The transformation of China from a traditional Confucian empire in the nineteenth century to a post-communist state in the 2000s is among the most complex series of events in modern world history. This course examines some of the elements and interactions that have propelled those changes.

Three themes will help us make sense of this history. First is the individual actor in society: people's relationships to themselves, their families, and the larger world. The second theme is human suffering. What keeps people from getting what they want and need? What have been the structural reasons for China's difficulties? Why is positive change so hard to achieve? The third theme is the nature of modernity. What has this word meant to Chinese over the last one hundred fifty years? Why have they sought or opposed it so vigorously? Which aspects of China's suffering have been broadly shared with other societies entering the modern world, and which are especially Chinese? Is China now grappling more successfully with its modernity?

The political history of modern China divides readily into three periods: the final seventy years of the Ch'ing/Qing dynasty (1839-1911), the forty years of Nationalist China (1911-1949), and the first fifty years of the People's Republic of China (1949 - ?). In each period we will emphasize the circumstances of three groups of people—the peasantry, who still constitute 75% of all Chinese; students and intellectuals; and rulers, who have been drawn from one or the other of the two preceding groups. The changing nature and relationships of these interests can be used to represent the shifting complexities of modern Chinese society.

Most of our reading will be in accounts by Chinese of their own circumstances. These include essays, novels, autobiographies, and films, ten of which will be shown at 7:00 on Monday evenings in Searles 315 as part of your homework. Class meetings will be built around discussions of these materials. I'll also ask you to do a lot of writing, of varied kinds. Some of this is indicated on the syllabus, but much of it will be assigned as we go. Because this writing constitutes part of your preparation for class, it will be important to do it by the due date, and late papers will not be accepted except for medical reasons. I expect that it will take you between six and seven hours per week to complete these varied tasks.

Here's more information on one type of writing assignment. Almost every week through the semester I will ask you to take a snapshot as we traverse periods and events—stoptime photographs, as if history had ended in that moment. These will take the form of short (generally one-page) papers. Sometimes I will ask you to write to a specific issue or from a specific point of view. Other times I will let you choose your approach to the material. These short papers will constitute 60% of your grade. Class participation will constitute another 20%.

Instead of a final exam or final paper, I will meet with each of you individually at the end of the semester for an oral exam. Previous to that, and as a class, we will have selected a set of topics, and I will ask you questions chosen from that list. This will constitute the final 20% of your grade. On the basis of your short papers, class
participation and oral exam performance, I will ask you to give yourself a grade for the course.

Attendance is required at all class meetings, and more than two absences will adversely affect your grade. This is not because I'm going to say precious things, but because the course is oriented to discussion and viewing. It's simply not possible to reproduce that experience in any other medium. If you do have to miss class, please check with me--I'll usually ask you to write a one-page paper discussing some aspect of that day's classwork. I will not put grades on your written work, though I will make extensive comments. However, if you're concerned about how you're doing at any point in the course, please come see me.

My office is at 38 College Street. My for-sure office hours are Wednesdays, 9:30 to 11:30, but I'm usually around--just drop by or make an appointment. My phone is -3524, and my e-mail address is <kidder>.

The following books (listed in the order we will read them) should be available for purchase in the Bookstore:

- John Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution*
- Arthur Waley, *The Opium War Through Chinese Eyes*
- Ba Jin, *Family*
- Chen Yuan-tsung, *The Dragon's Village*
- Liang Heng, *Son of the Revolution*
- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*
- Michael Dutton, ed., *Streetlife China*