

# HIST 328: Themes in Modern Chinese History

## Rebellion and Revolution in Modern China

Fall 2022

Lectures: Mon/Wed 8:35-9:25 in Trottier 2100

Conferences: Fri 8:35-9:25 in Trottier 2100 or 9:35-10:25 in room TBA

McGill University

### INSTRUCTOR

Dr. David Porter

Office: Ferrier 330

Office Hours: Thursday 2:00 to 4:00 PM – available in person OR by Zoom

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### OVERVIEW

The period between 1839 and 1949 was one of convulsion and upheaval that reshaped China's political institutions, society, and economy, often at enormous cost to its people. Though this century is often discussed in terms of the impact of foreign powers on China, from the Opium Wars to the Japanese invasion, our course will focus instead at efforts by the people of China to remake their own society. As the course title suggests, we will be particularly interested in violent attempts to change the political or social order, events often called "rebellions" or "revolutions." We will look at these rebellions and revolutions both individually and in relation to one another, aiming to understand their role in the history of modern China and their links to the Communist revolution that continues to form the basis of legitimacy for the contemporary Chinese state.

### COURSE GOALS

You will leave this course with a good understanding of the history of China between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. You will be familiar not only with major events like the Taiping Rebellion or the Chinese Civil War, but the social systems out of which these events emerged. You will not study a monolithic China, but one marked by profound internal diversity – regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and otherwise – that is of crucial importance to understanding the country's history (and present).

In addition, you will develop some of the skills that are central to doing historical scholarship, but also will serve you well in nearly any job that relies on your intellectual labor. In particular, you will learn to read critically both primary sources and the writing of scholars. To put it in more concrete terms, you will both read material that was not designed with a reader like you in mind and extract valuable information from it and read works written to argue for a particular

interpretation in order to comprehend that argument and assess its strengths and weaknesses. You will learn to synthesize and digest large amounts of information and explain it succinctly, as you will be asked to do in your midterm exam. But you will also learn to use sources to build an argument, as you will be asked to do in your final paper.

## PREREQUISITE

It is officially recommended to take HIST 218 (Modern East Asian History) prior to this course, but my intention is for the course to be accessible to all students, regardless of prior study. That said, students who have taken a university-level history course will be at an advantage.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

We will meet three days per week. In general, Mondays and Wednesdays will be primarily lecture-based. However, even during lecture, I regularly ask questions and elicit participation (as well as welcoming your questions) and you should complete the readings associated with a particular class meeting prior to its start in order to be able to fully engage with class activities.

On Fridays (except in Weeks 1-2), we will divide into two conferences that will be discussion-based, and centered on a set of primary sources (available on our MyCourses page), which you should have read prior to the meeting. The other readings for the week will also be relevant to our discussions, so if you did not complete them prior to lecture, please be certain to complete them in advance of the conference session. Your participation in discussion will be the primary basis of your participation grade for the course. Sign-up for conferences will be made available shortly – I ask that students who can make the 9:35 section sign up for that one (until it fills up) to ensure that students with a conflict can attend the section scheduled for our regular 8:35 meeting time.

## READINGS

Students must acquire copies of the following books, which can be purchased online, and which are on digital reserve via the McGill library. Note that the library has access to a limited number of digital copies, so if you're relying on library access, you may need to be flexible about when you do your reading. The digital course reserve can be found here:

<https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/courseReserves/course/id/18812408>.

Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China 1845-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980) – **Note that though new copies can be hard to find (Le James is incapable of acquiring them, which is why books haven't been ordered for purchase there) used copies of this book are easily available online – I recommend using [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com) to search for used book availability across a number of websites**

Stephen R. Platt, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, The West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012)

**Optional** (you will be reading a lot from these books over the course of the term, but McGill has unlimited digital access; you only need to purchase if you prefer to read a print copy):

William T. Rowe, *Crimson Rain: Seven Centuries of Violence in a Chinese County* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)

Peter Gue Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1947* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Additional readings will be supplied on the MyCourses page.

## 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 rivers of contemporary China.

### **Brief Essay on Zhong Renjie (15%)**

Due **September 23 at 5 PM** via MyCourses. This is a three-page essay (MAXIMUM 1000 WORDS), based on primary sources that you will examine during class. The exact assignment will be distributed in class on September 16 and you will have one week to complete the essay.

### **Midterm (30%)**

You will take an in-class midterm on **October 31**. In the midterm you will be expected to write identifications of 5 terms (which you will choose from a group of 8 possibilities), each worth 20% of the midterm grade.

