

HUMA 2440
Twentieth-Century China in Documentary Films

Spring 2019
Lecture & Tutorial: Tuesday 12:00–14:50, LTH

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents the turbulent history of twentieth-century China through texts and documentary films. In addition to reading a textbook and articles, we will closely study several films made by journalists and filmmakers of the time and in recent years. Major themes include the 1911 Revolution, China's role in WWII, the Communist Revolution, the Korean War, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, reform and opening up, and the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. Some of the films are in English and some in Chinese with English subtitles.

Each student is required to carry out an oral history interview project on a topic of your choice, which is not necessarily limited to Chinese or East Asian history. In addition, each student will be assigned to a three-person team to produce a 5- to 8-minute documentary film based on one team member's oral history interview.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

- 1 Grasp major historical events and general trends in 20th-century China
- 2 Think historically and critically about history and films
- 3 Understand history as personalized and lived experiences
- 4 Conduct oral history interviews and write an oral history report
- 5 Produce a short documentary film

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Jonathan D Spence. *The Search for Modern China*. New York: Norton, 1990, 1999, 2013.
Multiple copies of the textbook have been placed in the library on 2-hour reserve. [DS754 .S65 1990/1999/2013]

* All other assigned readings are available as PDFs on CANVAS. You should **print them out** and annotate them instead of reading them on your phone or computer.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Please be forewarned: this class requires a substantial amount of reading and other assignments every week. **Before each class**, you are expected to have completed all readings assigned for the week and watched the film, if it is available online (most of them are). Lecture and film attendance is required, as the lectures and films include materials not provided in textbooks.

ASSESSMENTS

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| 1. Weekly timeline/chronology x 10 | 10% |
| 2. Film reviews (x 2) | 10% |
| 3. Mid-term exam (1-hour) | 25% |
| 4. Final exam (1-hour) | 25% |
| 5. Oral history interview presentation | 5% |
| 6. Oral history interview report | 10% |
| 7. 5 to 8-minute documentary film (team) | 15% |

1. **Ten weekly timeline/chronology and short bios of historical figures.** Before each class, you should have completed all readings assigned to the week and watched the film. You

should hand in a timeline with at least **TEN events** and short **biographies of THREE individuals** covered in the film (other than Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong). You can draw from the textbooks, Wikipedia, and other sources. Format and length: 2 pages (on a double-sided sheet), **single-spaced**, Times New Roman, **10-point**. The timeline can help bring some order to the complex sequence of events we will be studying. By the end of the semester, you should have combined all timelines into one file and submit by email.

2. **Two film reviews.** Choose two films shown in the course and write short review essays (2 to 4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point). You should summarize the main message of the film, analyze the background and process of the production, and offer your critique.
3. **Mid-term and final exams** contain map, photo, and video clip identifications, multiple-choice questions, and a short essay. A study guide will be provided before each exam.
4. **Oral history interview project.**
 - a) Each student is required to conduct an oral history interview on a topic of your choice. You are responsible for locating the interviewee and conducting the interview.
 - b) Audio or video-record the interview with the interviewee's consent, as you may need the video recording for film production.
 - c) The final oral history interview report should situate your interviewee's story into a larger historical context, and you should explain how it will shed light on the history of twentieth-century China or the broader world.
 - d) For the final report, while you will draw upon the oral history account as the primary source, you should cite at least **one scholarly monograph, one article** from a scholarly journal, and **one documentary film** as secondary sources, in addition to the textbooks and readings.
 - e) Format and length: 4 to 6 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point.
5. **One team-produced documentary film.** Each student will be assigned to a three-person team to produce a 5- to 8-minute film, based on one team member's oral history interview. A final presentation and competition of all team-produced films will be held during the 3-hour final exam period. You are required to use the following components to make the film:
 - a) Oral history interview video footage.
 - b) Historical documentary film footage downloaded from the Internet.
 - c) Historical photographs obtained from the Internet and your interviewee.
 - d) Historical maps and/or Google Map/Earth.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

This course enforces a zero-tolerance policy on cheating. The discovery of cheating on an exam or paper will result in an automatic Fail grade in the course, and the case will be reported to university administration.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

1 (2/12) Introduction

Film: *China: A Century of Revolution*. Part I "China in Revolution 1911–1949" (1989) (114 min)

2 (2/19) The End of the Dynasty and the 1911 Revolution

Readings: Spence, Chapters 11–12 (End of the Dynasty; New Republic)

Film: Theodore H. White, *China: The Roots of Madness* (1967) (77 min)

3 (2/26) The Rise of Chinese Nationalism and Communism

Readings: Spence, Chapters 13–15.

