HIEA 155: China and the Environment (ca. 1800-present)
MWF 1:00-1:50pm CSB 005
Instructor: Professor Micah Muscolino (mmuscolino@ucsd.edu)
Office Hours: W 11am-12:30pm H&SS 3070

Course Description
This course covers the history of interactions between humans and the environment in China over the past two hundred years, generating a fuller understanding of China’s present-day environmental problems by situating them in a broader historical context.

Learning Objectives
1) Recognize and describe the role of the natural environment as an active, shaping force in the diverse spatial and temporal patterns of Chinese history.
2) Discuss present-day environmental problems and identify their roots in China’s environmental history.
3) Critically evaluate, in oral and written form, arguments about the connection between environmental processes in China’s past and contemporary ecological challenges.
4) Create original pieces of writing that analyze and explain the historical context of China’s current environmental predicament.

Books:
The following texts are available for purchase at the UCSD Bookstore and can be bought from all major booksellers. Copies will also be placed on reserve in the UCSD Library.


All other required readings are online or will be posted as pdf files on Canvas. Links to the supplementary readings (see below) will also be provided on Canvas.
Assignments

1. Author interviews: For all assigned readings and for three of the supplementary readings, write one paragraph (150-240 words) to introduce and summarize the argument in your own words for someone who has not read it, then make a list of three interpretative questions that you would like to ask the author during an interview.

2. Current events reports: Two times during the quarter, you will need to find a news article about a present-day environmental topic in China related to the required and supplementary readings for the week and write a paragraph (150-240 words) summarizing it. During some of the class meetings, a student will be asked to introduce an article for class discussion.

3. Past and present essay: For the final assignment, write an 1,800-word essay that connects research on China’s environmental history to current environmental concerns. You will need to turn in a rough draft of your essay by 8am on Monday of 10th week.

4. Peer review for final essay: Read the draft of two of your classmates’ final essays. Write one paragraph (150-240 words) introducing and summarizing the arguments of the essays, then make a list of three questions that you would like to ask them. You will discuss these summaries with your classmates on the Friday of 10th week.

Remember to keep track of your interview questions and current events reports. You will be able to draw upon this material for your final essay.

All assignments must be turned in on Canvas as .docx files. The names should adhere to the following format: SURNAME_NAME_MONTHDAYYEAR.docx (Example: MUSCOLINO_MICAH_DECEMBER292019.docx).

Grade Breakdown:

Author interviews: 30%
Current events reports: 20%
Past and present essay: 30%
Past and present essay rough draft: 5%
Peer review: 5%
Participation: 10%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the
University’s ability to certify students’ knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in this class and suspension or dismissal from the University. So, think carefully before you act by asking yourself: a) is what I’m about to do or submit for credit an honest, fair, respectful, responsible & trustworthy representation of my knowledge and abilities at this time and, b) would my instructor approve of my action? You are ultimately the only person responsible for your behavior. So, if you are unsure, don’t ask a friend—ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at academicintegrity.ucsd.edu.” (Source: UC San Diego Academic Integrity Office, 2018).

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1. Background**

Monday, January 6

Introduction to the Course

Wednesday, January 8


Friday, January 10


**Week 2. Famine and Disaster Relief**

Monday, January 13


Wednesday, January 15

Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley, “Pictures to Draw Tears from Iron” (Introduction, Famine & Philanthropy, Mobilizing Relief, and Reaching a New Audience) [https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/tears_from_iron/tears_from_iron/tears_from_iron](https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/tears_from_iron/tears_from_iron/tears_from_iron)

Friday, January 17


*Zoom interview with Pierre Fuller

**Week 3. The Environmental Modern**

Monday, January 20

MLK Holiday

Wednesday, January 22


*Zoom interview with Robert Weller.

Friday, January 24


*Presentation by Xi CHEN, Chinese Studies Librarian

**Week 4. Imperialism and the Environment**

Monday, January 27


Wednesday, January 29


Friday, January 31


*Zoom interview with Sakura Christmas.
Week 5. Energy Transitions

Monday, February 3

Peter Lavelle, “The historical roots of China’s industrial revolution”

Wednesday, February 5

Victor Seow, “Carbon’s footprint in Chinese modernity”


*Zoom interview with Victor Seow.

Friday, February 7

Judd C. Kinzley, “How oil has shaped Xinjiang”
https://www.chinadialogue.net/culture/11031-How-oil-has-shaped-Xinjiang/en

Week 6. Revolutionary Natures

Monday, February 10

Watch the film Behemoth (2016) by this date. We will discuss it in class.

Wednesday, February 12

Shapiro, Mao’s War Against Nature, chapters 1-2.

Friday, February 14

Shapiro, Mao’s War Against Nature, chapters 3-4.

*Zoom interview with Judith Shapiro.

Week 7. The Yellow River

Monday, February 17

President’s Day Holiday

Wednesday, February 19

Ling ZHANG, “Xiongan New Area: One locale, two histories, a thousand years apart”
https://www.chinadialogue.net/culture/10508-Xiong-an-New-Area-One-locale-two-histories-a-thousand-years-apart/en
Micah S. Muscolino, “Yellow River flood, 1938-47”

Friday, February 21
Xiangli Ding, “The human costs of ‘Swan City’”
https://www.chinadialogue.net/culture/11315-The-human-costs-of-Swan-City-/en

*Zoom interview with Xiangli Ding.

