-39.
3. Rahile Dawut, "Mazar Pilgrimage Among the Uyghurs" in *Mazar: Studies on Islamic Sacred Sites in Central Eurasia*, edited by Jun Sugawara and Rahile Dawut (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Press), 3–20.

NOTE: No class November 30 (Monday schedule)

FINAL PAPER DUE – Sunday, December 3, 11:59 PM

December 5 – War on Terror/War on Islam

Reading:

1. Sean R. Roberts, *The War on the Uyghurs: China's Internal Campaign against a Muslim Minority*, ch. 6, "Cultural Genocide, 2017-2020," pp. 199-235.
2. Rian Thum, "[The Spatial Cleansing of Xinjiang: Mazar Desecration in Context](#)," *Made in China Journal*, August 24, 2020.
3. Tahir Hamut Izgil, "One by One, My Friends Were Sent to the Camps," *The Atlantic* (July 14, 2021): <https://www.theatlantic.com/the-uyghur-chronicles/>
4. "Speech by Comrade Chen Quanguo at the First and Second Plenary Sessions of the Fourth Plenary Session of the Ninth Committee of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the Chinese Communist Party." Read section IV ("Comprehensively and deeply implement the spirit of the 19th party congress [...]") sub-parts i-vii (ending with the section titled "Strive to create a new situation of frontier consolidation"). <https://interpret.csis.org/translations/speech-by-comrade-chen-quanguo-at-the-first-and-second-plenary-sessions-of-the-fourth-plenary-session-of-the-ninth-committee-of-the-xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region-of-the-chinese-communist-party/>