Class details

History of US & China Relations (HIST-UA 9560)
Tuesdays, 9-12

Instructor Details
Dr. Michael Wall
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, TBA (or by appointment)

Class Description

“The relationship between the United States and China will shape the 21st century…”
Barack Obama, July 27, 2009

“...a long-term historical perspective does enable us to draw some meaningful conclusions about the past and present and to make educated forecasts for the future.”
Robert B. Marks, The Origins of the Modern World

In the 21st century, perhaps no bilateral relationship is more important than that between the People’s Republic of China and the United States. How this relationship between the globe’s sole superpower and a rapidly emerging contender evolves not only will affect their state-to-state interactions but also will affect the daily lives of their citizens, the nations of the Asia-Pacific region, and, inevitably, will have global repercussions. To understand and fully appreciate the current status of US-PRC relations, and in order to envision the possible course this relationship might follow, an examination of their past interactions is necessary. To provide such a foundation, this course will survey major trends, policies, and events that played a role in shaping the Sino-American path to the present and will continue to influence the path to the future.

The format of the course will be discussion. Each week, the class will begin with a general review of the historical context of the period being examined, followed by a student-led discussion of the week’s assigned readings.
**Desired Outcomes**

Historical analysis is at its core an examination of cause and effect and change over time. You are encouraged to read and think closely about the issues; to make explicit and question the validity of conventional wisdom; and to interrogate and not simply accept the explanations of cause and effect presented. More practically, in this course you will hone your ability to sift through and synthesize large amounts of information in short periods of time, to critically examine historical arguments, and to discriminate between different types of evidence. You also will further develop your ability to articulate and support a thesis-driven argument in writing and to sustain oral arguments based on evidence.

- Students will gain a better appreciation of the nature and practice of history as a discipline, and as the study, based on evidence, of human experiences, interactions, and relationships as they change over time. They will learn to appreciate that history does not consist of a simple succession of self-evident facts, and that evidence-based interpretation and analysis are central to all historical work.
- Students will hone their reading, writing, and oral communication skills; they will develop further their ability to think historically, that is to situate events and developments in their historical context for the purpose of critical analysis; and they will expand their ability to engage with complex causal analysis, and to articulate arguments that integrate supporting evidence and analytical commentary.
- Students will develop the ability to explain and contextualize change over time on the basis of evidence.
- Students will gain an appreciation for the long-term and nuanced mechanisms of historical change and causality.
- Students will develop their ability to assemble and use evidence, including primary sources, not only to gain information about the past, but also to formulate analytical questions, to construct and support original arguments, to sustain oral arguments, and to infer something from a source that is not explicitly stated therein.
- Students will be able to identify, evaluate, and compare historians’ different interpretations of the past, i.e. to engage in basic historiographical discussions, thus understanding the discipline of history as an ongoing conversation between sources, scholars, and students.

**Assessment Components**

The class will feature weekly student-led discussions based on the assigned reading(s). The purpose of the discussion sessions is to provide opportunities for students to exchange opinions, interpretations, and ideas about the readings and the topics they address. A good discussion is one where the participants feel that they have learned something new, something that they would not have learned by simply reading the materials on their own.

Note - the value of each discussion section ultimately rests on a willingness to come prepared to talk. Thus, all students are expected to do all of the assigned readings. Failure to do so will impair your ability to follow, benefit from, and actively participate in discussion, as well as diminish the value of the session for those students who are prepared.

Active, informed, thoughtful and constructive class participation is a critical part of the assessment criteria for the course. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to
engage in a critical analysis of the assigned readings. Strong and effective class participation is characterized by:

- demonstrated mastery of the assigned material;
- critical examination of the assumptions and implications of the assigned readings;
- ability to identify key issues, synthesize information (including making connections or exploring contrasts with previously assigned readings); and
- respectful but probing examination of the contributions of your peers and effective facilitation in clarifying different points of view, thereby contributing to the learning of the whole group.

Guide for Leading Discussions:

- As discussion leader it is your responsibility to create the environment described above. You will begin with a brief presentation (approximately 7 to 10 minutes) to introduce the reading(s). The briefing should consist of the following:
- It should begin with an introduction that provides a very brief overview of the contents of the reading and your evaluation of the reading.
- Next, you should provide a concise summary of the main points of the reading.
- Who are (or were) the authors? What, if any, training or experience qualified them to write about these issues? You also might note how the book has been received and if there are similar or competing books.
- Next, you should evaluate the quality and consistency of the author’s argument. Your evaluation should include discussion of the sources the author used. Examine the references in the footnotes or endnotes and the bibliography. Upon what types of sources is the book based? How extensive is each author’s research? What is the range of sources consulted by each author?
- The briefing should end with a conclusion that ties together the issues raised in the reading and relates them to the general themes of the course.

