



CHINESE/COLL 150

Revolution in Life—How Communism Changed China

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00am–12:20pm
Tucker Hall 325

Prof./Dr. Emily Wilcox

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00pm–3:30pm & by appointment
Sign up for Office Hours here:

<https://calendly.com/emilywilcox>

Course Overview: During the first half of the twentieth century, revolutionary thinkers and activists envisioned the possibility of a new society for China. In 1949, this new society started to become a reality when the Chinese Communist Party led by Chairman Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China, today the world's second largest economy and one of the most powerful nations on the planet. In this class, we examine the ideas that inspired China's revolutionary transformation and look at how these ideas were implemented in practice, shaping everyday lives and remaking the world for a diverse range of people from powerful state leaders to poor women in rural villages. Bringing together the academic disciplines of intellectual and social history with media

and cultural studies, we examine China's communist revolution as a process of transformation in society as well as culture, in ways of living as well as ways of interpreting and making sense of the world. Students will have an opportunity to explore diverse facets of China's revolutionary past, through a combination of shared readings, viewings, and in-class discussions as well as a personal interview and a final research paper delving into an aspect of Chinese revolutionary history and culture of your choice. Students will come away from the class with a deeper understanding of contemporary China, as well as the complex history of communism as at once a constellation of concepts and a field of unfinished revolutionary experiments.

WHAT IS COLL 150?

Official description: "In your COLL 150 course, you'll engage in deep readings and group discussions of texts, data, or methods of inquiry. These are small classes that focus on a more narrow topic within a discipline. You will learn methods of scholarly research and will practice and strengthen your writing skills. As you become more aware of the power of academic writing to clearly and persuasively communicate your ideas, you'll experience how the process of writing includes revision and self-editing. Through your work in this course and others across the curriculum, you'll become more skilled at writing prose that communicates complex ideas in your own lively, intelligent, and interesting voice."

<https://www.wm.edu/as/undergraduate/coll/150/>

Note: This class is a COLL 150 that also counts toward the majors and minors in Chinese Studies and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. If you are interested in becoming a major or minor, please speak to the professor to learn more. Reminder: "A single course may fulfill only one COLL requirement (COLL 100, COLL 150, COLL 200, COLL 300, COLL 400, or one of the extra courses in the domains); a course may fulfill one COLL requirement and a proficiency. A maximum of three courses may be counted toward the COLL requirements and toward the major(s)."

<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=26&navoid=4141#the-general-education-curriculum>

Prerequisites: None.

Course Objectives:

- Gain an understanding of the history and culture of China's communist revolution, from its beginnings in Marxist revolutionary thought and the Russian revolution through its realization in diverse social and cultural changes since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949;
- Learn about China's recent past through a diverse range of sources and perspectives, including intellectual history, first person accounts of land reform and the changing lives of rural women, and cultural sources such as films and performances popular during the revolutionary period;
- Articulate in writing complex ideas and analysis of social and cultural phenomena that may be vastly different from one's own upbringing or personal experience;

- Practice close reading of a diverse range of textual and media sources in order to hone skills of critical thinking, discovery and articulation of new ideas, and crafting of compelling analysis and arguments.

Readings and other course materials: This course takes advantage of materials available for free to students through open access sources and the W&M Swem Library. Required course readings and viewings are available to students at no cost. Unless a link is provided in the syllabus, all readings and viewings can be found on Blackboard.

Course Requirements: Students will be graded on a combination of attendance, participation, reading quizzes, three short papers, an interview project, and a final paper. Grades will be broken down as follows:

