

Colloquium for History Majors (World)
China in 1900: Village Culture, Foreigners, and the Boxer Uprising

Tues & Thurs 2:30-3:45
103 Schaeffer Hall

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office hours: Mon. & Thurs. 4-5:30, or by appt.

This colloquium is to help History majors develop their skills at historical thinking, reading, research, and writing. We will discuss and ponder the writing of history, its methods and goals, how written history is necessarily different from the past as experience, the distinction between primary and secondary sources, and different styles of historical writing. We will read and analyze historical articles, books, and primary sources. You will have the experience of doing research using primary historical materials, and of writing a long paper based on it, having the paper read and critiqued by others, and rewriting it. You will also practice other kinds of writing: short reactions to readings, a book report, and suggestions for improvements on colleagues' research papers. We will work on these skills while learning about the Boxer uprising of 1900 and its background in Qing dynasty China, village culture, and foreign penetration. No previous knowledge about China is expected.

Course Requirements:

Writing assignments and class discussion are particularly important, especially as there are no tests or examinations. Class participation is required – that means coming to class having done the readings and then participating in the discussions – and will count for 25% of the final grade; your grade will be lowered for more than two absences or repeated lateness.

Most weeks there will be a short written assignment, usually about three pages, due Tuesday, and based on the assigned reading. During weeks 4 to 6 each student will write a book review and make a class presentation based on it; more information on this is below. During the final three weeks, when we discuss all the research papers in class, each student will prepare a written comments for presentation in class on two other students' papers. These written assignments and oral presentations will count 35%. The research paper, described below and the focus of almost half the semester, will be 40%.

Because of the way this class is organized, it will not work unless people make class presentations and turn in papers when scheduled. It is necessary, therefore, to insist that no late presentations or papers will be accepted, nor incompletes given. As adults you need to be able to meet deadlines.

The course is given by the Department of History, 280 Schaeffer Hall; call 335-2299 to contact the chair or his designate. Anyone who has a disability which may require some modification of seating or other class requirements should see me so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Books to buy (available at Prairie Lights Bookstore, 15 S. Dubuque St.):

Paul A. Cohen. *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Patrick Hanan, trans. *The Sea of Regret: Two Turn-of-the-Century Chinese Romantic Novels*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995.

Richard Marius. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, 2nd edition. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

Class Schedule

Week 1, **Jan. 21, 23** – Introduction

reading (for Thurs.): Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, chap. 1 “The Boxer Uprising: A Narrative History”

assignment (for Thurs.): A 1-page (single-spaced) chronology, with dates, of the key events in the Boxer Uprising. Put year at left, followed by month and day, and then the event, so it is easy to refer to as a chronological list of dates. Limit yourself to no more than 25 of the most important occurrences. This is hard: it means deciding what is most important, and boiling everything down to an outline that you can remember. But if you do a good job you will find it very useful for the rest of the semester.

Week 2: **Jan. 28, 30** – Explaining Boxer Uprising

reading: Paul J. Bailey, *China in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 34-43.

assignment: A 3-page paper (typed, double-spaced, due at the beginning of class Tuesday – true from now on unless otherwise indicated) on how, based on all the reading we have done so far, you would “explain” the Boxer uprising. That is, what are the factors that made people become Boxers, that made the movement the way it was, and that led to its spread?

Week 3, **Feb. 4, 6** – What is History All About?

reading: Cohen, preface (pp. xi-xvi), Part I prologue (pp. 3-13), and Part II prologue (pp. 59-68)

Marius, *Writing about History*, pp. 1-50 (Intro., chap. 1-2)

assignment: A 3-page paper on, what are historians up to. In what ways does historical writing differ from the past as experienced? Why, according to Cohen, is the job of historians not simply to “reconstruct the past”? Why can they not just “print the facts and let them speak for themselves”? What must historians do instead?

Week 4, **Feb. 11, 13** – Village Society and Culture

reading: Cohen, chap. 2 “The Drought and the Foreign Presence” (Tues.)

Cohen, chap. 3 “Mass Spirit Possession” (Thurs.)

assignment: This week and the next two, those who are not presenting book reports that week, are to write a 2-page paper, based on the reading in Cohen, discussing how historians can learn something about the past was experienced by ordinary people who lived in circumstances different from ours.

oral presentations and book reports due on:

- Smith, Arthur Henderson. *Village Life in China: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Haskell House 1968 [first published 1899].
- Yang, Martin C. *A Chinese Village: Taitou, Shantung Province*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945.
- Fei, Hsiao-tung. *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1939.
- Jordan, David K. *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors: The Folk Religion of a Taiwanese Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.

Week 5, Feb. 18, 20 – Popular Religion and Rebellion

reading: Cohen, chap. 4 “Magic and Female Pollution” (Tues.)
Cohen, chap. 5 “Rumor and Rumor Panic” (Thurs.)

assignment: oral presentations and book reports due on:

- Kuhn, Philip A. *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Naquin, Susan. *Millenarian Rebellion in China: the Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- Esherick, Joseph. *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Prazniak, Roxann. *Of Camel Kings and Other Things: Rural Rebels Against Modernity in Late Imperial China*. Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 1999.

Week 6, Feb. 25, 27 – The Foreign Presence

reading: Cohen, chap. 6 “Death” (Tues.)

