

HIST 105 INTRO SEMINAR

**CHINA'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

Fall 2008 T/Th 3:30-4:45 Palmer Hall 206

Instructor: Dr. Clayton D. Brown [brownc@rhodes.edu](mailto:brownc@rhodes.edu)

Office: Clough Hall 301, Fridays 2:00-4:00 pm and by appointment

**(this syllabus is subject to revision at the professor's discretion)**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1966, what had once seemed the best disciplined and most stable of dictatorial states dissolved into anarchy, and those youth who under Chairman Mao's direction turned society upside down became China's "lost generation." Only after the Chairman's death did sweeping reforms allow the Chinese people to publicly reflect, recount, and even criticize. This opening of the floodgates spawned histories, memoirs, films, and novels, but each tells a different story with a different agenda. This course examines the many narratives of China's Cultural Revolution in an effort to better understand how each source engages historical memory while responding to its own times.

COURSE GOALS

**This course is designed to take you through the process of writing an analytical paper. In general, each class meeting is a step toward your final product—the capstone paper. With each exercise progressing toward the final essay, you are rewarded for consistency and diligence at every stage and the final product will reflect all the work you did in the process.**

**Although the subject for the course is China's Cultural Revolution, the main point of the course is not to know everything about the Cultural Revolution but to evaluate different narratives of the event. This requires critical analysis of various sources, some of which include memoirs and autobiographies, novels, documentaries, textbooks, and oral histories. In each case, special attention is paid to the author's agenda, use of voice, depictions of self, and how the narrative fits into a broader historiographical framework.**

**Through this course, it is expected that students will not only gain factual knowledge related to the Cultural Revolution but also acquire an interest in learning more by asking and seeking answers to *their own* questions, learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas and points of view, and to express themselves both orally and in writing.**

## TEXTS

Jung Chang, *Wild Swans* (Touchstone, 2003) ISBN 0743246985

Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution* (Vintage: 1984). ISBN 0394722744

Gu Hua, trans. by Gladys Yang, *A Small Town Called Hibiscus* (Fredonia Books, 2003) ISBN 1410103528

John A. Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2002.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS (selections available digitally on Moodle)

Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (New York: Random House, 1994).

Woei Lien Chong, *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield); chapter 5 "The Deification of Mao" pp. 139-169.

Wen Chihua, *The Red Mirror* (Westview Press, 1995).

(Fens Jacai) Feng Jicai, *Ten Years of Madness: Oral Histories of China's Cultural Revolution* (China Books and Periodicals, 2007).

(Feng Kicai) Feng Jicai, *Voices from the Whirlwind* (Random House, 1992).

## GRADES

**Final Grade: 20% of grade based on daily participation in discussions, 20% based on annotated bibliography, 20% based on occasional exercises (including genealogy and oral history projects and brief writing exercises), 20% based on midterm paper and presentation, 20% based on final capstone essay and presentation (using a points-based system, this amounts to 250 total points or 50 points apiece).**

**Participation Points:** Keep up on the daily readings so you can make regular and informed contributions to daily classroom discussions. Use the annotated bibliography (see below) as a means of preparing questions and comments for class. You and your classmates will also be contributing to the review and revision of your essay drafts. The consistency and quality of contribution will be regularly assessed and rewarded with a semester total of twenty percent, ten percent before midterm and ten after. Persistent silence and unpreparedness disqualify one from participation credits. If you have any issues with public speaking please notify me in private ASAP!

**Annotated Bibliography:** Keep an annotated bibliography with your own notes for each piece we read, both books and articles. Note those things that will be useful in preparing the midterm paper and final capstone essay (discussed below) as well as any questions or thoughts you wish to share in class as your

contribution to discussion. This should be electronic (Word document) so that you may submit it occasionally for assessment.

**Occasional Exercises:** Any other exercises, such as the genealogy, oral history, and occasional brief writing assignments like the paper outline, will count toward 20% of your final grade. These will be explained in class.