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| Attendance and Participation | 15% |
| Reading Quizzes | 20% |
| Interview Project (2 pp + recording, presentation) | 15% |
| Three Analytical Papers (3 pp each = 9 pp total) | 30% |
| Final Paper (4 pp draft + 9 pp revision/final = 13 pp total) | 20% |
| Peer Review Process | P/F |
| In-class writing exercises | P/F |
- **Attendance:** Class will begin promptly at 11:00am. Students are expected to arrive on-time and attend class in its entirety. Each student will be allowed up to three excused absences during the semester. If you are too unwell to attend class or if you have another reason you need to miss class (such as a required school event, a religious holiday, a family emergency, etc.), you must email the professor before the start of class to request an excused absence. Students who miss class without prior permission will receive a zero for attendance and participation for that day, as well as a zero on any quiz given in class. It is the student's responsibility to make up work missed due to absences.
 - **Participation:** As a seminar course, this class employs interactive teaching methods in place of a lecture format. Students are expected to complete required readings and/or viewings before class and to arrive prepared to participate in class discussion. While active listening is an important component of participation, a complete participation grade should also include verbal contributions to class discussion. Short writing assignments will also be completed occasionally in class and will contribute to this portion of the course grade. An important part of full participation will also include leaving time for all classmates to talk and responding meaningfully to others' contributions.
 - **Reading/Viewing quizzes:** Periodically, pop quizzes will take place at the beginning of class to assess students' preparation of the assigned readings and viewings for that day. Unlike assignments, there will be no prior warning. These quizzes are designed to provide incentives for keeping up with the course readings, as well as a system to identify and reward students who consistently complete the reading and viewings on time. Quizzes typically consist of ten true/false and multiple choice questions and are designed to assess basic completion of the reading, not comprehension. At the end of the semester, the lowest quiz score will be dropped. Quizzes missed due to excused absences can

- be made up for full credit during the next class period or in office hours. Quizzes missed due to unexcused absences will receive a zero.
- **Interview Project:** During Unit Two, students will conduct a 60-minute oral interview with a person who lived in the People's Republic of China at least through high school. This may be a member of the student's family, a classmate, teacher, or neighbor, the relative of a friend or acquaintance, etc. If students are unable to identify someone to interview through their own networks, they can reach out to the professor for assistance. Prior to the interview, students will submit an Interview Plan and learn basic interview skills during in-class activities. After the interview is complete, students will submit a recording along with a short (2-pages double spaced) reflection paper, which will serve as the basis for a short in-class oral presentation about what you learned. Detailed instructions for this project will be distributed to students during Unit One.
 - **Three Analytical Papers:** At the end of each Unit, students will synthesize their learning through a written response in the form of a 3-page (double spaced) expository paper written in response to a question prompt. These papers are NOT research papers. Instead, they require students to respond to the required course readings and materials. Students will be evaluated on their ability to develop an original thesis in response to the posted question, by drawing upon evidence from the course readings, viewings, and discussions. The final day of each Unit will be dedicated to brainstorming ideas for the paper. A Peer Review Process will be carried out for each of these three papers, with the requirement to submit one in a revised form for a revised grade.
 - **Final Paper:** You will complete a series of steps in the research and writing process that will culminate in a research paper of 9 pages (double spaced). Students will have three options for the Final Paper: book review, literature review, or primary source analysis. You will receive verbal or written feedback from the professor at each stage of the process. Students are encouraged to start thinking early and speak with the professor about a topic they may like to research. Steps will include the following:
 - A topic, a set of research questions, and a preliminary bibliography (Final Paper Plan) will be due Sunday, April 7.
 - An abstract (roughly 250 words) will be due Sunday, April 14.
 - Oral presentations on research in progress for the final project will take place in class on April 23 and April 25.
 - A rough draft (minimum of 4 pages) will be due Sunday, April 28, and a peer review session will be conducted in class on the following Tuesday. During the final week of classes, students will also receive feedback from the professor on their rough draft.
 - A one-page revision plan that is based on your peer review and feedback from the professor will be due on May 5.
 - Students will carry out a robust revision and expansion of their draft based on peer and instructor feedback.
 - A final version of the research paper will be due on May 14 at 5:00pm.

For instructions on citations, students should refer to the following guide:

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html>

A full assignment description will be distributed later in the semester.

Assignments: All assigned readings and viewings should be completed before class on the day noted in the course schedule. Students will receive written feedback on all assignments and are encouraged to visit the professor during office hours to discuss any questions or concerns. Grades will be posted regularly on Blackboard for student review and verification. Please email the professor immediately if you see a discrepancy in your reported grade or if you have trouble accessing any assigned materials.

