

# History 491H: The Chinese Cultural Revolution

## UMass: Spring, 2010

Seminar meetings: T 2:30-5:00

\*\*\*COURSE WEBSITE on SPARK\*\*\*

**Professor: Sigrid Schmalzer**

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**Note: When emailing, please include "History 491H" in the subject heading.**

### **Course Description:**

This course will be an in-depth investigation of China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), in which Mao Zedong urged the people to wrest control away from Communist Party leaders and recreate Chinese culture and society based on revolutionary principles. What motivated people, and particularly youth, to participate in activities that often brought suffering to themselves and their families and destruction to China's cherished cultural sites? What were the ideals they strove to realize, and to what extent can their actions be considered in positive light? How has the Cultural Revolution been remembered in years since?

In order to encourage empathy for historical actors and critical evaluation of the way the Cultural Revolution has been portrayed, we will begin with the most primary of sources and move progressively "outward" until we arrive at recent scholarly analysis. The character and context of sources will be a consistent emphasis.

### **Grading method:**

I have become convinced that grades are at best a distraction and often actually an impediment to learning. If it were up to me, UMass would abandon letter grades and convert instead to a system of qualitative feedback similar to the one used at Hampshire College. For this reason, I will be providing only qualitative feedback on all assignments. I will post this feedback to Spark promptly after your submission of each assignment; it is your responsibility to read my comments and contact me with any questions. I expect you to take the comments seriously and to pay special attention in subsequent assignments to any areas I highlight for improvement.

Of course, UMass does require me to enter a final grade for you in the class: I am allowed the use of just one letter, followed if I choose by a + or -. At the end of the semester, I will reflect on all aspects of your work in the class in order to assign an appropriate final grade. The A range requires the production of excellent work throughout the semester (with room for falling down a bit on one or two small assignments) and also the fulfillment (with few or no exceptions) of the other expectations listed below. For example, a student who **for any reason** misses more than two classes, or who consistently submits work late, should not expect an A in the course even if all other aspects of his or her work are excellent. The B range is for students who, in addition to meeting the expectations listed below, consistently produce very good work or produce passable work and demonstrate considerable effort to improve over the course of the semester. Students who produce passable work with little effort to improve but who meet the other expectations will receive a grade in the C range. I will assign Ds and Fs to students who produce consistently poor work, fail to take steps to improve, and/or fail to meet the other expectations of the course.

I do recognize that some students have special reasons (e.g., scholarship requirements, expectations for athletes, general anxiety about assessment, etc.) to be concerned about their grades. If for any reason, at any time in the semester, you are concerned about your grade, please let me know and I will tell you where you seem to be headed. I will also take it upon myself to inform you if you are in danger of receiving less than a C in the course.

## Requirements:

### Your concrete responsibilities are as follows:

Weekly assignments, each of which is a very important component of the entire course

Attendance (one absence is understandable; after that it becomes very problematic; and four absences will prevent you from passing the class)

Active participation in class, including periodic formal presentations

A final project that demonstrates extensive research on a subject of your choice. Many students will choose to write formal research papers (shoot for 15-20 pages in length). I am, however, delighted to consider proposals for other kinds of projects. You must still conduct significant research, but you may present your ideas as fiction, film, art, museum exhibit, school curriculum, or ... the world is your oyster!

### Less tangible expectations:

Regular attendance and punctuality

Regular contributions to class discussion

Collegiality (i.e., courtesy and helpfulness to me and your classmates)

Timely submission of all assignments (see below)

Careful consideration and thoughtful analysis of the readings

High-quality written work (including engagement with and proper citation of sources)

Willingness to proofread each assignment before submitting

Responsiveness to feedback

Initiative in pursuing research (choosing an interesting topic and locating sources)

**NOTE THAT ASSIGNMENTS ARE ALWAYS DUE AT 9:00 A.M. THE MONDAY BEFORE THE CLASS FOR WHICH THEY ARE LISTED! You must post them to SPARK by then. If you have any technical difficulties, you should email me the file. IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU SUBMIT THE WORK ON TIME, SINCE I CANNOT PROMISE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS SUBMITTED LATE.**

### Texts:

1) Ye Weili with Ma Xiaodong, *Growing Up in the People's Republic: Conversations between Two Daughters of China's Revolution* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Available at Amherst Books in downtown Amherst.

2) One other representative of "scar literature" (choose from a list and order on your own or borrow from a library)

3) Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz, and Andrew Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History* (Stanford UP, 2006).

Available at Amherst Books.

4) Other materials available on ereserves, on line, or at the library (see schedule)

### Academic Honesty:

Students are responsible for knowing the university's policy on academic honesty

(<http://www.umass.edu/academichonesty>). Students who plagiarize or engage in other forms of cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and possibly other consequences.

# Schedule

## INTRODUCTION

### Week 1 (1/19)

Introductions and overview of Cultural Revolution in the context of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century China

#### PROPAGANDA AND THE STATE'S VOICE

Remember: propaganda is not *necessarily* a bad thing. It's a means of communicating a certain point of view to your audience without attempting to provide alternate viewpoints. What kinds of propaganda do we routinely encounter in our society?