ID terms will be taken from both lecture and readings. You are expected to write 1-2 paragraphs about each term, demonstrating BOTH that you have a grasp of basic factual information about the person/thing being discussed AND (more importantly) their significance. That is, tell me not just who or what the term refers to, but why they/it matter. The best answers will relate the term to broader themes in the course: how does understanding the term shape our understanding of rebellion and/or revolution in the history of Modern China?

### **Final Paper (total 40% for 2 components)**

- 1. Primary Source Analysis (10%) – due November 18 at 5PM** via MyCourses (MAXIMUM 500 WORDS)
- 2. Final Paper (30%) – due December 5 at 5PM** via MyCourses (MAXIMUM 2500 WORDS)

For your final paper, you should pick a rebellion, uprising, or revolutionary moment covered during our course (if you wish to write about an event that we did not cover, you must request permission from me, no later than November 5). In your paper, you will explain EITHER the causes of the rebellion/uprising/revolution, the state/official response to the event, OR the consequences/effects of the event. Your paper should be based in substantial portion on primary sources, taken both from those assigned in class and, if possible, from others you find yourself

(see below for some suggestions of places to look). In addition, you should engage with the scholarship on the event that we read in class, evaluating the evidence and claims presented in it, and addressing divergent opinions of different authors. To write the best paper possible, you will likely want to go beyond some of the chapters assigned in class to look at the books from which they are drawn and, perhaps, other scholarship cited by those authors.

As part of the paper-writing process, you will choose one primary source that is important to your argument and write a **SHORT (500 WORD MAXIMUM)** analysis of that source, explaining how it helps you to answer the question on which your paper is focused. This assignment is due two weeks before the final paper itself and I will endeavor to provide you with comments on it within a week of submission (if you would like to get a head start, you are encouraged to submit this assignment early; I will try to give you comments within a week of when you submit). Your final paper may freely reuse what you wrote in this assignment; this is meant as a stage in the larger process of paper writing, not an independent task.

A few good places to start looking for primary sources on Chinese history that have been translated into English include *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (eds. Janet Chen, Pei-Kai Cheng, and Michael Lestz), *Sources in Chinese History: Diverse Perspectives from 1644 to the Present* (eds. David and Yurong Atwill), Volume 2 of *Sources of Chinese Tradition (From 1600 through the Twentieth Century)* (eds. William Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano) and *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook* (ed. Patricia Ebrey). You are free to examine these books during my office hours; I will keep copies of all of them in my office.

### **Attendance and 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. 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. Participation is particularly important during conference sessions – and you are **required to attend and participate in conferences**, but there will be opportunities to contribute during lecture as well.

## 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 Thursdays from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM in my office in Ferrier 330 (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 the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>) 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

Key to readings:

RRNC = *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China 1845-1945*

AHK = *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom*

CR = *Crimson Rain* (Note that this book is available online via the McGill library and so purchase is entirely optional)

CWR = *China in War and Revolution* (Note that this book is available online via the McGill library and so purchase is entirely optional)

All other readings are available digitally on the course website (MyCourses page)

### **Week 1 – Introduction, Rebellion in Late Imperial China**

*August 31 – Course Introduction and China in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*

Recommended reading: CR 1-42

*September 2 – Rebellion in Late Imperial China*

Required reading: CR 161-190

### **Week 2 –Millenarian Rebellion and the Frontier c. 1800**

*September 5 – Labor Day, NO CLASS*

*September 7 – Millenarian Rebellions – White Lotus and Eight Trigrams*

Required reading: Wensheng Wang: *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire*, ch. 2 “The White Lotus Rebellion in the Han River Highlands, pp. 37-80.

*September 9 – Thinking about Primary Sources*

Required readings: Hong Liangji, "On Imperial Malfeasance and China's Population Problem"; Quotations from White Lotus texts; "Taxes and Labor Service"

### **Week 3 – Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Local Protest and the Rebellion of Zhong Renjie**

*September 12 – The Social and Institutional Background of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Rebellion*

Required reading: RRNC 1-9, 48-95;

*September 14 – Activity: Into the Archives of the Zhong Renjie Rebellion*

#### **MAP QUIZ (In Class Sep. 14)**

Required reading: Bradly Reed, *Talons and Teeth*, ch. 1, "Illicit Bureaucrats" (pp. 1-30).

