**SIS 106.007 China from the Inside Spring 2016**

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Office hours: Tuesdays after class, Wednesdays late mornings, and by appointment other days. Please tell me if you plan to stop by. Email and phone consultation also welcome and encouraged!

**Course introduction:**China is transforming the globe, yet all too often the country is considered as a single unit, with little appreciation for the complexities of what it means to be Chinese, of regional differences, or of the weight of history and culture. This course aims to provide a view of China “from the inside.” We will start by appreciating China’s historical legacy after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 to the Communist victory in 1949. We will read some of the rich memoirs of the Mao period. The final section of the class focuses on China today, including challenges of the environment, national character, ethnic minority groups, and China’s enormous footprint in the world.

**Course goals and learning outcomes:**This First Year Seminar is intended to provide you with an introduction to modern Chinese history, culture, and contemporary challenges. The primary goal is to help you feel enduringly fascinated by China and to learn to think critically about sources of information. All First Year Seminars have these two learning outcomes: Demonstrate critical thinking as evidenced through both written and oral presentation; interpret issues from multiple cultural and philosophical perspectives. By taking this course and participating fully you will be able to:

Grasp the basic outline of recent Chinese history and understand the relationship between history and contemporary problems

Reflect on how different versions of “truth” are reflected in memoirs, novels, documentaries, journalism, and official histories

Critically evaluate the assumptions and perspectives of these various modes of representation

Delve deeply into themes such as: the role of women, human rights, ethnic minorities, political repression, intellectual freedom

Analyze the causes of China’s environmental challenges and their impacts

Appreciate the problems China faces using domestic Chinese perspectives

Understand how national cultural differences affect global affairs

**Course Requirements:**Class attendance is essential. If you MUST miss class, you must send me an email explaining why. Written assignments include weekly MANDATORY Blackboard posts about the readings BEFORE class (TWO misses permitted), two papers (the first on the Mao years and the second on contemporary China, 5-7 pages each), several informal reports in class, and a final presentation. Final grades will be based on attendance, in-class projects, and participation (30%), consistency and content of Blackboard posts (20%), the two papers, including deadline-meeting (40%), and final presentation (10%).  If you have any difficulty meeting deadlines, please consult me. All students will be held to the highest standards of the Academic Integrity Code. If you have any questions about academic ethics, let me know.

We will read several books, all of them lively and interesting. These are available in the bookstore, or you can buy used copies very cheaply on line. They include: *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang, *Son of the Revolution* by Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Sijie Dai, *River Town* by Peter Hessler, *China’s Environmental Challenges* by Judith Shapiroand the *Age of Ambition* by Evan Osnos. We will also use films extensively, mostly in class.

Please minimize printing -- I do need a hard copies of papers, however!

**NOTE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**  
In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community.  Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students.  These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods.  Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency.  Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness.  Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies.   In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site ([www. prepared. american.edu](http://www.american.edu/)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/ college-specific information.

**Jan. 12 Organizational meeting**

**Jan. 19 1911-1949**

**Read: First one-third of Wild Swans by Jung Chang (theme: women’s status)**

**In Class: Documentary Film, China in Revolution**

**Jan. 26 Intro to the Mao Years**

**Finish Wild Swans (theme: youth in Revolution)**

**Feb. 2 Mao Years**

**Son of the Revolution (all) – (theme: political repression and its impact on ordinary people)**

**Feb. 9 The Educated Youth Movement**

**Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress (all) – (theme: intellectual freedom)**

**FIRST SHORT PAPER ON THE MAO YEARS DUE**

**Feb. 16 Introduction to Modern China**

**River Town (all) – (theme: cultural difference)**

**Feb. 23 Environmental Degradation**

**China’s Environmental Challenges (first 4 chapters) – (themes: governance, identity)**

**Film: Waking the Green Tiger**

**March 1 Environmental Degradation and Human Rights**

**China’s Environmental Challenges (rest of book) – (themes: civil society, ethnic minorities)**

**Film: Warriors of Qiugang**

**SPRING BREAK**

**March 15 Modern Identity/ Materialism**

**Age of Ambition, Part One**

**March 22 Modern Identity/ Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

**Age of Ambition, Part Two**

**April 5 Modern Identity/ Religion and Faith**

**Age of Ambition, Part Three**

**April 12 FINAL REPORTS, PART ONE**

**FINAL PAPER DUE**

**April 19 FINAL REPORTS, PART TWO**

**I will be available during our exam time slot for final questions and wrap-up. May 3, but attendance is not required.**