### Week 2 (1/26)

Discussion leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

Read and analyze:

**Please note: Do your best to ignore any analysis presented on the websites. I want you to start with primary sources only and to respond to them on your own.**

*Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* (a.k.a. *Little Red Book*)

<http://www.morningsun.org/living/redbook/toc.html>

<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/poster/exhibintro.html>

[http://www.morningsun.org/stages/rent\\_courtyard.html](http://www.morningsun.org/stages/rent_courtyard.html)

"English Lessons" (<http://www.morningsun.org/multimedia>)

*Peasant Paintings from Huhsien County* (on reserve at the library)

ASSIGNMENT: Try to get in the heads of the people reading and memorizing the *Little Red Book*. If you were them, which passages would you emphasize and why? Then try to understand the people who created and consumed the other examples of propaganda. What did they want to communicate? What do you think people saw in them? Write ~2 pages of notes. You should engage directly with the sources: use quotations and specific descriptions of visual content as the basis for your analysis.

### Week 3 (2/2)

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_ Discussion leader (for Schoenhals documents): \_\_\_\_\_

Read:

1. Documents (from Schoenhals' *Not a Dinner Party* -- on Ereserves). Please come to class ready to talk about these documents. Whose voice(s) do they reflect? How are they similar to or different from the propaganda we have looked at so far?
2. SCMP assignment (see Spark for detailed instructions: this assignment is complex and well worth doing properly!)

## VISITORS' REPORTS

### Week 4 (2/9)

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_; Discussion leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest: Frances Crowe is a local celebrity who has been involved in peace and social justice activism for the better part of a century. She visited China in 1974 along with other Americans excited to learn about socialism in China and the lessons it had to offer the United States.

Read: All articles except the last may be found at [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) (you may search the database rather than typing the monstrous stable URL.) Note that if you are using your own Internet connection, you should find Jstor through the UMass library databases page.

ASSIGNMENT: Write a short analysis (~ 2 pages) of the reports **as primary sources**. What are their strengths and limits as sources? In other words, what kinds of questions do they help us explore, and what insight do they provide in answering these questions? What kinds of questions require other kinds of sources?

Foreign Expert, "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Eyewitness of the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly* 28 (October. - Dec., 1966): 1-7. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28196610%2F12%290%3A28%3C1%3AEOTCR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-D>

Frederick C. Teiwes, "Before and after the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly* 58 (Apr. - Jun., 1974): 332-348. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197404%2F06%290%3A58%3C332%3ABAATCR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8>

James C. F. Wang, "The May Seventh Cadre School for Eastern Peking," *The China Quarterly* 63. (September., 1975): 522-527. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197509%290%3A63%3C522%3ATMCSF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>

Alexander Casella, "The Nanniwan May 7th Cadre School," *The China Quarterly* 53. (Jan. - Mar., 1973): 153-157. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197301%2F03%290%3A53%3C153%3ATNM7CS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F>

A. Z. M. Obaidullah Khan, "Class Struggle in Yellow Sandhill Commune," *The China Quarterly* 51. (Jul. - September., 1972): 535-546. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197207%2F09%290%3A51%3C535%3ACSIYSC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

Jan S. Prybyla, "Notes on Chinese Higher Education: 1974," *The China Quarterly* 62 (Jun., 1975): 271-296. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197506%290%3A62%3C271%3ANOCHE1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-L>

Rhoda Stockwell, "With China's Children," *The Elementary School Journal* 75.4. (Jan., 1975): 228-237. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0013-5984%28197501%2975%3A4%3C228%3AWCC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>

C. K. Jen, "Science and the Open-Doors Educational Movement," *The China Quarterly* 64 (Dec., 1975): 741-747. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197512%290%3A64%3C741%3ASATOEM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>

Alexander Casella, "Recent Developments in China's University Recruitment System," *The China Quarterly* 62 (Jun., 1975): 297-301. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197506%290%3A62%3C297%3ARDICUR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>

Robert McCormick, "'Revolution in Education' Committees." *The China Quarterly* 57 (Jan. - Mar., 1974): 133-139. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7410%28197401%2F03%290%3A57%3C133%3A%22IEC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>

Margaret Stanley, "China: Then and Now," *The American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 72, No. 12. (Dec., 1972), pp. 2213-2218. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-936X%28197212%2972%3A12%3C2213%3ACTAN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>

\*\*\*NOTE THIS LAST ONE IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER DATABASE RATHER THAN JSTOR.

Robert L. Metcalf, "China Unleashes Its Ducks," *Environment* 18.9 (Nov. 1976): 14-18  
Stable URL: <http://silk.library.umass.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9185896&site=ehost-live>

**(February 16: NO CLASS)**

**Week 5 (2/23)**

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_

Read: A book-length visitors' report of your choice.

ASSIGNMENT: Prepare notes (to turn in) and a 5-minute presentation. Use the sheet provided for your notes so that you're sure to answer necessary questions.

