

# CAH2840: LATE IMPERIAL AND MODERN CHINA

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Late Imperial and Modern China

### Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

### Course Number

2840

### Academic Unit

Chinese and History (CAH)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course is an introductory survey of the continuity and change of modern China from the Qing Dynasty to the Republican period. It focuses on the forces that have contributed to China's modernization through a multidisciplinary perspective. Adopting a chronological and thematic approach, this course explores how internal and external challenges impact the political, social, economic, and cultural development of modern China. Special attention is given to the nation's intellectual development during this period in response to the influx of Western knowledge. Using primary sources and aided by secondary sources, students will be able to think historically. They will also appraise the significant factors that have shaped modern China and the underlying forces that have led to contemporary China.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Demonstrate knowledge in the interrelationship between various historical events	20	x		
2	Examine the overall historical development in modern China and its position in world history	20	x		
3	Assess and analyse primary sources and secondary sources	20		x	
4	Develop college-level reading skills, oral presentation skills and writing skills	20		x	
5	Apply historical understanding to the social and political issues pertinent to contemporary China and the world at large	20			x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	In-class learning activities on facts, ideas, themes, theories and research findings are designed to (a) illustrate the key events and themes in Chinese history; (b) discuss fundamental knowledge of relevant Chinese historical and documentary sources; (c) examine the overall historical themes. Interactive in-class activities will also be included, e.g. five-minute comment and summary.	1, 2
2	Reading	Books and articles related to the topics.	1, 2
3	Tutorial and Presentation	Group discussions and presentations are required. In tutorials, teachers will assess students' analytical skills and their understanding of assigned readings. Students will be divided into small groups to present an assigned topic. Teachers will assess and grade the groups according to their performance. Through presentations and peer assessments, students' analytical skills will be enhanced.	3, 4, 5

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?	
1	Class participation and performance: Students should contribute to class discussion by offering insightful ideas and asking clarifying and meaningful questions to extend their understanding and academic knowledge. They should listen actively to others both in groups and in class discussions, and respects others' opinions. They should also always be well-prepared for class with the required readings. They need to list the main points related to the learning at the end of the lecture. They should also make comments and give their own opinions about what the teacher says and about reading for the class.	1, 2	10	-	No

2	Mid-Term Exam: A Mid-Term examination will be given to assess students' knowledge and ability in describing, analysing and reflecting on the subject. It also provides an opportunity to the lecture as well as students to reflect on the teaching and learning.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No
3	Final Paper (around 3000 words): students are required to write a final paper on a selected topic in academic form. Students are required to generate their own arguments originally, use historical sources properly and apply methods skilfully.	3, 4, 5	40	-	Yes
4	Group Presentations: Students need to develop their own points and express their ideas in a creative and fluent manner.	1, 3, 4, 5	20	-	Yes

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Class participation and performance

**Criterion**

Students actively participate in discussions, debates and other class activities in tutorials and lectures. They should demonstrate an ability to interpret and criticize both insightfully and innovatively.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of:

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, able to simulate class discussion and comment on other points.
- Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of :

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, able to initiate class discussion and comment on other points.
- Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of :

- Active in-class participation, listening comprehension, able to participate in class discussion and comment on other points.
- Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

**Marginal (D)**

Marginally satisfies the basic requirements of the participation.

**Failure (F)**

Fail to meet minimum requirements of participation

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**Assessment Task**

Final Paper

**Criterion**

This assessment will grade on content, organization and fluency. Students should demonstrate the ability to utilize primary and secondary sources properly, deliver argument and analyse critically, apply research methods skilfully, as well as conclude in a convincing and creative manner.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of :

- Rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;
- Creative, and insightful ideas
- Able to interpret the opinions originally;
- Sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various research methods and writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of :

- Rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;
- Creative and insightful ideas
- Able to interpret the opinions originally;
- Sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of :

- Rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;

- Creative and insightful ideas
- Able to interpret the opinions originally;
- Sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

#### **Marginal (D)**

- Adequate content, ability to integrate resources generally based on demand, limited or irrelevant use of resources;
- Loose organization;
- Able to express relevant points to the subject matter;
- References are insufficient, ability to provide some reasonable personal comments, but no clear demonstration;
- Sentence fluency and diction is acceptable.

#### **Failure (F)**

- Vague and devoid of content, weak ability to integrate limited resources;
- Loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary levels;
- Unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes;
- Summary of references, no personal idea and/or unreasonable comment;
- Seriously insufficient/no reference;
- Although expression is not clear, part of the idea can be identified; over- use of existing quotations and relevant research.

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### **Assessment Task**

#### Group Presentation

#### **Criterion**

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation as well as the organisation and coherence of the assignment. The group delivering the presentation must have thoroughly studied and researched their topic and worked as a team on the collection, reading, selection, integration, analysis of the resources. They should lead classmates into the discussion, to explain with rich content and excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter. They should demonstrate rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition and an ability to criticize and analyse with cogent arguments and creative comments.

#### **Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of:

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- Critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management

#### **Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of:

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- Critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.

#### **Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of:

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- Critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.

#### **Marginal (D)**

- Loose organization, but acceptable identified content.
- Adequate understanding of the reading and indication of grasp of the general ideas, limited or irrelevant use of reading materials;
- Simple and unilateral comments, without clear explanation;
- Acceptable pronunciation and expression; few of mistakes in diction, but no influence to general delivery.

**Failure (F)**

- Limited familiarity with the facts of the reading and its surface relations, unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes;
- Loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary structure;
- Devoid of personal comment and/or unreasonable opinion;
- Overly soft voice, indistinct pronunciation and improper diction, seriously over time.

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**Assessment Task**

Mid-Term Examination

**Criterion**

A mid-term examination will be given to assess students' knowledge and ability in describing, analysing and reflecting on the subject.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

- Excellent command of knowledge, skills and understanding in lectures of ancient Chinese history.
- Deep understanding of concepts and key ideas and connections between them
- Innovative ideas with convincing demonstration
- Good and organized expression

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

- Good command of knowledge, skills and understanding in lectures of ancient Chinese history.
- Deep understanding of concepts and key ideas and connections between them
- Innovative ideas with convincing demonstration
- Good and organized expression

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

- Adequate command of knowledge, skills and understanding in lectures of ancient Chinese history.
- Understanding of concepts and key ideas and connections between them
- Innovative ideas with less convincing demonstration

**Marginal (D)**

- Marginal command of knowledge, skills and understanding in lectures of ancient Chinese history.
- Fair understanding of concepts and key ideas and connections between them
- Ideas without convincing demonstration

**Failure (F)**

- Failure to show knowledge, skills and understanding in lectures of ancient Chinese history.
- Poor understanding of concepts and key ideas and connections between them
- Ideas without convincing demonstration

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**Part III Other Information**

Keyword Syllabus

Chinese culture, western culture, transformation, localisation, translation and interpretation, nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, socialism, communism, capitalism, Modern China, Qing dynasty, modern science, knowledge/power, Kuomintang (KMT), Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

## Reading List

### Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Fairbank, John King & Merle Goldman, China: A New History (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006, available online), Chapters 8-17
2	Cheng, Pei-kai and Michael Lestz, with Jonathan D. Spence ed., The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection (New York: Norton, 1999).

### Additional Readings

Title	
1	Spence, Jonathan D., The Search for Modern China (Third edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013).
2	Cohen, Paul, History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience and Myth, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.