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

The goals of this course are twofold: First, because the subject of the course is China’s Cultural Revolution, students are expected to gain factual knowledge about this event, including names, dates, and an understanding of historical significance. But as an exercise in historical methods, students will also learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

COURSE ATTRIBUTES

This course fulfills requirements for F2 - Intensive Written Communication, F3 - Historical Forces and Humanities credits.

TEXTS (available in the Book Center in paperback, some used)


ADDITIONAL READINGS (selections available digitally on Moodle)

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


**FILMS**

*The Blue Kite* (available on Moodle)

*Farewell My Concubine* (available on Moodle)

*Morning Sun*

*The Red Detachment of Women* (available on Moodle)

*Small Happiness*

*To Live* (available on Moodle)

*Yang ban xi* [Eight Model Plays]

**GRADES**
Your final grade is based on assessment of three criteria: Participation, Quizzes, and Essays. Current scores will be posted on Moodle, which automatically calculates and displays your overall score to date.

**Participation Points:** Participation comes in two forms: 1) completion of occasional assignments, such as written responses to films and the poster exercise, are worth ten points for each assignment; and 2) *regular and informed* contributions to classroom discussion, which requires that you keep up on the daily readings and, for every day we have an assigned reading, bring to class a brief (1 substantial paragraph or half a double-spaced page) typewritten response for group discussion in the form of either commentary or question *for each reading* (most days will require two responses). These you will use for discussion and turn in to me as part of your participation points for that day, so be sure to include your name and the title of reading(s). The thoughtfulness of your responses and the consistency and quality of your contribution to class discussions will be regularly assessed and rewarded with a semester total of fifty points, twenty-five before midterm and twenty-five after. Persistent silence and unpreparedness disqualify one from participation credits. This is a seminar, so if you have any issues with public speaking please notify me *in private*!

**Quizzes:** We will regularly have brief (usually multiple-choice or fill in the blank) quizzes. These are content-based and are designed to include simple questions on the readings assigned for that day, so that those who have carefully and thoughtfully considered the material will receive full credit. Expect eleven quizzes worth ten points apiece over the course of the semester, with the lowest score dropped at the end so that quiz points total one hundred.

**Essays:** An essay is due at the completion of each book, with a specific topic assigned for you to address in each case. The first essay is five pages worth thirty points, while the final essay will be ten pages worth fifty points, for a total of eighty essay points. This final essay will be a ten page synthesis of our sources (using the two books and at least three articles). Feel free to draw from your earlier work, but make this essay unique. Use double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font with standard one inch margins. Use correct Chicago style citations, either footnotes or endnotes, and include a signed honor code pledge and sequential page numbering centered at the bottom of each page as well as a list of sources cited. Consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* as necessary. Refer to the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing* for assistance, and if necessary use the Rhodes Writing Center in Barret 122 in the process of drafting and revising papers.

In general, papers are graded according to the following schema:

**Title**—Give your essay a descriptive title that conveys both the topic and the gist of your argument in a creative way (i.e. do not title your paper “Paper #1”).

**Thesis statement**—A clear, concise statement of no more than one sentence that posits your argument.

**Introduction**—Opening paragraph of your essay introduces the topic, states your thesis, and provides a preview of the paper’s main points.

**Conclusion**—Last paragraph of the essay recapitulates your thesis, summarizes the main points and ties the essay together.

**Mechanics**—Paragraphs, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. must adhere to academic standards.
Persuasiveness—Is your argument clear and logical and does your evidence support your conclusion?

Organization—Follow the trajectory outlined in your introduction. Is there natural progression? Or is it a jumble of unrelated ideas?

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.

Aesthetics—is the language of your paper engaging, informative, and reliant on active rather than passive voice? AVOID LINKING VERBS AND THE VERNACULAR!

Evidence/support—Refer to specific examples covered in the lectures or readings to support your argument. Be sure your information is correct, and properly cite your sources.