**Week 8, part 1. Mao-Era Soil Conservation**

Monday, February 24

**Week 8, part 2. The Yangzi River**

Wednesday, February 26
Chris Courtney, “Picturing disaster: The 1931 Wuhan flood”
https://www.chinadialogue.net/culture/10811-Picturing-disaster-The-1931-Wuhan-flood/en


*Zoom interview with Covell Meyskens.

Friday, February 28

**Watch the film Up the Yangtze (2007) by this date. We will discuss it in class.**

**Week 9. Animals and Agriculture**

Monday, March 2
Mindi Schneider, et al. “How the pig became a ‘pork factory’ in China”

Wednesday, March 4
Robert B. Marks, “Modern China’s agricultural contradictions”
https://www.chinadialogue.net/culture/9279-Modern-China-s-agricultural-contradictions/en
*Zoom interview with Robert Marks.

Friday, March 6


**Week 10. Pollution and Protest**

Monday, March 9


Wednesday, March 11

*Watch the film Under the Dome (2015) by this date. We will discuss it in class.*

Friday, March 13

Peer review group discussions.

➡️ **Friday, March 20: Past and present essay due.**

Supplementary readings

Note that if you decide to read one of the *books* in the bibliography of supplementary readings you should read the introduction and one of the main chapters.

**Background**


**Famine and Disaster Relief**


The Environmental Modern

Micah S. Muscolino, *Fishing Wars and Environmental Change in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center and Harvard University Press, 2009), Chapters 1-3.


Imperialism and the Environment


Energy Transitions


Revolutionary Natures


Yellow River


Yangzi River


Animals and Agriculture


Pollution and Protest


ASSIGNMENTS

1) Author interviews

**Objective:** Recognize and describe the role of the natural environment as an active, shaping force in the diverse spatial and temporal patterns of Chinese history. Critically evaluate, in oral and written form, arguments about the connection between environmental processes in China’s past and contemporary ecological challenges.

For all the assigned readings for each class meeting and for three book chapters and/or articles listed in the supplementary readings section, you will need to write one paragraph (150-240 words) introducing and summarizing the argument of the reading for someone who has not read it. These summaries need to be written in your own words and should not merely replicate the language used in the reading. After writing the summary, make a list of three interpretative questions that you would like to ask the author during an interview. Your summaries and questions need to be turned in on Canvas by 8am on the day of class so that everyone can talk about them during lecture. Over the course of the term, you will have the opportunity to ask these questions to some of the historians who authored the readings.

2) Current events report

**Objective:** Discuss present-day environmental problems and identify their roots in China’s recent environmental history.

Two times during the quarter, you will need to find a recent news article about a present-day environmental issue in China that relates to the assigned and supplementary readings, and which you think you might want to explore in greater depth. Lots of news outlets unfortunately keep their online articles behind paywalls, but you can start by looking for articles free of charge on chinadialogue.net, npr.org, theguardian.com, apnews.com, and bbc.com. The Chinese Studies Librarian will visit class on January 24 to introduce other options. Some good places to try searching, all of which can be accessed via the UCSD library website, include the following:

- **Access World News** Includes news of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (from late 1990s and 2000s to current) - China Daily, Xinhua News Agency, South China Morning Post, Taipei Times, Taipei News etc.

- **EMIS Intelligence (formerly ISI Emerging Markets)** Provides economic studies, company & industry reports, country risk, statistics and political news on emerging
market countries. Covers public & private companies & global industry reports. Includes interactive data analysis tools & news alerts. Excellent China coverage.

**Factiva** Factiva.com provides access to over 8,000 sources including: * 1,000+ Global and local newspapers * 3,000+ Journals and magazines * 30,000+ Company Reports Factiva.com delivers content in 22 languages.

**Nexis Uni** Nexis Uni contains thousands of full-text sources including newspapers, wires, transcripts, newsletters, magazines, trade journals; also industry news, company information, law reviews, court decisions, statutes. Coverage dates vary. International and U.S. sources. (Previously called Lexis Nexis Academic).

After you have selected and read an article, you should write a paragraph (150-240 words) summarizing it in your own words. Your summaries need to be turned in via Canvas by 8am on the day of class. You should also be prepared to discuss the news articles and your summaries of them in class. Students who present their news article for class discussion will receive extra points for the assignment.

3) Past and present essay

**Objective:** Create original pieces of writing that analyze and explain the historical context of China’s current environmental predicament.

The final assignment for the class will be to write an 1,800-word essay that relates research on China’s environmental history to current environmental concerns. You can consider the Chinese environmental history articles from chinadialogue to be models for how to complete this assignment. Your essay must use the relevant assigned readings, at least one of the supplementary readings, and at least one news article. The essay should also include a map and at least one other illustration. You will need to turn in a rough draft of your essay via Canvas before 1pm on the Monday of 10th week.

4) Peer review for final essay

Read the draft of two of your classmates’ final essays. Write one paragraph (150-240 words) introducing and summarizing the arguments of the essays, then make a list of three questions that you would like to ask them. The summaries and questions must be turned via Canvas by 12am on the Friday of 10th week. You will then discuss the summaries and your questions with the two classmates whose essays you reviewed on the Friday of 10th week.