The Making of Modern China
(1600 to the present)

Professor Eugenio Menegon

Time: Thursday, 3:00-6:00 pm
Location: History 504

Professor's Office: Department of History,
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Office Hours:
Thursday, 2:00-3:00 PM;
and by appointment

Website for this course is available at:
http://learn.bu.edu

Course Overview:

This seminar will provide an overview of crucial themes in late imperial and modern Chinese history, tracing continuities as well as change in political, institutional, religious, cultural and social processes between 1600 and the present. To comprehend the special nature of the political and social context of modern China, students will be encouraged to critically examine how long-standing imperial institutions, ethnic policies sanctioned by the Manchu dynasty starting in the 17th century, and social-religious habits that were rooted in traditional culture, have influenced modern China in the Republican and Communist periods. Conversely, students will also consider the elements of change and rupture that emerged as a reaction to traditional modes of social and political organization (political and economic reforms; rebellions; revolution).

While prior specialized knowledge of China is not expected (although desirable), students will be required to read selected chapters from textbooks as a preparation for in-depth discussion of the

Completion of ALL readings and writing of a précis prior to each class meeting is crucial for a smooth working of the seminar. Schedules, topics, readings and films may be revised at times, in which case announcements will be made in class as appropriate.

**Grading and Requirements:**

**Participation (15%):** This portion of the grade will be based on the general level of engagement and participation in class.

**Précis (30%):** Each week, students will prepare a one-page long précis (1.5 spacing; 12 point; 1-inch margin) of that week’s readings. Each student will also formulate two questions for discussion, to be e-mailed to the instructor and the student discussion leader(s) a day in advance of class (by Wednesday, noon). The précis should not simply summarize the readings; rather it should make a comprehensive, yet concise critical analysis of their arguments, and offer a comparison of them, in response to the instructor’s suggestions. Instructions will be handed out as appropriate.

**Oral Presentations (15%):** Seminar members will alternate in leading discussion. The leader will offer a brief oral presentation of the main points of the readings, and then use select questions sent by all seminar’s members (including her/his own questions) to structure the discussion.

**Paper proposal and annotated bibliography (10%):** due on Saturday October 22, by midnight. Instructions to follow.

**Paper (30%):** Students are required to write one final paper during the semester. Paper is due on Wednesday December 14, by 5 pm (both as paper copy and e-mail).

The final paper is to be 10-12 pages long (double spacing; 12 points; 1-inch margin; excluding bibliography). The topic will be chosen by students after a first email consultation with the instructor early on in the semester. A preliminary one-page written paper proposal, plus an annotated bibliography, has to be turned in by Saturday October 22. Two meetings with the instructor will follow to refine the topic and bibliography. For grading percentage, see above.

Additional research other than course readings may be required for the writing of the paper.

**Penalties for late work:** all written assignments must be turned in on the dates specified below. ½ grade will be deducted for each day of delay.

**Attendance** in all classes (including film screenings and educational visits) is expected and will be recorded. If you cannot attend a specific class you must make all efforts to notify the instructor beforehand or to explain your absence later.

**Plagiarism** in any form is never acceptable. You are advised to review the college’s definitions of and policies regarding plagiarism and cheating which are available online and in print. See for example: [http://www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode.html](http://www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode.html)
TEXTBOOKS (selected chapters)


RECOMMENDED:


EXTRA CREDIT EVENTS:

During the semester the Instructor will inform students about selected on-campus events organized by the BU Center for the Study of Asia, the Pardee School, and other BU units. Students who attend such events and send a short analytical paragraph on them can earn extra credit.

SYLLABUS OF READINGS

- **Week I (September 8): Introduction to Chinese Late Imperial and Modern History**


Self-introduction; expectations and requirements; instructor’s introductory comments on historiography and group discussion of reading; screening of documentary *All Under Heaven*, by Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon (a portrait of daily life in a north China village, 1980s); discussion of documentary; assignment of discussion tasks.

