History 3995, China and the West, Fall 2014

Dr. Victor Zatsepine
Office: Room 307, Wood Hall, History Department, UConn
Tel: 860-4714079

Lectures: 2 times a week
Discussions: selected days, TBA

This course analyses China’s political, economic, and cultural encounters with the Western Powers from the seventeenth century to 1949. Students will consider the changing structure of Chinese society in order to understand how Imperial China perceived the West. Additionally, this course addresses different strategies employed by the Western Powers to gain influence in China, ranging from missionary work and the opium trade to military invasion. In the twentieth century, Chinese people borrowed such foreign concepts as republican government, revolution, and nationalism to overthrow the Qing dynasty and to launch political, economic, and social reforms that were unprecedented in scale and human cost. This course aims to help students reflect on the perceived and real impact of Chinese and Western civilizations on each other.

Learning objectives:
This course will incorporate current and past historiography to familiarize us with problems that arise in studying Chinese modern history and in analysing Western accounts of China. By the end of this course, successful students will have increased their understanding of the history of Sino-Western interactions and of Western perceptions about China. Critical thinking and writing skills will be strengthened through reading, discussions, assignments and research for a term paper.

Required readings:
The search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999)

Recommended reading:

Distribution of Grades:
Paper proposal – 10%
Book review – 20%
Term paper – 30 %
Final exam– 20%
Participation, discussions – 20%
• This course has **three writing assignments** (a book review, a term paper proposal, and the term paper) and final test.

1) Book review: Jonathan Spence, *To Change China* (5 pages, double spaced)

2) Term paper proposal (3 pages double-spaced). Each student will choose **either** a Western person who wrote about China, a Chinese person who wrote about the West, or a Western institution/country, which got involved with China at any period from 1650 to 1949. You will write a brief plan of the term paper, which will include the topic, potential arguments, chronology and available sources. Selected sources can be used from the collection of documents by Jonathan Spence (required text). This exercise will prepare students for writing a successful term paper.

3) Term Paper (10 pages double-spaced, including bibliography) will be based on your term paper proposal. This paper will critically evaluate any Western account of the Qing or Republican China or any Chinese account of the West from 1650 to 1949.

• 6 group discussions will be based on Jonathan Spence’s document collection *In Search of Modern China* (See required texts).

**Week 1:**
- Chinese and Western approaches to Chinese history
- Travels of Marco Polo

**Week 2:**
- Portugal in Macao and early Europeans in China
- Qing dynasty and early emperors

**Week 3:**
- Jesuits at the Qing court
- China in the 18th century world

**Week 4:**
- European images of China
  - **Discussion 1**

**Week 5:**
- European diplomatic missions in China
  - **Discussion 2**

**Week 6:**
- Opium Wars and the “Opening of China.”
- The Taiping Rebellion and Christianity

**Week 7:**
- Life in treaty ports and in colonial Hong Kong
  - **Discussion 3**

**Week 8:**
- Western media on (images of) China
  - **Discussion 4**
Week 9: Chinese labor in North America (19th century)  
Self-Strengthening movement (Learning from the West)  

**Book review is due!**

Week 10: Boxer Rebellion (1900).  
**Discussion 5**

Week 11: Movie “55 days in Peking”  
Sun Yat-sen, the revolution and the end of Qing dynasty  

Week 11: Soviet and US interests in Republican China (1920-1940)  
**Discussion 6**

Week 12: Chinese writings about the West  
The roots of Western stereotypes about China  
**Final paper is due!**

**Suggested readings for final paper.**

1. **General:**


Hopkirk, Peter. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road* (London, 1980)

Kerr, Douglas and Julia Kuehn. *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from 1840s to the 1940s* (HKU, 2007)

(Harvard, 2008)


Wood, Frances. *The Lure of China* (Hong Kong, 2009)

2. **Individuals experiences and accounts of China and the West:**


Bird, Isabella. *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: an Account of Journeys in China* (1899)


Fleming, Peter. *News from Tartary: A Journey from Peking to Kashmir* (1936)


Hedin, Sven. *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912)

Hooker, Mary. *Behind the Scenes in Peking* (1910)

Johnston, Reginald F. *From Peking to Mandalay: a Journey from North China to Burma through Tibetan Ssuch’uan and Yunnan* (1908).

Johnston, Reginald F. *Twilight in the Forbidden City*. With a preface by the Emperor (1934)


Lattimore, Owen. *The Desert Road to Turkestan* (1928).


Wu Tingfang, *America and Americans from a Chinese Point of View* (London, 1914)