*September 16 – Conference #1 – Explaining the Zhong Renjie Rebellion*

Required reading: Review Zhong Renjie documents you collected on Wednesday

### **Week 4 – Taiping: Origins and Rebels**

*September 19 – The Opium Wars and the Background to the Taiping*

No reading specific to this class, but you'll probably want to get a start on Wednesday's reading

*September 21 – Hong Xiuquan and the Early Progress of the Rebellion*

Required reading: AHK 1-24, 50-68, 140-163;

Recommended reading: Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son* ch. 7 "The Base" (pp. 79-95), ch. 11 "The First City" (pp. 140-153), ch. 13 "The Earthly Paradise" (pp. 172-191).

*September 23 – Conference #2 – Explaining the Success of the Taiping*

Required readings: "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," "A Primer in Verse," "The Taiping Economic Program," "Taiping Anti-Manchu Proclamation," "Taiping Ten Commandments," "Taiping Plan for Reorganizing Chinese Society," Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty," "Taiping Religious Verses,"

#### **BRIEF ESSAY ON ZHONG RENJIE DUE (Sep. 23, 5PM)**

### **Week 5 – Taiping: Suppression and Aftermath**

*September 26 – New Qing Armies*

Required reading: AHK 113-139, 304-313, 355-364

Recommended reading: AHK 251-279

*September 28 – The Suffering of the War*

Required reading: CR 191-218;

Recommended reading: Tobie Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, ch.3 "Marked Bodies" (pp. 65-98)

*September 30 – Conference #3 – Personal Experience of the Rebellion and the Memoirs of Zhang Daye*

Required reading: Zhang Daye, *The World of a Tiny Insect*, selection from Part 2, pp. 81-98; Zeng Guofan, "A Proclamation Against the Bandits of Guangdong and Guangxi," "Mid-Century Rebels."

### **Week 6 – Muslim Rebellion in the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century**

*October 3 – Hui Rebellion in the Northwest and Yunnan*

Required reading: David Atwill, "Blinkered Visions: Islamic Identity, Hui Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China" JAS 62.4 (2003), pp. 1079-1108

Recommended reading: Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, "Every Sixty Years a Big Rebellion," (portion of ch. 4, pp.115-138),

*October 5 – Rebellion in Xinjiang*

Required reading: Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China*, ch. 2 "Xinjiang in Revolt" (pp. 37-71)

*October 7 – Conference #4 – Two Accounts of the War in Xinjiang*

Required readings: Selections from accounts of the Muslim rebellions by Donjina and Mullah Musa Sayrami

### **Week 7 – The Nian Rebellion**

*October 10 – Thanksgiving, NO CLASS*

*October 12 – Fall Break, NO CLASS*

*October 13 (NOTE: This is a Thursday, but will follow Monday schedule. There are NO conferences this week) – Mid-Century Violence in North China*

Required reading: RRNC 96-151;

Recommended reading: Zhang Daye, *The World of a Tiny Insect*, "The Nian Uprising" (pp. 109-114)

### **Week 8 – The Boxer Uprising**

*October 17 – Western Missionaries and the Background to the Uprising*

Required reading: Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, ch. 6 "Guan County, 1898" (pp. 136-166)

Recommended reading: Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, ch. 4 "The Boxer Uprising and the Souls in Purgatory" (pp. 92-115)



*October 19 – The Course of the Uprising and Its Suppression*

Required reading: Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys* ch. 2 "Drought and the Foreign Presence" (pp.69-95);

Recommended reading: Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, ch. 1 "The Boxer Uprising: A Narrative History" (pp. 14-56)

*October 21 – Conference #5 – Understanding the Boxers*

Required readings: "Malan Boxer Proclamations," "Sprit Boxer Possession," "Imperial Edict to 'Declare War,'" "Several Accounts of the 'Shining Red Lanterns,'" "Four Accounts of the Fate of Miss Han."

**Week 9 – 1911**

*October 24 – The Rise of the Anti-Qing Movement*

Required reading: CWR 12-52

Recommended reading: Edward Rhoads, *Manchus & Han*, ch. 4 "The 1911 Revolution" (pp. 173-230);

*October 26 – The Xinhai Revolution*

Required reading: CR 219-238

*October 28 – Conference #6 – What did the Revolutionaries Want?*

Required readings: "Three People's Principles"; excerpts from Zou Rong, *The Revolutionary Army*; "The Manchu Abdication Edict"; "The Revolutionary Alliance Proclamation"

We will also do midterm review during this meeting.

