

**San José State University**  
**College of Social Sciences – Department of History**

**Hist 109B (01)/Asia 109B History of China from 1800**  
**Fall 2025 – 4 units**

**Course and Contact Information**

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Wednesday 3 pm – 5 pm or by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Mo/We 13:30 – 14:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	DMH 354

**Course Description**

This 4-unit course surveys China's revolutions and ongoing modernization. It examines Chinese history from 1800 to the present focusing on political, economic, and social changes. It looks into the geography and cultural heritage of China, its encounters with the Western powers, the efforts and the failures of modernization by reforms, the rise of Communist revolution, and dramatic transformations in politics, economy, and culture after 1949. You will be presented with a wide range of primary sources, visual materials, and documentary films.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

**CLO1:** Describe and explain the major events and themes in Chinese history since 1800. **Assessed by essay questions on exams.**

**CLO2:** Describe and explain the concept of “modern” and China's interactions with the world. **Assessed by long essay questions on the final exam, response paper and essay.**

**CLO3:** Summarize and critically analyze historical documents/novels/visual materials. **Assessed by the presentations and response paper.**

**CLO4:** Present their findings to the classmates, respond to critiques, and learn to constructively critique the work of other classmates. **Assessed by presentations and class discussion.**

**CLO5:** Write historical essays with a strong thesis and clear evidence of historical thinking. **Assessed by essay questions on exams, response paper, essay proposal and essay writing.**

## Required Texts/Readings

### Textbooks

Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (Third Edition)

Jung Chang, *Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China*. Any Edition.

### Other Readings

Additional documents and articles will be posted on the Canvas site, as indicated by \* in the syllabus. Doing the reading assigned for each class before coming to class is necessary to benefit from what we do in class. The tentative course schedule indicates details on the readings and the dates by which reading assignments must be completed.

### Library Liaison

The History Department Library Liaison is Nyle Monday ([nyle.monday@sjsu.edu](mailto:nyle.monday@sjsu.edu)). Contact him for help with any library assignments in your history classes. His telephone number is (408) 808-2041.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

### Final Examination or Evaluation

**Exams. one mid-term exam and one final exam.**

**Reading Response Paper.** You need to write one response paper for *The True Story of Ah Q*, discussing what kinds of Chinese characters Ah Q represented. Three pages.

**Essay Proposal.** Write a brief narrative describing your topic and how you find materials relevant to that topic. You are encouraged to consult with the instructor during office hours on your essay proposal.

**Final Essay.** This essay is to illuminate aspects of life in China since 1800 (possible choices include social relations, communism, gender, wars...), building upon your proposal. It should include an introduction; historical narrative and analysis supporting your thesis; a conclusion; and a source bibliography. Six pages.

**Oral Presentation.** Each student is also required to team up with a classmate and make a 10-minute in-class presentation on recent news on China. In reporting the news, the presenters should synthesize news stories. If necessary the presenters should also provide some background information to help the class understand the story better. After each presentation there will be a short period in which the presenters respond to questions or comments from the audience.

All written assignments, with the exception of exams, must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font (or an equivalent font), and have one-inch margins. Written assignments will be graded on both content and composition.

## Grading Information

Midterm exam	180 points
Response paper	100 points
Essay proposal	50 points
Essay	200 points
Final exam	270 points
Presentation	100 points
Class participation	100 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 1000</i>	<i>93 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 859</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

## Classroom Protocol

All students are expected to attend two lectures each week and complete all assignments. Please come to the class having completed the readings for that day. Bear in mind that active participation means asking good questions as well as proposing good answers. If you cannot attend a lecture, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed.

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

All dates and assignments in this syllabus are subject to modification. Any changes will be announced during the class.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Aug 20	Introduction
2	Aug 25	The Long 18 <sup>th</sup> century Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 5-6 “Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization” *
2	Aug 27	China in Crises Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 7-8 “Mid-century Rebels”*
3	Sept 1	Labor Day, No Class.
3	Sept 3	Reform, Treaties and New Tensions Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 9-10 “Liang Qichao on His Trip to America”*
4	Sept 8	The End of Qing Dynasty Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 11
4	Sept 10	1911 Revolution and the New Republic Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 12 Chapters from <i>China in Revolutions</i> *
5	Sept 15	May Fourth Movement and Communists in Early Years Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 13 <i>The True Story of Ah Q</i> *  <b>Response paper due (online submission)</b>
5	Sept 17	The Fractured Alliance Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 14

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Mao Zedong, “Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan”*
6	Sept 22	Guomindang in Power Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 15 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i>
6	Sept 24	Urban Life in the 1930s Readings: <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i>
7	Sept 29	Communist Survival Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 16 “Mao’s Talks at the Yan’an Forum”*
7	Oct 1	The War with Japan Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 17 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i> : Chapter 5-6
8	Oct 6	The Fall of the Guomindang Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 18 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i>
8	Oct 8	Mid-term Exam
9	Oct 13	The Birth of the People’s Republic Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 19 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i> Documents on the Birth of PRC*
9	Oct 15	China in the early 1950s Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 20 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i> “Shanghai Little Men” *
10	Oct 20	China in the 1950s Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 20 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i> Documents on the Hundred Flowers Movement *
10	Oct 22	Great Leap Forward and the Famine

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 21 “Food Augmentation Methods”*
11	Oct 27	<i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 22 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i> , Chapter 14-17 Documents on the Cultural Revolution*  <b>Essay Proposal Due (online submission)</b>
11	Oct 29	A Small Town Called Hibiscus
12	Nov 3	China in the 1970s Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 23 <i>Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China</i>
12	Nov 5	The Demise of Mao Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 24 Documents on reforms*
13	Nov 10	Deng’s Reform Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 25 Documents on reforms*
13	Nov 12	China in the 1980s Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 25 <i>The Death Song of the River</i> , Introduction *
14	Nov 17	The Tian’anmen Incident I Readings: Documents on Tian’anmen Incident*
14	Nov 19	The Tian’anmen Incident II Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 26
15	Nov 24	To Live
15	Nov 26	Happy Thanksgiving, No Class
16	Dec 1	China in the 1990s Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 27

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
16	Dec 3	China under Jiang, Hu and Xi Readings: <i>The Search for Modern China</i> , Chapter 28
17	Dec 8	Review and Discussion
<b>Final Exam</b>	Dec 10	13:00 – 15:00

### Online Resources for Current Affairs in China.

- *Google News* <http://news.google.com/>
- *Financial Times - Asia* <http://www.ft.com/home/asia>
- *The Economist* <http://www.economist.com/>
- *CNN Asia* <http://edition.cnn.com/ASIA>
- *BBC Asia-Pacific* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/asia/>
- *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong newspaper. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/asia/>
- *New York Times - Asia Pacific* <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/asia/>
- *People's Daily* <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/> China's official newspaper in English, presents the government versions.
- *China Digital Times* <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/> CDT is a bilingual news website covering China from cyberspace, run by overseas Chinese. It aggregates more than 100 posts a day from Chinese cyberspace, focusing especially on that which is blocked, deleted or suppressed by state censors.
- *Zao Bao* <http://english.zaobao.com> Newspaper from Singapore with selected articles and news in English. It is considered relatively neutral.
- *The China Beat* <http://www.thechinabeat.org> A blog run by scholars who are interested in China. It provides personal yet insightful analyses on hot issues in China.