Be sure to include your thesis statement in the opening paragraph. Remember, your essay is argument-driven, not a summary of the book(s). Refrain from recapitulating the story; 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 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: Any disrespectful utterances or actions, whether directed at the instructor or fellow students, will not be tolerated. 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.

**Availability:** If I am in my office with the door open, feel free to stop in. I do teach two other courses and am not always available, but my office hours are M/W 2-5 pm; please use that time to visit with me if at all possible. I am also 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.

**READING SCHEDULE**

**January**

Thursday 14th: Introduction (note *Wild Swans* has timeline and map at the end)

Tuesday 19th: *Wild Swans*, Intro to page 61 and “Women’s Virtues and Vices”

Thursday 21st: *Wild Swans* 62-93 and “Widows Loyal Unto Death”

*Tuesday 26th: No Class (instructor out of town). Read *Wild Swans* 94-150.*

Thursday 28th: *Wild Swans* 151-203 and “Examples of Filial Piety”

**February**

Tuesday 2nd: *Wild Swans* 204-255 and “The Great Leap Forward”

Thursday 4th: *Wild Swans* 256-307; in-class documentary on the Great Leap Forward

Tuesday 9th: *Wild Swans* 308-361 and “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions”

Thursday 11th: *Wild Swans* 362-405 and “Jiang Qing”

Tuesday 16th: *Wild Swans* 406-457 and “Wei Jingsheng”

Thursday 18th: *Wild Swans* 458-end

*Tuesday 23rd: First Essay due; 5 pages on the topic—How did the lives of China’s women change with the Communist takeover and the advent of the Cultural Revolution? Was life for women better or worse than before? Be sure to properly cite evidence from *Wild Swans* and at least two other assigned readings. In-class screening of *Morning Sun.*
Thursday 25th: Second half of *Morning Sun*. During film screening, professor will meet with students individually in History Department lounge (3rd floor next to the department office) for discussion of paper.

**March**

Tuesday 2nd: “Li Zhisui pt. 1”

Thursday 4th: Celebrate annual Lei Feng Day! Read “Lei Feng” and “Li Zhisui pt. 2”

Tuesday 9th: “Mao on Art and Literature” and “Picturing Power”

Thursday 11th: “Deification of Mao”

* Tuesday 16th: NO CLASS—Spring Break.

* Thursday 18th: NO CLASS—Spring Break.

Tuesday 23rd: In-class poster analysis (assignment due 30th).

Thursday 25th: Watch *Farewell My Concubine* on Moodle or at the Media Center and write a 3 page response to the film on how the Cultural Revolution changed Peking Opera (sets, costumes, story, actors, etc.). In-class documentary *Yang Ban Xi*.

Tuesday 30th: Read “Mao’s Harem,” share posters.

**April**

* Thursday 1st: NO CLASS—Easter Break.

Tuesday 6th: “Was I Really Guilty” and “CR Victims pt 2”

Thursday 8th: library day

Tuesday 13th: *Hibiscus Town* 1-50

Thursday 15th: *Hibiscus Town* 51-100

Tuesday 20th: *Hibiscus Town* 101-150 and “Butterflies and Rain”

Thursday 22nd: *Hibiscus Town* 151-201 and “The Most Intelligent Man”

Tuesday 27th: *Hibiscus Town* 202-249 and “CR in the Eyes of a New Generation”

Thursday 29th: Watch *To Live* on Moodle or on reserve in Barret Library Media Center and submit 3 page assessment: Analyze how it compares with *Farewell My Concubine* as a portrayal of the Cultural Revolution. Be sure to support your argument with salient examples.
**Final Essay Question:** The work of a historian is to discover how the past relates to and informs the present. Although the Cultural Revolution occurred in China decades ago, there are still lessons we can learn from this history. If you were to write a ten page argument to help your peers understand the significance of the Cultural Revolution today, what would you say? Drawing on the range of sources we explored this semester, explain what they should know about the Cultural Revolution and why. (See the essay evaluation schema provided above. In addition to an assessment of these qualities, I will be most impressed with how well you employ sources and relate the Cultural Revolution to American college students.)