

History 223: Modern China
Connecticut College, Spring 2014, (19 students)

Course Description

This class is both a survey of the past two centuries of Chinese history (1799-present) and a course in thinking critically about historical narratives. In terms of factual content, it is mainly a social history of China, as we follow changes in everyday life, culture, and the relationship between ordinary people and power. The textbook is supplemented by challenging but accessible secondary and primary readings chosen to present the same period in a very different way. By the end of the semester, students are able to identify the most important phenomena ...

Activities

This course is heavily discussion-based. Students take the lead by designing their own group presentations to link the previous week’s material into the current week’s lesson. In-class debates and a semester-long guided historiography project help students build their knowledge and confidence.

Final Evaluations

Qualitative

- “This course offered a really great balance between memorization of historical facts and more theoretical critical thinking about larger themes of identity and nationalism.”
- “A lot of reading, but texts were interesting and directly related to discussions.”
- “I think diagrams used in class explained concepts I had only come across through literature very well, and the benefits derived from this class will stay with me for a while.”
- “He is a wonderful teacher and I love how reflective he is with his students and how eager he is to improve his class sessions. His joy for teaching and his subject matter is apparent every time he steps into the classroom and he leads glowing discussions and mini-lectures.”

Quantitative (by percentage)

Prompt	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Course requirements were clearly stated			100%
Instructor was responsive and available		11%	89%
Assignments returned in a timely manner			100%
Comments were constructive and useful		26%	74%
Instructor taught in a way that made you take responsibility for your own learning	6%	6%	89%
Assignments gave opportunity to synthesize or apply knowledge		5%	95%
You either mastered body of material or developed intellectually		11%	89%
Instructor treated students with respect		5%	95%
Challenged you to do your best work	5%	32%	63%
Instructor encouraged class participation		5%	95%
Texts or other materials were appropriate			100%