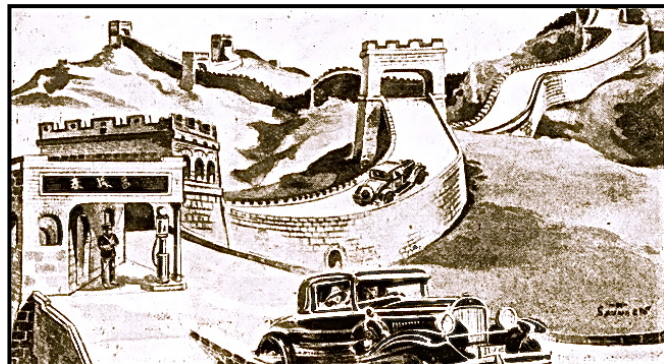


## **HIST 251: HISTORY OF MODERN CHINA**

**Spring Semester 2023**  
Tuesday & Friday, 9:45–11:00 a.m.  
Kerwin 6

**Instructor:** Justin M. Jacobs  
**Office Hours:** Tu/Fr. 11:30-12:30, Battelle 153  
**E-mail:** [dryhten@gmail.com](mailto:dryhten@gmail.com)  
**Course Website:** [edspace.american.edu/cave17/](https://edspace.american.edu/cave17/)



**Teaching Assistant:** Rachael Davis ([rd7845a@american.edu](mailto:rd7845a@american.edu))  
**TA Office Hours:** Tu/Fr. 12:30-1:30 p.m. (in-person) & Th. 11:00-12:00 (Zoom)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an introductory course in the history of modern China. We will cover the Qing Empire (1644–1912), the Republic of China (1912–49), and the People’s Republic of China (1949–present). We will proceed in broad thematic fashion, covering topics such as government, ethnicity, gender, economics, culture, and geopolitics. This is primarily a lecture course, followed by discussion of primary and secondary source readings. These latter include transcripts of Qing court cases, an autobiography of a working woman during the Republican era, and a fictionalized memoir of life during the Cultural Revolution.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

We will read the following books in their entirety:

1. Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman* (Stanford University Press, 1967)
2. Wang Gang, *English* (Penguin, 2010)

All other readings and films will be available as PDF files or URL links on Canvas or our course website ([edspace.american.edu/cave17/](https://edspace.american.edu/cave17/)).

### **CLASS STRUCTURE:**

All students are expected to come to class having already completed all assignments for that day, which are listed in the course schedule below. The assignments consist of recorded lectures (i.e., the *Beyond Huaxia* podcast episodes) and Youtube videos produced by your instructor, translated primary sources, secondary scholarly literature, and other documentary videos. All assigned podcasts and videos have been selected to familiarize you with the subject matter before coming to class, so that we can use class time to clarify, reinforce, and expand upon the material that you have already encountered in introductory form. Similarly, they can also serve as handy references for you to consult after class while you study for the exams—or perhaps out of the sheer love of learning.

## **GRADES:**

The breakdown of your final grade will be as follows:

Mock Qing Court Transcript:	15 pts. (15%)
Mock Qing Court Skit:	10 pts. (10%)
Exam #1:	25 pts. (25%)
Exam #2:	25 pts. (25%)
Exam #3:	25 pts. (25%)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 pts. (100%)</b>

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### ***IN-CLASS EXAMS. FEBRUARY 14, MARCH 24, & APRIL 28.***

Each student will complete **three (3) in-class exams**, each of which is noted in the course schedule below in **yellow highlighting**. These exams will include a range of identifications, short essay questions, and primary source quotations, based on material derived from the lectures and discussions in class. In grading these exams, I will be looking for evidence that you have incorporated insights and interpretations presented during our lectures—not whatever you may find about the “the Xi’an Incident” or “Boxer Treaty” on Wikipedia or other internet sites. Even if such answers are not, strictly speaking, factually incorrect, they do not demonstrate your understanding of the instructor’s value-added analysis of the material under examination and will thus receive a much lower grade. Needless to say, in order to do well on these exams, you must attend every class, pay close attention to the lectures, and take notes—there is simply no substitute for the in-class experience. For each exam, I will provide a study guide on the day of the previous class session. This study guide will include 2-3 times as much material as will actually appear on the exam—but you can rest assured that nothing will appear on the exam that was not also on the study guide. So students who use the study guide to prepare diligently will not encounter any surprises on the actual exams.