Office Hours: This is a precious opportunity to get to know your instructors and to get one-on-one attention and advice. Take advantage of it! You can use office hours to get feedback on a recent assignment, to brainstorm ideas for an upcoming paper, or to talk about the class and your interests in general. Times and instructions can be found at the top of this syllabus.

Email: Students are responsible for regularly checking and reading all course-related emails and Blackboard announcements. The professor will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours, excluding weekends. Questions posed in email should be limited to those that can be answered within 2-3 sentences. Complex content-related questions or requests for feedback on individual assignments should be addressed during office hours or in class.

Extra Credit: Events related to this course will be posted periodically as extra credit. After attending an event, students should submit a one-page (double-space) reflection using the assignment feature on Blackboard. Each event will add .5 percentage points on the final course grade. If you hear of an upcoming event that you think may be relevant, please email the professor so that it can be approved and shared with the class.

Disabilities and Special Accommodations: William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas.

Mental and Physical Well-Being:

William & Mary recognizes that students juggle different responsibilities and can face challenges that make learning difficult. There are many resources available at W&M to help students navigate emotional/psychological, physical/medical, material/accessibility concerns, including:

- The W&M Counseling Center at (757) 221-3620. Services are free and confidential.
- The W&M Health Center at (757) 221-4386.

- For additional support or resources & questions, Contact the Dean of Students at 757-221-2510.
- For other [resources](#) available to students, see <https://tinyurl.com/wmentalhealth> or:



Writing Resources Center: Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of one-on-one peer consultation and other forms of writing support provided by the Writing Resources Center (WRC). The WRC “help[s] you strengthen your writing and communication skills by providing resources, workshops, and individual support for all kinds of assignments and projects that require writing: academic essays, presentations, storyboards, posters, personal statements, creative writing, applications, and more.” <https://www.wm.edu/as/wrc/>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Plagiarism, including the unauthorized use of AI tools to generate written content or exam answers, will result in an automatic failing of this course and possible disciplinary action by the University. It is your responsibility to uphold academic integrity and follow university policies regarding honesty and original work. For more information, see the explanation of [Honor Code Violations](#).

Land and Slavery Acknowledgment: William & Mary acknowledges the Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of the lands our campus is on today – the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Monacan, Nansemond, Nottoway, Pamunkey, Patawomeck, Upper Mattaponi, and Rappahannock tribes – and pay our respect to their tribal members past and present. William & Mary acknowledges that it owned and exploited slave labor from its founding to the Civil War; and that it had failed to take a stand against segregation during the Jim Crow Era.

Classroom environment: All students are of equal importance and value in this classroom. If you ever feel that your ability to participate and learn in this class is limited by the behavior of the professor or of other students, please let the professor know immediately so that change can be made. The professor welcomes student input at all times and on all aspects of the class. Humanistic inquiry acknowledges and values diversity in ideas and personal experiences. Let us join in celebrating these differences and similarities, and let us work together to make this classroom a safe and respectful space for the learning and growth of all students regardless of background or perspective.

Grading Scale for Final Grades:

A 93 – 100	A- 90 – 92.9	
B+ 87 – 89.9	B 83 – 86.9	B- 80 – 82.9
C+ 77 – 79.9	C 73 – 76.9	C- 70 – 72.9
D+ 67 – 69.9	D 63 – 66.9	D- 60 – 62.9
F <60		

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Thurs, Jan 25—Course Overview
No required readings or viewings.

Week 2: Foundations for Writing and Thinking

Tues, Jan 30—Writing Style and Mechanics

Read:

- *The Elements of Style*. Read the book in its entirety.

Prepare and bring in typed hard copy:

- a list of at least 10 points in the book that you found helpful.
- a one-page double-spaced essay answering the following questions: 1) How would you describe your relationship to writing? What aspects of your writing would you like to work on this semester and why?

