

Hist31201 China and the West: The Age of Empire and Beyond (2023-24)



Nemesis destroying Chinese junks
7 January 1841



Beijing Olympic opening ceremony
8 August 2008

This is a level three module that focuses on China's relationship with Europe, Russia, America and Japan. We are interested in why they engaged with China and how their relationship shaped their own and Chinese histories. We began with Britain followed by the invasion of Protestant missionaries in the late 19th century when the "scramble for China" intensified and when more Europeans, the Japanese and the Americans, joined the game of empire. We study Chinese Diaspora and the rise of Chinese nationalism to explore how the Nationalist regime reached out to the West, and how the Communist regime dealt with them, especially Russia and the US during the Cold War. Sino-West relation is even more interesting to study in the post-Mao era as China has re-asserted herself on the international stage when she has not forgotten about the humiliation suffered during the so-called "century of unequal treaties". What can politics of history teach us about the future?

Assessment:

Primary Source Analysis of 2000 words (40%) and Essay of 3000 words (60%)

Sample readings:

Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire*

Louise Tythacott, *The Lives of Chinese Objects: Buddhism, Imperialism and Display*

Jonathan D. Spence, *The China Helpers: Western Advisers in China, 1620-1960*

George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*

Yangwen Zheng, *China on the Sea: how the Maritime World Shaped Modern China* (Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2011)

Knowledge of Chinese history will enhance your job prospects in the future as China rises to be the world's dominant economic power. Whatever job you might take after graduation, it would have something or a lot to do with China. Bragging about your knowledge of China will impress your employers, as many graduates have told me. Among those who took this module, several have joined the Foreign Office while others have become journalists and lawyers for international newspapers / law firms.

Online office hour: Jun 12, 2023 11:30 AM <https://zoom.us/j/94872597671> Meeting
ID: 948 7259 7671