

Course: **A SOCIAL HISTORY OF MAOIST CHINA**
Instructor: Kyle E. David
Course level: Upper-level undergraduate
Enrollment: 15 – 30

What was life like during the tumultuous three decades from the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 until the death of Mao Zedong in 1976? Was this period, known as the Maoist era, an aborted revolution, or are legacies from it still palpable today? Focusing on questions of class, gender, age, and the urban-rural divide, this course examines the “lived experience” of Maoist China from the perspective of a wide variety of historical actors. These include workers, peasants, state bureaucrats, intellectuals, children, teenagers, men, and women.

This course is divided into three units. For unit one, students will develop a broad foundation of knowledge, which will help them contextualize and analyze primary sources and cultural artifacts. For this section, students will read Felix Wemheuer's *A Social History of Maoist China: Conflict and Change, 1949-1976* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2019). In unit two, students will read a broad range of first-hand accounts of life as experienced by a range of people. In contrast to unit one's “top-down” approach, unit two's emphasis on “bottom-up” sources will allow students to assess how ordinary individuals experiences the major political movements that punctuated this period. Finally, unit three provides students with an opportunity to analyze a broad range of cultural productions. This includes popular art, literature, film, children's literature, and state propaganda. In addition to attendance, participation, and regular reading quizzes, students will write one short paper for each unit, in addition to a final paper connecting the course's major themes.

Week 1: Course Introduction: Maoist China and the Cold War
Week 2: Chinese Society under Mao, New Democracy
Week 3: The Transformation of State Socialism, The Great Leap and Famine
Week 4: Socialist Education Campaign, The Early Cultural Revolution
Week 5: The Late Cultural Revolution, Legacies and Continuities of the Mao Era
Week 6: Case Study: Land Reform Up Close
Week 7: Case Study: Women Before the Revolution
Week 8: Case Study: Family Life and Reproductive Labor
Week 9: Case Study: Childhood and Youth in the Cultural Revolution
Week 10: Case Study: Intellectuals and the Political Elite in the Cultural Revolution
Week 11: Popular Art, Drama, and Literature
Week 12: Revolution and the Cinema, Part I: 1950s
Week 13: Revolution and the Cinema, Party II: 1966-1976
Week 14: Comics, Cartoons, and Children's Literature
Week 15: State Propaganda
Week 16: Course Wrap Up