Thurs, Feb 1—Politics of Cold War History

Read:

- “Introduction” (pp. 1-9) in Robert Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism*. Harvard University Press, 2007.
- “Introduction” (pp. 7-20) in William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, updated edition. London: Zed Books, 2014.

Prepare and bring in typed hard copy:

- a one-page double-spaced essay responding to the two readings. Content is open and should be a journal of your own thoughts after completing the two readings.

Add/drop deadline: February 2

UNIT ONE: Comparative Trajectories— Communist Revolution from Marx to Lenin to Mao

Week 3: Communist Revolution in Marx and Engels

Tues, Feb 6– Introduction to Marxist Thought

Read:

- Chapter 1 (pp. 3-33) in Tucker, Robert C. *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*. New York: Norton, 1969.
- Chapters 4-5 and Chapters 8-9 (pp. 28-38, 58-85) in Peter Singer, *Marx: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Prepare in any format:

- Take notes on the “Concepts” handout to try to define each key word.

Thurs, Feb 8– Early Communist Documents

Read:

The readings for today are available online here:
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>

- “Manifesto of the Communist Party, Part I: Bourgeois and Proletarians”
- “Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith”
- “The Principles of Communism”
- “Demands of the Communist Party in Germany”

Prepare in any format:

- Identify 3 quotes from the readings that you would like to discuss further in class.

Week 4: Communist Revolution in Russia

Tues, Feb 13 – Launching a Revolution

Read:

- “Russia in Revolution, 1905-17” (pp. 1-34) in Steve Philips, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution*. Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2000.*

Prepare in any format:

- Write a paragraph identifying the key challenges facing pre-revolutionary Russia.

Thurs, Feb 15 – The Bolshevik Experiment

Read:

- “The Consolidation of Bolshevik Power, 1918-29” (pp. 35-94) in Steve Philips, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution*. Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2000.*

Prepare in any format:

- Make a basic timeline of the Russian Revolution based on the reading.
- **Revised essay about writing goals due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59pm.**

Week 5: Communist Revolution in China (I)

Tues, Feb 20 – Opium War to the Long March

Read:

- Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-49) in Rebecca Karl. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World*. Duke University Press, 2010. Ebook available [here](#).

Prepare in any format:

- Write a paragraph identifying major similarities and differences between pre-revolutionary China and pre-revolutionary Russia.

Thurs, Feb 22 – Yan’an to the Great Leap Forward

Read:

- Chapters 5-7 (pp. 51-116) in Rebecca Karl. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World*. Duke University Press, 2010. Ebook available [here](#).

Prepare in any format:

- Make a basic timeline of Chinese revolutionary history based on the reading.

- **Email me by Friday if you need an interviewee match.**

Week 6: Communist Revolution in China (II)

Tues, Feb 27 – Cultural Revolution to Reform and Opening

Read:

- Chapters 8-10 (pp. 117-184) in Rebecca Karl. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World*. Duke University Press, 2010. Ebook available [here](#).

Prepare in any format:

- a paragraph summarizing the changes in China after 1976.

Thurs, Feb 29 – Brainstorm and Discussion for Analytical Paper One

No assigned readings.

Prepare in any format:

- a draft outline of ideas you'd like to explore in Analytical Paper One.
- **Interview Proposal due on Blackboard by Friday night at 11:59pm.**
- **Analytical Paper One due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59pm.**

Unit TWO: Communism at the Ground Level—Revolution as Lived Experience

Week 7: Land Reform Up Close

Tues, March 5 – Rural North China in the 1940s

Read:

- Preface, Prologue, and Chapters 1-5 (pp. xxi-xxv, 1-68) in William Hinton, *Fan Shen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. Monthly Review Press.

Prepare in any format:

- Identify three quotations from the reading that you would like to discuss further in class.

Thurs, March 7 – Land Reform in a Shanxi Village

Read:

- Chapters 13-15, 21, 25-26 (pp. 128-156, 198-209, 243-258) in William Hinton, *Fan Shen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. Monthly Review Press.*

Prepare in any format:

- Write a paragraph describing the process of land reform.

