

HIST 3995. Special Topics: The Chinese Revolution in Chinese Eyes

Spring 2014

Tu/Th 12:30-1:45, Information Tech Engr 127

Prof. Peter Zarrow

Wood Hall 313

office hours: Th 2-3 p.m. & by appt.

The “**long**” **Chinese Revolution** lasted from the late 19th century at least through the end of the 1960s. It was of world-historical importance and may in time be seen as the most significant event of modern history (something like how the French Revolution has been regarded). Chinese who lived through these events, and made them, sometimes recorded their experiences. This course focuses on some of those records, in English translation or the original English, to ask two questions. 1) What do autobiographies and memoirs tell us about the Chinese Revolution? 2) How can we best read these texts?

Self-writing (i.e., memoirs, autobiographies, letters) may or may not present an accurate picture of what the author lived through. It may or may not represent a truthful account remembered as best as possible. It may or may not represent the author’s sincere attempt to understand herself. Self-writing is certainly shaped as much by the times in which the author was writing as by the earlier times it describes. Aside from the vagaries of memory, it is shaped by the narrative forms, cultural expectations, and even market conditions to which the author responds consciously or unconsciously.

This course does not require a prior knowledge of modern Chinese history. It focuses on what we can learn from memoirs. However, students without such knowledge are advised to consult a basic textbook such as Jonathan D. Spence’s *Search for Modern China*; Maurice J. Meisner’s *Mao’s China and After*; or John K. Fairbank’s *The Great Chinese Revolution, 1800-1985*; etc.

Grading for this class is based on the following work:

-class participation and reports; quizzes: 40%

-paper 1: 20%

-paper 2: 20%

-take-home final exam: 20%

Notes:

1. Plagiarism is not tolerated. See http://irc.uconn.edu/PlagiarismModule/intro_m.htm.
2. Provisions will be made for students with disabilities.
See http://www.csd.uconn.edu/accommodation_services.html.
3. Attendance is encouraged; class participation and student reports count toward your final grade.
4. Laptops, mobile phones, and other electronic doodads may not be used in class.

Books for class readings: available at the UConn Co-op (as well as Amazon.com, etc.):

-Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*

-Ida Pruitt (Ning Lao T’ ai T’ ai) *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman*

-Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*

-Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution*

-Ping Fu, *Bend, Not Break: A Life in Two Worlds*

****Class-kit* on HuskyCT***

CLASS SCHEDULE

Unit 1: Background: two memoirs

Jan. 21 -*Wild Swans*, 1-114

Jan. 23 -*Wild Swans*, 115-255

Jan. 28 -*Wild Swans*, 256-378

Jan. 30 -*Wild Swans*, 378-508

Feb. 4 -*A Daughter of Han*, 1-73

Feb. 6 -*A Daughter of Han*, 74-141

Feb. 11 -*A Daughter of Han*, 142-194

Feb. 13 -*A Daughter of Han*, 195-249

Unit 2: Theoretical issues

Feb. 18 -Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, “Reading Autobiography—Life Narration” (reserved on HuskyCT, 1-19);

-Nicole King, “Memory, Narrative, Identity—Memory in Theory” (reserved on HuskyCT, 11-32)

Feb. 20 -Wendy Larson, “Literary Authority and the Modern Chinese Writer—Hu Shi and Lu Xun” (reserved on HuskyCT, 87-112)

-Q.S. Tong and Ruth Y.Y. Hung, “Life Writing—‘To Be Worthy of the Suffering’” (reserved on HuskyCT, 59-79)

* paper 1 due

Unit 3: 20th century memoirs

Feb. 25 -Mrs. Nie Zeng Jifen. “Testimony of a Confucian Woman...” (reserved on HuskyCT, 57-81)

-Buwei Yang Chao, “Autobiography of a Chinese Woman...” (reserved on HuskyCT, 82-114)

Feb. 27 -Mao Tse-tung [Mao Zedong], “Red Star Over China—Part Four...” (reserved on HuskyCT, 129-181)

Mar. 4 -Pu Yi, Aisin-Gioro, “From Emperor to Citizen—From the Forbidden City (in part)” (reserved on HuskyCT, vol. 1, 137-169)

-Pu Yi, Aisin-Gioro, “From Emperor to Citizen-- From Fear to Recognizing My Guilt (in part)” (reserved on HuskyCT, vol. 2, 333-358)

Mar. 6 – Chiang Monlin, “Tides From the West—Rapid Changes... Years of Trouble” (reserved on HuskyCT, 92-135)

Unit 4: Cultural Revolution memoirs

Mar. 11 -*Son of the Revolution*, 1-80

Mar. 13 -*Son of the Revolution*, 81-175

Mar. 16-22 Spring break

Mar. 25 - *Son of the Revolution*, 176-231

Mar. 27 – (film; no class)

Apr. 1 -*Son of the Revolution*, 232-292

Apr. 3 -*Spider Eaters*, 1-65

*paper 2 due

April 8 -*Spider Eaters*, 66-129

Apr. 10 -*Spider Eaters*, 130-199

Apr. 15 -*Spider Eaters*, 200-285

Apr. 17 -*Bend, Not Break*, ix, 1-71

Apr. 22 -*Bend, Not Break*, 73-136

Apr. 24 -*Bend, Not Break*, 137-197

Apr. 29 -*Bend, Not Break*, 199-274

May 1 (last class) – The Ping Fu controversy (reserved on HuskyCT):

-Tania Branigan, “The Guardian: Ping Fu’s Childhood Tales...”

-various, “Bend Not Break: Amazon.com comments”

-Joe Nocera, “New York Times: Cultural Revolution Vigilantes (with comments)”