Program: CET Shanghai
Course Code / Title: (SH/HIST 350) Shanghai: Key to Modern China?
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: History / East Asian Studies, International Relations, Urban Studies
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
The city of Shanghai has had multiple and changing historical representations. It has been simultaneously blamed as the source of all that was wrong in China and praised as the beacon of an advanced national future. Historically, the city has been the empire’s cotton capital, a leading colonial-era treaty port, the location of Chinese urban modernity, a national center of things from finance to publishing, an exotic space that attracted and repelled, a home to new ideas and public activism, and the country’s industrial powerhouse. This course examines the social, political, economic, and cultural history of Shanghai and uses it to analyze if and how the city’s history provides keys to understanding the making of modern China.

After a critical examination of concepts of tradition and modernity and approaches that have been used to understand Shanghai history, the class explores the city during the late imperial, Republican, and People’s Republic periods. Throughout, it contends with the contemporary return of Shanghai to urban preeminence and how this process intersects with the city’s history. Themes include commercialism, modernity, how the city’s “semi-colonial” past has shaped its history, migration, and whether Shanghai is somehow unique or representative of what we know as modern China. The course takes advantage of its location with at least three field classes at significant historical sites and exhibits.

Objectives
Through their participation in this course, students:

• gain a nuanced understanding of Shanghai’s history and how it connects to the modern historical experience of the nation.
• build their analytical skills through the critical interpretation of secondary and primary sources and learning how to weigh and utilize historical evidence.
• master a historical tradition outside the western one.
• compare different approaches to the study of history and international relations.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to attend each class and field-based course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Active participation is essential. Students are to read all assigned materials before each class session and come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments average about 50-80 pages per class.
Syllabus of Record

Graded assignments include:

- **Precis:** Students submit several two-page papers that summarize the main points of the reading for that week, discuss how the author constructs his or her argument, analyze the evidence that is used to support it, and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work.
- **Site visit essay:** Students choose a historical site in the city to visit and then write a short paper focused on analyzing the site within its historical and contemporary context.
- **Final exam essay:** This paper ranges from 6-8 pages and requires students to identify scholarly theses that defined the course, evaluate historical evidence, analyze arguments, and demonstrate an understanding of historical context.

**Grading**
The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Precis: 30%
- Site visit essay: 20%
- Final essay: 30%

**Primary Texts**


Syllabus of Record


Syllabus of Record


Yeh, Catherine Vance. “Playing with the Public: Late Qing Courtesans and Their Opera Singer Lovers.” In Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China, edited by Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson, Chap. 6. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.


Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 - Themes in Chinese History, Politics, and Culture
  • Defining tradition and modernity
  • Modernization theory vs. the concept of multiple modernities
  • Foundations of Chinese civilization: theories of governing, Confucian and other philosophies, religion, foreign affairs, class formation, and the examination system.

Topic 2 - Approaches to the study of Shanghai
  • Marxist and Chinese studies; western impact studies; new history in the 1990s
  • Ming urban development; transition from market town to port city
  • Pirate invasions and the building of the city wall
  • Cotton capital and increasing commercialization and early industrialization
  • Urban development during the “high Qing” period/1700s; continued spatial changes
  • Motifs for the nineteenth century: rebellion, foreign invasion, and elite response
  • Imperialism and global systems of trade

Topic 3 - External Pressures: Tea and Opium
  • The role of guilds in the city’s growth; increasing commercialization
  • The Canton system of trade, silver currency flows, trade imbalances
  • The response to British opium smuggling; the Opium War and Treaty of Nanjing
  • The creation of the foreign concessions in Shanghai
  • The role of guilds in the city’s growth
  • How to read primary sources

Topic 4 - Internal Pressures: The Taiping Rebellion
  • The Small Swords uprising; rebellions lead to migration and rapid urban growth
  • Chinese move into the foreign settlements
  • The start of the shikumen housing tradition
  • Taipings to Self-strengthening and ti-yong
  • Sino-Japanese War and the Treaty of Shimonoseki; foreign factories open in the city
  • the treaty-port system fails; foreigners command spheres of influence

Topic 5 - Fall of the Qing
  • Elite activism in the city; publishing, study circles
  • Tongmenghui; the rise of the nationalism as a response to imperialism
  • Shanghai’s leading role in the 1911 Revolution

Topic 6 - The Rise of the Republic
  • Sun Yatsen and Guomindang politics in the city and state; Song Jiaoren’s assassination
  • WW1 and economic development in the city
  • An urban model for the nation
Syllabus of Record

Topic 7 - The New Culture and May Fourth Movements
• May Fourth in Shanghai; continued effects from the divided city
• Class dynamics in shaping social and political activism
• CCP founding in Shanghai
• May Thirtieth Movement; increasing nationalist activism

Topic 8 - The Nanjing Decade (1927-37)
• SH Commune, April 12 Coup, Guomindang purge of the left
• White Terror and GMD cooperation with the Green Gang
• The changed nature of revolution: urban to rural
• The rise of consumerism and urban glamour
• Shanghai as defining urban modernity
• Shikumen and lilong living; the idea of Old Shanghai
• Vice and crime in the city delegitimizes the GMD
• Growth of the rural revolutionary movement; Jiangxi Soviet and the Long March

Topic 9 - Occupied Shanghai and World War Two (1937-1945); Civil War (1945-49)
• GMD policy of "internal pacification before external resistance"; Second United Front
• Urban terrorism; Mao Liying
• The Battle of Shanghai and then Japanese occupation
• Shanghai’s contributions to the war and the New Fourth Army
• The end of the century of foreign concessions
• Underground CCP and GMD wartime resistance

Topic 10 - The 1950s: Now the Revolution
• Liberation of Shanghai; urban/social/political change in the 1950s
• Urban change and reform through movements/campaigns
• Cleansing a city with a tarnished past
• Industrial powerhouse for the nation

Topic 11 - The Cultural Revolution
• Working class response versus Red Guard activism
• Housing crisis
• Power shifts; return of local radical political and labor activism
• Home to the Gang of Four

Topic 12 – Socialist Modernity to Shanghai Redux
• How national policy changes affect the city
• Shanghai’s plans to reclaim its historical position
• 1990s: a city for the next century starts to emerge
• What is lost in the creation of the new city?