Stuart Creighton Miller, “Ends and Means: Missionary Justification of Force in Nineteenth Century China,” in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 249-82 [start at p. 296] (Thurs.)

assignment: oral presentations and book reports due on:

- Cohen, Paul A. *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860-1870*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Sweeten, Alan Richard. *Christianity in Rural China: Conflict and Accommodation in Jiangxi Province, 1860-1900*. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2001.
- Hunter, Jane. *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn Of-the-century China*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Schrecker, John E. *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism: Germany in Shantung*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Week 7, Mar. 4, 6 – Two Chinese Novels from the Period

reading: Hanan, *Sea of Regret*, pp. 1-100 (Fu Lin, *Stones in the Sea* [1906]), and pp. 103-205 (Wu Jianren, *Sea of Regret* [1906])

assignment: A 3-page paper on what we can learn from these two 1906 romantic novels about the attitudes of urban upper-class Chinese toward Boxers, village culture, and foreigners, and how they were affected by the Boxer uprising.

Comment [COMMENT1]: Naquin, Susan. *Shantung Rebellion: the Wang Lun Uprising of 1774*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Albert Feuerwerker, “The Foreign Presence in China,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, 128-207

Mackerras, Colin. *Western Images of China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Fay, Peter Ward. *The Opium War, 1840-1842: Barbarians in the Celestial Empire in the Early Part of the Nineteenth Century and the War by Which They Forced Her Gates Ajar*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Young, Marilyn B. *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895-1901*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968.

—> Thursday: Library visit, with John Schacht (Reference Librarian and History specialist). Meet in Library Rm 4037 (go to 4th floor, south end, turn right (west), enter door to stacks, and turn immediately left), 2:30

Week 8, **Mar. 11, 13** – Reconstructing a Chinese Viewpoint

reading: Henrietta Harrison, “Justice on Behalf of Heaven,” *History Today*, Sept. 2000, 44-51

assignment: A 3-page paper examining not so much the substance of this article, as on how it is constructed. Pay attention to how the author shifts from what her subject felt and thought about Boxers to more general background. What is new and what is old here, what is from primary sources and what from secondary scholarship? How does she relate the two?

No class Thursday; you should be working on your research project.

(Spring break)

Week 9, **Mar. 25, 27** – No class; continue work on research paper

reading: Marius, pp. 92-103, which should be useful at this stage

Week 10, **Apr. 1, 3** (Tues.) – Progress reports on research; discussion of writing and form

reading: Marius, pp. 131-67, which we will discuss in class

Week 11, **Apr. 8, 10** – No class; continue writing research paper

Week 12, **Apr. 15, 17** – (Tues.) – Short meeting to distribute research papers for the next week

assignment: For three weeks, research papers for the week following are due at beginning of class on Tuesday; this is a serious deadline and lateness will be penalized. Bring enough copies for the whole class.

In the next three weeks, students are to read and prepare to discuss each other's papers, two or three papers each class, according to a schedule prepared in advance. As your classmates will be making suggestions for your paper, it is inconsiderate and unfair not to do your part to make thoughtful suggestions on theirs.

In addition, two designated commentators will write out 2 pages of helpful suggestions for improvements for papers of two colleagues. These will be presented in class, and a copy given to the paper's author together with a marked up copy of her paper.

Week 13, **Apr. 22, 24** – Discussion of papers (by the class as a whole, two special commentators, and finally me)

Week 14, **Apr. 29, May 1** – Continued discussion of papers

Week 15, **May 6, 8** – Continued discussion of papers

Exam week, **Thurs. May 15** – Final, revised version of your paper must be turned in to my office (or the History Department office, 280 S.H.) before 5 p.m.

All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and meet the standards of the profession in regards to style, format, and citations. You should make it a habit to consult the Marius book on this and for lots of good hints on how to write an interesting history paper. Many students find helpful the History Department's Teaching and Writing Center (335-2584, 303 SH; www.uiowa.edu/~histwrit). You should be familiar with the College's policy on plagiarism and cheating (see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/rights_respons.shtml).

Book report:

You will be assigned to write a book report, in the 4th to 6th week of the semester. On the assigned day, a 4-5 page paper is due at the beginning of class, and you will read this paper to the class. The book report should be written clearly, to be understood aurally, and should be directed to your fellow students. The goal is to convey to them what seems most useful and interesting in this book, particularly for our understanding of the Boxer incident. You may also want to consider questions like: What are the most important points that the author is trying to convey? How does the author use evidence? For example: what kind of evidence is principally relied on, what kind of sources? does the use of evidence seem to you to be fair and reasonable? given the kind of evidence that the author had at her disposal, what sorts of arguments might you have made that the author does not make? And perhaps something about the author: what is worth knowing about her background, specialty, previous works (check the Library catalog)? In preparing book reports, you will find it useful to look at Marius, *Writing History*, pp. 188-90. You may also want to consult reviews in professional journals such as (for China), the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Research paper:

Paul Cohen's *History in Three Keys* examines in some detail the experiences of Chinese in the Boxer uprising and the 1906 novels translated by Hanan give an idea of the views of upper-class urban Chinese. Your paper is to examine the experiences and views of Westerners, comparing them with Chinese experiences and views. You want to try to get close to their experiences and understand how they saw things. But you want also to treat their views critically, by putting them in a larger context, relating them to a bigger picture (from your reading, you have a broader overview of happenings in 1900 than was possible for them). That is the historian's job: digging in sources to imagine what it was like for participants, but then explaining this experience by connecting it to the larger historical picture as found in works by other historians – in your case Cohen and the other secondary works we have read in this class. The paper should be around 10 to 12 pages in length, based on research in the primary materials which have been assigned you (as well as relevant secondary sources you have located).

Paper critiques:

In making suggestions about your colleagues' draft papers, do not concentrate only on matters of writing, but think too about substance. For instance, does the evidence support the thesis convincingly? If not, how might the thesis be changed to capture better what the evidence really seems to show? Would a different organization be more interesting and effective? Would some sections be improved by shortening, or by expansion? The most helpful suggestions, of course, are feasible ones.