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

**Week 6 (3/2)**

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_ Discussion Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interviews

Read: Selections from *Voices from the Whirlwind* and *Mao's Children* (on reserve and on my door for convenient copying).

ASSIGNMENT: Write 1-2 pages on the use of these interviews as historical sources. What are their benefits? Limitations?

I will give you your first progress report (general feedback on your performance thus far).

### Week 7 (3/9)

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_

#### "Scar literature"

Read: A Cultural Revolution memoir of your choice. Sign up on SPARK discussion board. If you know of a memoir not on the list that you would prefer to read, please feel free -- and please indicate on SPARK the author, title, publisher, and date.

ASSIGNMENT: Prepare notes (to turn in) and a 5-minute presentation. Use the sheet provided on SPARK for your notes so that you're sure to answer necessary questions.

### 3/16 SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

ASSIGNMENT: Write and post to SPARK one paragraph each on three different ideas for final projects. **DON'T BLOW THIS OFF!** Not only will you lose the opportunity for valuable feedback, but your final project grade will suffer.

### Week 8 (week of 3/23)

#### Scar literature, cont.

We will need to reschedule to accommodate Ye Weili's schedule.

**Read: Ye Weili's *Growing Up in the People's Republic*.** SPECIAL VISITOR: YE WEILI.  
Bring notes (to turn in) that prepare you to ask her lots of questions

### Week 9 (week of 3/30)

#### Scar literature, cont. Film: *Morning Sun*

We may be rescheduling to meet in the evening in order to include a visit by a local man who lived through the Cultural Revolution and has important stories to relate. Stay tuned for updates.

ASSIGNMENT: book review for *Growing Up in the People's Republic*. Book reviews should be **two pages, double spaced**. They should briefly outline the main themes and arguments of the book and then point out the chief contributions, limitations, and any problems. For examples, see <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/chinesehistory/pgp/index.html>. Note that the reviews on this website include mention of contemporary scholarly reviews (this part is optional for you).

## PROJECT PROPOSALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

### Week 10 (4/6)

Project proposal and annotated bibliography due. The proposal should be a concise (2-3 pages, double spaced) explanation of: the main question or theme addressed in the project, its significance, the way it relates to existing scholarship, and the methods you propose to use. An annotated bibliography is a list of all relevant sources with one or two sentences following each entry describing the source and its usefulness to your project. Use proper bibliographic format: consult the Chicago Manual of Style available through the Databases section of the library website, and then follow the "Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide" link or go to Chapter 17 for more detailed examples. You should have on the order of ten sources including primary and secondary sources. **DON'T BLOW THIS OFF!** Not only will you lose the opportunity for

valuable feedback, but I will have a much harder time assessing your final project.

Discuss projects in class. Please be prepared to discuss the sources you are using so that your classmates may benefit from your research.

## SCHOLARLY ANALYSIS

### Week 11 (4/13)

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_; Discussion leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Scholarly Analysis: The Countryside**

Chan et al, *Chen Village* (on reserve)

Gao, *Gao Village* (on reserve)

ASSIGNMENT: Rather than selecting chapters for you to read, I have placed the two books on reserve for you to explore on your own. You will probably not have time to read both books in their entirety. Welcome to life as a scholar! Part of your job is thus to determine what to read, what to skim, and what to skip. Obviously, our main goal is to understand how the different authors analyze the Cultural Revolution as experienced in the countryside. However, it will also be useful to think about how they discuss the post-Mao era, since their different perspectives on the reforms after the Cultural Revolution clearly influence their accounts of the Cultural Revolution itself. Moreover, in order to develop an appreciation for their differing analyses, you should at least skim the introductory material to determine who the authors are in relation to their subjects and how they went about their research. Write ~2 pages comparing and contrasting the two accounts.

### Week 12 (4/20)

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_; Discussion leader: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Scholarly Analysis: Culture in the Cultural Revolution**

Dahpon Ho, "To Protect and Preserve" (in Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder)

Jeremy Brown, "Staging Xiaojinzhuan" (in Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder)

ASSIGNMENT: write ~2 pages discussing the different meanings culture took in these two accounts. What was the significance of "culture" in the Cultural Revolution?

### Week 13 (4/27)

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_; Discussion leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Scholarly Analysis: Youth**

Xiaowei Zheng, "Passion, Reflection, and Survival" (in Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder)

Schmalzer, "Youth and the 'Great Revolutionary Movement' of Scientific Experiment in 1960s-70s Rural China" (Hot off the presses! I will provide you with a copy of my latest paper.)

ASSIGNMENT: write ~2 pages comparing and contrasting the two accounts of youth in the Cultural Revolution

**Week 14 (5/4)**

Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_; Discussion leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scholarly Analysis: Coming to terms with violence in the Cultural Revolution**

Yang Su, "Mass Killings in the Cultural Revolution" (in Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder)

Jiangsui He, "The Death of a Landlord" (in Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder)

ASSIGNMENT: write ~2 pages reflecting on the complex issues involved in writing historically about violence in the Cultural Revolution

**MEET DURING EXAM WEEK FOR PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**