Film: Joris Ivens with Robert Capa, *The 400 Million* (1939) (54 min)

4 (3/5) The War of Resistance (1937–), China as America's Ally in WWII (1942–45)

Readings:

- Spence, Chapters 16–17 (Communist survival; WWII).
- Pomfret, *Burmese Days* (280–291); 21 *Dangerous Liaisons* (292–305)

Film: Frank Capra (US Office of War Information), *Why We Fight: The Battle of China* (1944) (65 min)

5 (3/12) The Civil War (1945-1949) and the Early PRC

Readings: Spence, Chapters 18-19 (Fall of KMT; birth of the PRC).

Films:

China: A Century of Revolution. Part I “China in Revolution 1911–1949” (1989) (114 min)

China: A Century of Revolution. Part II “The Mao Years 1949–1976” (1994) (115 min)

Mao in Color (Discovery, 2015) (44 min)

6 (3/19) The 1950s: The Korean War, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, and the Great Famine

Readings:

- Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–1962* (NY: Walker & Co, 2010), i–xxiii, 324–337.
- Spence, Chapters 20 (Planning the New Society), 21 (Deepening the Revolution/Great Leap Forward)

Film: Patrick Cabouat, *Mao's Great Famine* (2012) (52 min)

- https://search.alexanderstreet.com/whiv/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C2037818?play=1

7 (3/26) MID-TERM EXAM (1-hour)

Film: Hu Jie 胡杰, *Searching for Lin Zhao's Soul* 寻找林昭的靈魂 (2004) (115 min)

Readings:

- Spence, Chapter 20-21.
- Philip P. Pan, “Searching for Lin Zhao’s Soul” and “Blood and love,” in *Out of Mao's Shadow: The Struggle for the Soul of a New China* (2008), pp. 21–79.
- La Frances Hui, China Through An Independent Lens: Six Experts Recommend Their Favorite Chinese Documentary Films [<http://www.chinafile.com/china-through-independent-lens>]
- Jie Li, “Virtual Museums of Forbidden Memories: Hu Jie's Documentary Films on the Cultural Revolution,” in *Public Culture* Fall 2009 21(3): 539–549.

8 (4/2) The Cultural Revolution I

Readings: Spence, Chapter 22 (Cultural Revolution).

Film: Carma Hinton, *The Morning Sun* (2003) (117 min)

- HKUST Media Reserve DS778.7 .M67 2005

9 (4/9) The Cultural Revolution II

Readings:

- Christ Buckley, “Bowed and Remorseful, Former Red Guard Recalls Teacher’s Death,” *New York Times*, Jan. 14, 2014.
- Xiao Han, “Confessions of the Cultural Revolution,” trans. Stacy Mosher, *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 2014.
- Chris Berry and Lisa Rofel, “Alternative archive: China’s independent documentary culture,” in *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement*, pp. 135–154.
- Wu Wenguang, “DV: Individual filmmaking,” in *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement*, pp. 49–54.

Film: Hu Jie 胡杰, *Though I am Gone* 我雖死去 (2007) (68 min)

10 (4/16) Hong Kong in 1967 and the Cultural Revolution

Readings: Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, Chapters 11-14.

Film: *Vanished Archives* (2017)

11 (4/23) 1980s: “Reform and Opening Up”

Readings: Spence, Chapter 23 (Reopening the Doors), 24 (Levels of Power)

Film:

Assignment China: The Week That Changed The World (58 min)

*Isaac Stern, *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China* (1981) (84 min)

Carma Hinton, *Tiananmen: The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1995) (180 min)

12 (4/30) 1989 Tiananmen

Readings: Spence, Chapters 26 (Testing the Limits).

Film: Carma Hinton, *Tiananmen: The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1995) (180 min)

DUE: Draft of Individual Oral History Report

13 (5/7) Final EXAM (1-hour)

Student Oral History Interview Presentation

DUE : combined timeline

14 (TBD)

Final competition of team-produced documentary films

DUE: Individual oral history report and the interviewee's timeline