**Midterm Paper:** For the first half of the semester, we will be working toward a rough draft of your paper. This will focus on a topic of your own design based on a theme which holds special interest for you, such as religion, gender roles, guilt, blame, humor, family relations, views of America, victimization, heroism, or any other topic you wish that is dealt with adequately in the narrative literature (you should be able to cite examples from at least two of the following: *Wild Swans*, *Son of the Revolution*, or *Li Zhisui*). The theoretical articles on memory and trauma will serve as a model for approaching your chosen theme, and accordingly at least one of these articles should be cited. The paper itself will be five pages in length, complete with citations in MLA style and a bibliography. Refer to the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* for assistance, and please also feel free to use the Rhodes Writing Center in Barret 122 in the process of drafting and revising papers.

**Final Essay:** We will continue to revise and add to your midterm paper in the second half of the semester, with assistance from peer review. The final draft will be ten pages in length, with double the sources from midterm (i.e. at least four narrative sources and two theoretical sources, along with one relevant outside source chosen by you).

Papers are graded according to the following schema:

**5 points – thesis statement** (A clear, concise statement of no more than one sentence answering the exam question).

**5 points – outline** (Use the first page in the blue book. One sentence per essay paragraph for a total of 5-7, including one each for introduction and conclusion. See attached handout as an example).

**5 points – introduction** (Opening paragraph of your essay introduces the topic, states your thesis, and provides a preview of the paper's main points).

**5 points – conclusion** (Last paragraph of the essay recapitulates your thesis, summarizes the main points and ties the essay together)

**5 points – mechanics** (Paragraphs, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)

**5 points – persuasiveness** (Is your argument believable? Do you include adequate evidence?)

**5 points – organization** (Follow your outline. Is there natural progression? Or is it a jumble of unrelated ideas?)

**5 points – focus** (Stick to the topic, no rambling. Leave out extraneous or irrelevant material, even if it is true. Whatever you say must clearly support your argument).

**10 points – evidence/support** (Refer to specific examples covered in the lectures or readings to support your argument)

Be sure to begin the first page with a thesis statement and outline. What I don't want is free association writing without any forethought, or unsubstantiated opinion, such as "I think." **Remember**, this exam is an argument-driven essay, not a survey of the Cultural Revolution literature. Refrain from summarizing everything we have covered; rather, be selective about which examples you cite in supporting your main point. This is the FOCUS portion of your grade as stated in the essay study guide above. Please review this study guide and the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* for assistance. This may save you time and effort and will certainly produce better essays.

## POLICIES

In this course we are committed to Rhodes standards: "Freedom of thought, a civil exchange of ideas, and an appreciation of diverse perspectives are fundamental characteristics of a community that is committed to critical inquiry. To promote such an academic and social environment we expect integrity and honesty in our relationships with each other and openness to learning about and experiencing cultural diversity" (Student Handbook 27). In this spirit, this class is to provide a safe space for critical thinking and the free exchange of ideas.

**The Honor System:** As a Rhodes student you are committed to the Honor Code. Students should be clear about what constitutes plagiarism and cheating, and should refrain entirely from engaging in either. Please review the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* pages 37-40. Any violation will be reported to the Honor Council which will then take appropriate action.

**Disabilities:** Any documented disabilities will be accommodated. This should be done through the Student Disability Services Office who will then work with the instructor to make any recommended accommodations for the student. See [www.rhodes.edu/disability](http://www.rhodes.edu/disability) or the *Student Handbook* page 8. Note that it is the responsibility of the student to obtain any necessary documentation and work through the Disability Office; the instructor merely complies with requests from the office.

**Attendance:** "Students enrolled at the institution make a commitment to participate fully in their education, which includes attending classes. Absenteeism is not to be taken lightly" (Student Handbook 12). Besides missing participation points, chronic absences will be noted by the instructor and your grade will suffer.

**In-class behavior:** Use of cell phones for speaking or texting, newspapers or other unrelated readings, and other distractions such as private conversations ARE NOT ALLOWED in the classroom. During class time, your classmates and the instructor expect that you will be engaged in the course and not serve as a hindrance to teaching or learning.

**Making up work:** As a policy I do not allow the "making up" of assignments, papers, exams, or even classroom participation. In *documented* cases of extenuating circumstances (i.e. emergency hospitalization) the instructor will make reasonable accommodations. No exceptions.