Week 8: SPRING BREAK

Tues, March 12—NO CLASS

Thurs, March 14—NO CLASS

Week 9: Oral History and Rural Women's Experiences of Revolution I

- **Interview Recording and Reflection Paper due on Blackboard by Monday night at 11:59pm.**

Tuesday, March 19—Interview Presentations

Prepare:

- oral presentation on your interview.

Thurs, March 21— Oral History and Changes in Family Life

Read:

- “Introduction” (pp. 1-12) and Chapter 4 “Activist” (pp. 96-128) in Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past*. University of California Press, 2011. Ebook available [here](#).
- **Revision of Analytical Paper I due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59 pm.**

Week 10: Rural Women's Experiences of Revolution II

Withdrawal deadline: March 25

Tuesday, March 26—Women's Labor

Read:

- Chapter 5 “Farmer” (pp. 129-153) and Chapter 7 “Mother” (pp. 182-209) in Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past*. University of California Press, 2011. Ebook available [here](#).

Thurs, March 28—Rural Women on Film + Unit 2 Reflections

Watch:

- *Li Shuangshuang* 1962 film (with English subtitles)
Viewing information TBD
- **Analytical Paper Two due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59 pm.**

Unit Three: Revolutions in Culture—The Communist Media Sphere

Week 11: Using Culture to Launch Revolution

Tues, April 2—Mao's “Talks” and Transforming the Intellectuals

Read:

- “Prelude to the ‘Yan’an Talks’: Problems in Transforming a Literary Intelligentsia” (377-403) by Ellen Judd, *Modern China* 11(3): 1985.

- “Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art” (pp. 458-484) by Mao Zedong in Kirk Denton, ed. *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Stanford University Press, 1996.

Thurs, April 4—Representing Suffering and Liberation

Watch:

- *Bai Mao Nü (White-Haired Girl)* 1950 film (with English subtitles)
https://www.iq.com/play/the-white-haired-girl-1950-19rrn6ryvs?lang=en_us

Final Paper Plan due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59 pm.

Week 12: Folk Culture and New Heroes

Tues, April 9—The Yangge Movement, or “New Wine in Old Bottles”

Read:

- “Folk Art as Propaganda: The Yangge Movement in Yan’an” (pp. 3-35) by David Holm in Bonnie McDougall, ed., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1979*. University of California Press, 1984.

Thurs, April 11—Wartime Drama and the Story of Liu Hulan

Read:

- “Mobilizing and Militarizing Rural China through the Girl Martyr, Liu Hulan” (pp. 175-197) in Louise Edwards, *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- “Introduction: Performing Mao’s Revolution” (pp. 1-24) in Brian DeMare, *Mao’s Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China’s Rural Revolution*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

- **Final Paper Abstract due on Blackboard by Friday night at 11:59 pm.**

Week 13: Revolutionary Women on Stage and Screen

Tuesday, April 16—Gender and Ethnicity on Screen

Watch:

- *Wu Duo Jin Hua (Five Golden Flowers)* 1959 film (with English subtitles)
Viewing information TBD

Thurs, April 18—Model Ballet During the Cultural Revolution

- *Hongse Niangzi Jun (Red Detachment of Women)* 1971 ballet film
<https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1Lb4y1872x/>

- **Analytical Paper Three due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59 pm.**

Week 15: Final Paper Presentations

Tues, April 23 – Final Paper Presentations

Prepare:

- oral presentation on your final paper research in progress.

Thurs, April 25 – Final Paper Presentations

Prepare:

- oral presentation on your final paper research in progress.
- **Rough Draft (4pp) due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59 pm.**

Week 16: Final Papers

Tues, April 30—Peer Review + Course Wrap Up

Prepare and email to your partner before the start of class:

- An annotated version of your partner's Rough Draft, along with a one-page double-spaced essay with your responses, questions, and feedback.

Thurs, May 2— NO CLASS

Individual consultations about feedback on rough drafts.

- **Final Paper Revision Plan due on Blackboard by Sunday night at 11:59 pm.**
- **Final Paper due on Blackboard on Tuesday, May 14 at 5:00pm.**