**Week 10 – The "Warlord Era"**

*October 31 – MIDTERM EXAM (covers material through week 9)*

*November 2 – Challenging the Center*

Required readings: CWR 149-169; RRNC 152-207

Recommended readings: Ed McCord, *The Power of the Gun*; ch. 6 "The Anti-Monarchical War and the Inception of Warlordism" (pp. 205-244)

*November 4 – Conference #7 – Warlords and New Youth*

Required reading: "Feng Yuxiang: Praising the Lord"; "The Dog-Meat General"; "Zhang Xun's Reasons for Restoring the Monarchy"; Chen Duxiu, "Call to Youth"; "The Spirit of the May Fourth Movement"; He Zhen, "What Women Should Know About Communism" and "Women's Revenge"; Han Yi, "Destroying the Family"

## **Week 11 – Communists, Nationalists, and the Northern Expedition**

*November 7 – Two Parties Fighting for a New China*

Required reading: CWR 190-209

Recommended reading: Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* ch. 6 "Provincial Narratives of the Nation" (pp. 177-204)

*November 9 – The Northern Expedition*

Required reading: CWR 230-247; CR 239-268;

*November 11 – Conference #8 – Revolutionary Ferment*

Required reading: "First Manifesto of the CCP on the Current Situation"; "Sun Yat-sen Opens the Whampoa Academy"; "Manifesto on the Northern Expedition"; "Sun Yat-sen's Last Wills and Testament"; "Qingdang: Purge the Party of all Undesirable Elements"; "KMT's Purge the Party Slogans"; "Proclamations from the Headquarters of the 26<sup>th</sup> Army"; "Madame Sun Yat-sen Defends the Left"; "The General Strike";

## **Week 12 – Communists in the Countryside**

*November 14 – The Jiangxi Soviet*

Required reading: CWR 271-293; RRNC 208-247

Recommended reading: CR 269-320

*November 16 – The Long March*

No required reading

*November 18 – Conference #9 – Rural Revolution*

Required readings: Mao Zedong, "Report on an Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement," "The Question of Land Redistribution," and "The Mass Line"; "Land Law of the Jiangxi Soviet"; "The Long March and Ethnic Borderlands: Two Perspectives"; "The Long March: The Tale of Luding Bridge"

***PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE (Nov 18, 5 PM)***

## **Week 13 – Revolutionary Victory**

*November 21 – Revolutionary Governance*

Required reading: Andrew Walder, *China under Mao* ch. 3 "Rural Revolution" and ch. 4 "Urban Revolution" (pp. 40-81)

Recommended reading: Felix Wemheuer, *A Social History of Maoist China* ch.2 "New Democracy and the Making of New China (1949-1952)" (pp. 48-84)

*November 23 – Civil War*

Required reading: CWR 337-357

*November 25 – Conference #10 – Why Did the CCP Win?*

Required readings: Wen Yiduo, "The Poet's Farewell"; "General Marshall: The Mediator's View"; "The 2-28 Incident in Taiwan"; Mao, "Order to the Army for the Country-Wide Advance"; "Proclamations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army"; Li Zongren, "The Disintegration of Our Military Forces"

#### **Week 14 – Permanent Revolution**

*November 28 – Economic Revolution: The Great Leap Forward*

Required reading: Walder, *China under Mao* ch. 8 "The Great Leap" (pp. 152-179)

*November 30 – Cultural Revolution*

Required reading: Wemheuer, *A Social History of Maoist China* ch. 6 "The Rebellion and Its Limits" (pp. 193-231) and first 10 pages of ch. 7 "Demobilization and Restoration" (pp. 232-241);

Recommended readings: Walder, *China under Mao*, ch. 10 "Fractured Rebellion" (pp. 200-230); Li Huaiyin, *Village China under Socialism and Reform*, ch. 6 "The Cultural Revolution" (pp. 139-159).

*December 2 – Conference #11 – The Role of Revolution in Maoist Governance*

Required readings: Ding Ling, *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River* (excerpt); Chen Boda, "Under the Banner of Comrade Mao Zedong"; "Hold High the Red Flag of People's Communes and March On"; "Bombard the Headquarters"; "The Sixteen-Point Decision"; "Revolutionary Masses of Various Nationalities in Lhasa Thoroughly Smash the 'Four Olds'"

#### **Week 15 – Reflecting on Rebellion and Revolution**

***FINAL PAPER DUE (Dec. 5, 5 PM)***

*December 5 – The Narrative of History*

Required reading: RRNC 248-262; CR 321-326; Joseph Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution" *Modern China* 21.1 (1995), pp. 45-76