The briefing will be followed by an open discussion led by you. As part of this, you will prepare a list of questions designed to provoke discussion on the readings (while they primarily should focus on the assigned reading, they also may consider links to previous readings as well as any broader implications of the work to global history, international relations, or other inter-societal relations). To assist your classmates in preparing for discussion, when possible your questions should include brief quotes and/or page numbers for their reference. **The questions must be posted in the “Discussion Board” of the class NYU Classes site at least 48 hours before class.** Students not leading discussion are encouraged strongly to post their own questions and thoughts based on the reading(s) on NYU Classes prior to class meetings.

The exact format will be determined by the student(s) leading the week’s discussion – e.g., you simply may generate discussion using the questions you have prepared; you may call on classmates to ask questions they have prepared; you may choose to use part of the class meeting to hold a debate; you may wish to impose a role playing format on a portion of your discussion to help illuminate different perceptions of the issue(s) at hand. If you choose to have your classmates present questions or participate in an activity (briefing,
debate) that requires preparation, you must give them advance notice and instruction.

Students are required to submit three written assignments (critical review; image analysis; research paper; details provided in a separate handout). **Papers are due at the beginning of class on March 11, April 8, and May 13.**

- Discussion Participation - 30%
- Leading discussion - 5%
- Written assignments - 20% for each of the first 2 papers (4-6 pages in length); 25% for the 3rd paper (10-12 pages)
- Regular attendance is required (absences, without compelling reasons, and without documentation from the site Director or a doctor, will count against your final grade)

Critical reading, consistent attendance, and active engagement in class discussions are all vital to your learning and the success of this course. To earn an A level grade for discussion participation, you must come well-prepared for class, consistently interact with your colleagues and move the discussion forward with your own questions, interpretations, and ideas. If you attend every session and occasionally contribute to discussion, demonstrating good preparation on the whole, you will receive a B level grade for participation. If you attend but never participate, your grade will be no higher than a B-.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

**Grade conversion**

NYU Washington, DC uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- 100-94 A
- 93-90 A-
- 90-87 B+
- 86-84 B
- 83-80 B-
- 79-77 C+
- 76-74 C
- 73-70 C-
- 69-67 D+
- 65-66 D
- below 65 F
**Attendance Policy**

Students are permitted **one unexcused absence** across the course of the semester. To seek an excused absence for medical reasons, students must email or discuss with Lauren in advance of their missed class. For an excused absence, students must produce a doctor’s note dated with the exact dates of the missed class and/or exam. Non-medical absences must be discussed with Lauren prior to the date(s) in question. Lauren will communicate the absence to all relevant faculty. If you have not received notification from Lauren, the student has not procured an excused absence.

If students have **more than one unexcused absence** they will be penalized by deducting 50% of the class participation grade (e.g.: If the class participation grade is 20% of the final grade, the final participation grade would be reduced by 50%, i.e., 80%→ 40%).

If students have **more than two unexcused absences they will fail the course**. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. This means they should initiate email and/or office hour discussions to discuss any missed lectures and assignments and arrange a timeline for submitting missed work.

NYU Washington, DC expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or earlier departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence.

Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion. Staff members may always be reached by cell phone for advice regarding public transportation.

**Late Submission of Work**

1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

2) Late work should be emailed to the faculty as soon as it is completed. If the assignment must be submitted in person, Lauren Sinclair can collect on behalf of the faculty between the hours of 10-6, M-F.

3) Late work will be reduced for a fraction of a letter grade (e.g: A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) every day it is late, including weekends.

4) Written work during the semester that is submitted 5 days after the submission date (including weekends) without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

5) Students who arrive to class late for an exam do not have automatic approval to take extra time to complete the exam.

6) Students who miss an exam (including the final) without previously arranged permission will receive a zero on that exam.

7) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days without
previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Plagiarism Policy

The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

NYU Washington, DC takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor. Your instructor may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:
http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html
http://gls.nyu.edu/page/gls.academicintegrity
http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity

Required Text


Supplemental Texts


Session 1
February 4
Course Introduction

Session 2
February 11
Early Contacts
- Merle Curti and John Stalker. “‘The Flowery Flag Devils’: The American Image in China
1840-1900,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 96, No. 6 (December, 1952). NYU Classes


Session 3
February 18

Chinese Exclusion


Session 4
February 25

The US and the “Open Door” Policy

McCormick. China Market

Session 5
March 4

Chinese Nationalism - American Response


Session 6
March 11

The War in China and Asia


FIRST PAPER DUE

March 18

Spring Break

Session 7

The “Lost Chance”?
March 25

Session 8
Cold War Confrontation in the 1950s
April 1

Session 9
Cold War Tensions in the 1960s
April 8

SECOND PAPER DUE

Session 10
Rapprochement & Normalization
April 15

Session 11
Taiwan
April 22

**NYU Classes**


**Session 12**  
**April 29**  
**Contentious Issues I**


**Session 13**  
**May 6**  
**Contentious Issues II**


**Session 14**  
**May 13**  
**Looking to the Future**

- *Death by China* (2012) **Video**

**FINAL PAPER DUE**

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

Information regarding relevant events, opportunities, etc. will be passed along by the professor as it becomes available. Students are encouraged to do likewise.