### ***MOCK QING COURT TRANSCRIPT. DUE MARCH 14.***

Your job for this assignment is to come up with a brand new court case of your own—one distinct from group skit project—that mimics the form and themes of those we have been discussing in class. As author, you will assume the identity of a Qing magistrate who is required to provide a detailed summary of a homicide case that occurred within your jurisdiction to the emperor in Beijing. In evaluating your mock court transcript, I will be looking for evidence of the following:

- mastery of the rhetorical forms of a Qing court transcript: proper forms of address from magistrate to emperor, from magistrate to suspect, from suspect to magistrate, from suspect to accuser, style of an edited confession, etc.
- plausible reconstruction of a homicide case and the events that led up to it, with accurate historical representation of the political, cultural, and economic relationships and actions of key figures involved in the case (i.e., age hierarchies, gender hierarchies, banner distinctions, religious affiliations, class differences, etc.)
- determination of a form of punishment that accords with the biases, assumptions, and expectations of the Qing world

### ***MOCK QING COURT SKIT. MARCH 21.***

For the first four weeks of this course, we will be reading translated transcripts of notorious criminal cases that were adjudicated in the courts of the late Qing bureaucracy. These transcripts offer a rare and precious glimpse into the everyday lives of peoples whose voices are otherwise seldom preserved in the historical record. In order to demonstrate your understanding of the major themes and procedures of Qing law and the social system over which it presided—and hopefully have a little bit of fun, too—each student will work together in a group of 5-6 classmates to perform a 10-minute skit in front of the class. Your goal is to recreate the adjudication process for a plausible criminal case from the late Qing era and then perform it for the class. To the extent possible, students should attempt to memorize their lines or at least work off of short notes. Whatever you do, do NOT read from your script! Costumes and props are welcome but not required.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's *Academic Integrity Code*. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the *Academic Integrity Code*, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the *Code*. Violations of the *Academic Integrity Code* will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the *Code* in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1

### **January 17: Introduction**

1. The following six short Youtube videos were produced by your instructor for a general audience. In less than an hour and a half, they provide a succinct overview of the major events and themes that we will cover over the next fifteen weeks. The first video establishes the context for today's topic and reading.
  1. **WATCH:** "The End of the Imperial Era, 1793-1911" (18:14)
  2. **WATCH:** "The Early Republic of China, 1911-27" (18:32)
  3. **WATCH:** "The Nanjing Decade, 1927-37" (10:37)
  4. **WATCH:** "WWII and the Chinese Communist Victory, 1937-49" (12:28)
  5. **WATCH:** "Chinese Communist Cultural and Ethnic Reform" (13:58)
  6. **WATCH:** "Maoist Politics and the Communist Legacy" (16:40)

### **January 20: The Big Picture**

1. **READ:** "We Need A New Approach to Teaching Modern Chinese History"
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Introduction ("Qing Administrative Systems and Practices"), Cases 1, 2

## WEEK 2

### **January 24: The Great Divergence**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 23
2. **READ:** "The Qianlong Emperor's Letter to King George"

### **January 27: Who Were the Manchus?**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 24
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Cases 3, 4, 5

## WEEK 3

### **January 31: Sex and the Law in Late Imperial China**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 30
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Cases 6, 7, 8

### **February 3: Women and Poverty in Late Imperial China**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 25
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Cases 9, 10, 11

## WEEK 4

### **February 7: The Government *Yamen***

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 26
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Cases 12, 13, 14

### **February 10: India, England, and the Opium War**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 27
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Cases 16, 17
3. **Study Guide for Exam #1 uploaded to Canvas today**

### WEEK 5

February 14: **\*\*\* EXAM #1 \*\*\***

February 17: **Qing Envoys to the West**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 28
2. **READ:** *True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China*: Cases 18, 19, 20

### WEEK 6

February 21: **The 1911 Revolution**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 31
2. **READ:** Lu Xun, “Preface”
3. **READ:** Lu Xun, “Diary of a Madman”

February 24: **Japan vs. China**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 29
2. **WATCH:** *China: A Century of Revolution, Part 1* (113 min.), 1911–1949
3. **READ:** *Daughter of Han*, pp. 1–86

### WEEK 7

February 28: **Nationalists vs. Communists**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 33
2. **READ:** *Daughter of Han*, pp. 87-162

March 3: **The Nanjing Decade**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 34
2. **READ:** *Daughter of Han*, pp. 163-250

### WEEK 8

March 7: **Chinese Cinema \*\*\* VIRTUAL ZOOM SESSION \*\*\***

1. **WATCH:** *The Goddess (Shennü 神女)*, 1934, 85 min.)
2. **PLEASE NOTE:** Due to anticipated travel plans, we will not meet in person on campus for today’s session. Instead, I will arrange a separate Zoom session at some point in the days before or after today’s class (I’ll send details a week or two before class). If you can attend the live Zoom session, great! If not, I will record it so you can watch it at your own convenience.