**Availability:** If I am in my office with the door open, feel free to stop in, but understand that I do teach two other courses and am not always available. My office hours are Fridays 2:00-4:00 pm; please use that time to visit with me if at all possible. If this does not work with your schedule, I am willing to meet by appointment. I do check email at least once a day, and I will respond within twenty-four hours, but do not expect a response the same day. If you have a genuine emergency please contact the department secretary, Ms. Heather Holt, who can then get in touch with me.

## SCHEDULE

Day 1 (Thurs 28th): Introduction

### September

Day 2 (Tues 2<sup>nd</sup>): *Wild Swans* Intro – p. 114 and “Navigating Life Review Interviews”

Day 3 (Thurs 4<sup>th</sup>): *Wild Swans* 115-169 and “Frey Takes a Novel Approach”

Day 4 (Tues 9<sup>th</sup>): *Wild Swans* 170-272 and “Changing Memory over Time”

Day 5 (Thurs 11<sup>th</sup>): *Wild Swans* 273-322 and “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions”

Day 6 (Tues 16<sup>th</sup>): *Wild Swans* 323-443 and “Truth and Testimony”

Day 7 (Thurs 18<sup>th</sup>): Complete *Wild Swans* and turn in 3 page paper of reflections.

\* (Tues 23<sup>rd</sup>): NO CLASS (DC Conference) Watch CR film *Farewell my Concubine*

Day 8 (Thurs 25<sup>th</sup>): *Son of the Revolution* 1-100 and turn in 1 page critique of film *Farewell my Concubine* explaining how it could inform your final paper.

Day 9 (Tues 30<sup>th</sup>): *Son of the Revolution* 101-200 and “Deification of Mao”

### October

Day 10 (Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup>): *Son of the Revolution* 201-241 and “Picturing Power”

Day 11 (Tues 7<sup>th</sup>): Complete *Son of the Revolution* and “Cultural Revolution Victims pts. 1-2,” prepare 3-5 page synthesis paper.

Day 12 (Thurs 9<sup>th</sup>): “Li Zhisui 1,” prepare Midterm Paper

Day 13 (Tues 14<sup>th</sup>): “Li Zhisui 2,” prepare Midterm Paper

\*Day 14 (Thurs 16<sup>th</sup>): Midterm Paper due, deliver oral presentations of paper in class.

\*Tues 21<sup>st</sup>: NO CLASS (fall break)

Day 15 (Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup>): *A Small Town Called Hibiscus* 1-100 and “Mobo Gao” 1

Day 16 (Tues 28<sup>th</sup>): *A Small Town Called Hibiscus* 101-200 and “Mobo Gao” 2

Day 17 (Thurs 30<sup>th</sup>): Finish *A Small Town Called Hibiscus* and “Official and Unofficial Histories”

## **November**

Day 18 (Tues 4<sup>th</sup>): “Voices from the Whirlwind 1” and “CR as History”

Day 19 (Thurs 6<sup>th</sup>): “Voices from the Whirlwind 2,” “Notes on Trauma and Community”

Day 20 (Tues 11<sup>th</sup>): “The Red Mirror 1” and “Reliability and Validity in Oral History”

Day 21 (Thurs 13<sup>th</sup>): “The Red Mirror 2” and “The Gulag in Memory”

Day 22 (Tues 18<sup>th</sup>): “Ten Years of Madness 1” and “Stolen Generations Testimony”

Day 23 (Thurs 20<sup>th</sup>): “Ten Years of Madness 2”

Day 24 (Tues 25<sup>th</sup>): Oral History pamphlet *Practices in Oral History*

Prepare oral history interviews

\*Thurs Nov 27<sup>th</sup>: NO CLASS

## **December**

Day 25 (Tues 2<sup>nd</sup>): Draft papers. Peer review of rough draft, oral presentations.

Day 26 (Thurs 4<sup>th</sup>): Revise papers. Oral presentations, video *To Live*.

Day 27 (Tues 9<sup>th</sup>): Revise papers. Final draft of paper due at the *beginning* of class. Oral presentations, finish video *To Live*.