- **Week II (September 15): From Ming to Qing. The Late Ming “Confusions of Pleasure”**

Documentary (selections): “Blending with Nature: Classical Chinese Gardens in the Suzhou Style”

Schoppa, *Revolution and Its Past*, Chapter 1, “Personal Identities,” only pp. 14-24, on Macroregions (Blackboard)

Brook, Timothy. *The Confusions of Pleasure, Commerce and Culture in Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998: pp. 1-13 and 238-262 (“Fall: The Lord of Silver, 1642-44”); if you have time skim also “Summer: The Last Century, 1550-1644”, trying to focus on the major themes as outlined by the sections’ titles. (Blackboard)

•  **Week III (September 22): The Apogee of the Qing Empire: the Reign of Qianlong**

**Documentary (selections): “Forbidden City: The Great Within” or**

**Documentary (selections): “The Emperor's Eye: Art and Power in Imperial China”**


Website: “Recording the Grandeur of the Qing”;
http://www.learn.columbia.edu/nanxuntu/start.html

•  **Week IV (September 29): China as Global Empire and World Economic Power in the Late Imperial Period**


•  **Week V (October 6): Family and Gender Relations**

**Visit to the Yin Yu Tang, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem**


Late Qing merchant family life; Website: http://www.pem.org/yinyutang/
Week VI (October 13): State Orthodoxy vs. Popular Culture and Religion

**Documentary:** “Mazu, Patron Saint of Taiwan”


Week VII (October 20): Rebellion or Revolution?

**Meeting with BU China anthropologist and weekly reading’s author Prof. Robert Weller.**


Saturday October 22

**PRELIMINARY TOPIC, ABSTRACT AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FINAL PAPER DUE**

Week VIII (October 27) **APPOINTMENTS WITH PROFESSOR TO DISCUSS YOUR PROPOSED TOPIC AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Week IX (November 3): Public Opinion and Mass Media in the Republican Era

**Film (selection): TBA**

Lean, Eugenia. *Public Passions. The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. Introduction; Chapter 1; Chapter 6; Conclusion (available online through Mugar Library portal, ACLS E-books)
• Week X (November 10): The Cultural Revolution

Movie Screening: selections from “Morning Sun”


Thurston, Anne F. Enemies of the People. The Ordeal of the Intellectuals in China’s Great Cultural Revolution. Cambridge (MA): Harvard U.P., 1988; pp. 28-54; 206-238; 276-303 (specific selections will be announced as appropriate). (Blackboard)


Please visit these websites:

“Picturing Power: Posters of the Cultural Revolution” (http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/poster/exhibintro.html)

“Chinese Propaganda Poster Pages”: http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/

“Morning Sun: A Cultural Revolution Site” (http://www.morningsun.org/)

PLEASE TURN IN BY NOVEMBER 12, 5 PM, THE REVISED TOPIC/ABSTRACT AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE FINAL PAPER – SET UP APPOINTMENT WITH PROFESSOR TO DISCUSS FINAL DRAFTING.

• Week XI (November 17): Intellectuals, Nationalism, and the Communist Party (1980s-2000s)

Documentary (selections): “The River Elegy” (He Shang 河殇); 1988 TV series

Cheek, Living with Reform, Chapter 2, pp. 49-53; and Chapter 6, pp. 94-99. (Blackboard)


Comparative Historical Perspective. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009, pp. 401-419 + notes. (Blackboard)

Thanksgiving Recess: November 24-27

- Week XII (December 1): Consumption and Social Life in China since the 1980s
  
  Documentary (selections): “Beauty in China” or “Inside the Campus: Life at a Chinese University”

  Cheek, Living with Reform, Chapter 4, “Brave new world: reform and openness,” pp. 74-102. (Blackboard)


- Week XIII (December 8): China Going Global and the Environment
  
  Documentary (selections): “Manufactured Landscapes” or “Pollution in China: The People Protest”

  Cheek, Living with Reform, Chapter 5, pp. 103-121. (Blackboard)


  FINAL PAPER DUE ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 14, BY 5 PM, IN INSTRUCTOR'S MAILBOX AT HISTORY DEPARTMENT AND BY E-MAIL.