March 10: **The Lost Treasures of China**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 32

2. The following five short Youtube videos were produced by your instructor for a general audience. In just over an hour, they provide a succinct visual overview of the dispersal of Chinese treasures abroad during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a great supplement to the *Beyond Huaxia* podcast episode.
  - a. **WATCH:** “The Treasures of China” (13:44)
  - b. **WATCH:** “The Forbidden City” (12:05)
  - c. **WATCH:** “The Silk Road” (13:30)
  - d. **WATCH:** “The Guardians of Dunhuang” (13:01)
  - e. **WATCH:** “Foreign Devils Begone” (13:44)
3. **READ:** “A Selection of Letters from Chinese Officials in Xinjiang to Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot, 1908–1925”

### WEEK 9

**March 14: SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS**

1. **MOCK QING COURT TRANSCRIPT DUE TODAY.** Please submit your completed assignment via e-mail ([dryhten@gmail.com](mailto:dryhten@gmail.com)) as a Word file attachment no later than 5 p.m. EST.

**March 17: SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS**

### WEEK 10

**March 21: \*\*\* MOCK QING COURT SKITS \*\*\***

1. Today each group will perform its Mock Qing Court Skit in front of the class. The expected length is about 10 minutes, followed by Q&A session from your classmates and instructor. I encourage the use of simple props and nametags to enhance the performative experience for your audience and make it easier to remember who is who.
2. **Study Guide for Exam #2 uploaded to Canvas today**

**March 24: \*\*\* EXAM #2 \*\*\***

### WEEK 11

**March 28: Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang, 1900-1949**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 35
2. **READ:** “Six Documents from Republican Xinjiang”

**March 31: The History of Taiwan**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 36
2. **WATCH:** *Taiwan: The Face of Free China* (1960, 26 min.)
3. **READ:** Zhong, “My Grandma from the Mountains”

### WEEK 12

**April 4: The Great Leap Forward**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 37
2. **WATCH:** *China: A Century of Revolution, Part 2* (114 min.), 1949–1976
3. **READ:** “Self-Expanding and Compulsory Consumerism”

#### **April 7: Education and Script Reform under Mao**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 38
2. **READ:** *The Chinese Typewriter*, pp. 1-9 (“There Is No Alphabet Here”), 35–74 (“Incompatible with Modernity”)

### **WEEK 13**

#### **April 11: Ethnicity, Tibet, and Xinjiang in the PRC**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 39
2. **READ:** *Classified: The Untold Story of Racial Classification in America*, pp. 141–43, 169–84
  - a. **Note:** The point of reading these excerpts is to provide you with a succinct account of the inherent artificiality and arbitrariness of what we think of today as “racial” or “ethnic” identities. The lesson is the same in any time and place throughout history: what appears to be an objective, natural description of biological differences among different human groups is in fact the product of endless subconscious creativity beholden to constantly evolving political agendas. This reading provides a great, efficient overview of this lesson in the context of modern American society, a phenomenon that many of us are quite familiar with—I want you to keep these conclusions in mind when we talk about the application of similar themes in modern China.
3. **READ:** “Results of the Ethnic Policy Inspection in Urumchi Factories”

#### **April 14: The Cultural Revolution**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 40
2. **WATCH:** *PRC Nuclear Testing Film* (1966, 33 min.)
3. **READ:** “The Mao Badge Phenomenon as Consumer Fad”

### **WEEK 14**

#### **April 18: China Since Mao**

1. **LISTEN:** *Beyond Huaxia*, ep. 41
2. **WATCH:** *China: A Century of Revolution, Part 3* (111 min.), 1976–1994

#### **April 21: English Discussion**

1. **READ:** *English*, 1<sup>st</sup> half

### **WEEK 15**

#### **April 25: English Discussion**

1. **READ:** *English*, 2<sup>nd</sup> half
2. **Study Guide for Exam #3 uploaded to Canvas today**

April 28: \*\*\* EXAM #3 \*\*\*