

Beijing Summer Session  
Modern Chinese History  
Instructor: James T. Gillam  
Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia  
July 1st-Aug. 15th  
MWF 7:00-8:30p.m.

This is a survey course on the history of modern China. The temporal focus of the course covers the century and a half from the forceful opening of China in the Opium War of 1839-42 to the year 2000. There may be mention of events and periods on either side of these guidelines, but these decades are the main concern of this course. During this period, the Chinese people dispensed with a form of government that had been used for three thousand years, attempted to establish a modern republican government, participated in two world wars, two civil wars, and finally established their version of a socialist state. In the broadest of contexts, the overall goal of this course is to provide you with a Sino-centric view of this historical process and its consequences for the Chinese people.

### **Goals of the Course**

There are five specific goals for this course. They are:

1. To enable you to identify and understand the major events and issues of modern Chinese history and discuss them with some knowledge of their impact upon the people of China.
2. To familiarize you with the basic cultural, intellectual and political traditions of the modern Chinese state.
3. To help you understand why democracy as it is defined in the West has not grown in China.
4. To provide you with a basic understanding of the political philosophy known as Mao Zedong Thought as well as the nature and significance of its difference from the Marxism-Leninism of the Soviet Union, and why the Chinese chose this political philosophy.
5. To introduce you to some of the events that have had major impact on the lives of China's women and to give you some idea of the issues that affect them and the quality of their lives.

### **Requirements for the Course**

1. **Complete all reading assignments BEFORE class.** You will be assigned a number of readings from a variety of sources. They will provide you with general background and details of issues and events. A thorough reading of both types of information will enhance your understanding of lectures and facilitate meaningful and informed participation in class

discussions.

2. **Punctual attendance and informed participation in all class meetings.** The class will meet twelve times during the five-week session. Late arrivals (more than 2 minutes after the official start of class) will not be allowed to attend. In each session, there will be a lecture to provide background for the assigned readings and a basis for class discussions of important people, events, and issues in modern China.

3. **Meaningful and informed participation in class discussions.** To ensure your preparation and verify it for the instructor, you must bring an **Access Sheet** to class for every reading assignment on the day it is due for discussion. An **Access Sheet** contains the following information on a half sheet of paper: A. The author and title of the reading. B. The main point, or thesis of the reading. C. Your opinion of the relevance of the reading. D. Three questions that will cause the class to analyze the content of the reading and comment knowledgeably about all or part of it.

3. **Pass each of the weekly quizzes on the course materials.** There will be a short quiz at the end of each week. It will require the effective management of vocabulary, events and issues covered in the reading assignments, lectures, and class discussions.

## **Class Meetings and Topics**

### **Class Meeting #1 Diversity and Identity in China**

**Read:** Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, pp. 1-23.

**Lecture 1:** “Diversity in China: Ethnicity, Topography, Climate”

**Discussion:** Writing in China. The Romanization of Chinese characters. Managing diversity and identity in China.

### **Class Meeting #2 Sino-foreign Relations 1839-1919**

**Read:** Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, pp. 49-58

**Read:** Commissioner Lin’s Letters in Ssu-yu Teng and John Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, pp. 23-28.

**Read:** Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, pp. 167-173.

**Lecture 2:** “The 1911 Revolution and Sun Yatsen”

**Discussion:** China’s Movement from Imperialist Victim to Militant Nationalism

### **Class Meeting #3 The Nationalist and Communist Parties 1921-1945**

**Read:** Craig Deitrich, *People’s China: a Brief History*, “Old China and Young Revolutionaries”, pp. 10-32.

**Read:** Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, pp.197-208, and p. 290.

**Lecture 3:** “The Nanjing Decade”

**Lecture 4:** “The Chinese People Stand Up”

**Discussion:** The legacies of Jiang Kaishek, Mao Zedong, and their parties.

#### **Class Meeting #4 Politics In The Early CCP Era in China 1949-1965**

**Read:** Conrad Shirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations*, pp. 600-610.

**Read:** Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, pp. 340-357.

**Lecture 5:** The Great Leap, Great Fall, and the Cultural Revolution”

**Discussion:** The Revolutionary heritage in the People’s Republic.

#### **Class Meeting #5 The Economy After the Cultural Revolution**

**Read:** James T. Gillam, “The Reforms of 1978: Revolution or Continuity?” pp. 15-29 in *Journal of Third World Studies, Volume VI, No.1, Spring, 1989*.

**Lecture 6** “Economic Initiatives in Post Liberation China”

**Discussion:** The meaning of “Marxism With Chinese Characteristics”

#### **Class Meeting #6 Family Issues in the People’s Republic**

**Read:** “Family Relations” in Emily Honig & Gail Hershatter, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980’s*, pp. 167-191.

**Lecture 7** “Family Planning, Sterilization, and Penalties”

**Discussion:** The family and the gender roles of men and women.

#### **Class Meeting #7 Economic Development and Socio-Political Consequences in the 80’s**

**Read:** James T. Gillam, “An Unacknowledged Revolution: Women’s Role in China’s Private Economy”, pp. 243-263 in William Head, editor, *Weaving a New Tapestry; Asia in the Post-Cold War World*.

**Lecture 8** “13<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, Economic Development and Ethics Issues”

**Discussion:** Social and political impact of “Marxism With Chinese Characteristics”

#### **Class Meeting #8 Authoritarianism, Democracy, and Party Leaders**

**Read:** Craig Deitrich, *People’s China: a Brief History*, pp. 250-278.

**Lecture 9** “Tolerance, Repression, and the Party Leadership”

**Discussion:** The quest for “Democracy” and its Meaning in China

#### **Class Meeting #9 The Tiananmen Incident 1989**

**Read:** Yi Mu and Mark Thompson, *Crisis at Tiananmen*, pp. 78-106, (photos included).

**Lecture 10** “The PLA vs The Chinese People”

**Discussion:** The legacy of the PLA and the Tiananmen incident.

**Class Meeting #10 The Hong Kong and Taiwan Issues**

**Read:** Immanuel Hsu, *the Rise of Modern China*, pp. 982-990, and 904-923.

**Lecture 11** “150 Years of Hong Kong History”

**Discussion:** The meaning of Hong Kong’s return and prospects for unification with Taiwan.

**Class Meeting #11 Economic Development of Interior China**

**Read:** James T. Gillam, “Impacts and Issues Associated With China's Three Gorges Dam Project”, pp. 1-11.

**Lecture: 12** Film/Slide Show visit to Upper Yangzi and 3Gorges Dam

**Discussion:** The social and political impact of the 3 Gorges Dam.

**Class Meeting # 12 China’s Modern Day Identity in the World**

**Read:** Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, pp. 441-453.

**Discussion:** Issues for China and the World in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.