

University of Maryland, Baltimore County – Spring 2020
MLL 335: “Modern China: Culture, Society, and Environment”
现代中国：文化、社会与生态环境



Course Information

Time:	MW 2:30-3:45pm	Location:	TBD
Instructor:	Professor Tong 唐老师	Office:	Fine Arts 445
Email:	ckt@umbc.edu	Office hours:	TBD

Course Description

When people are asked about environmental challenges in China today, they tend to recall familiar images of Beijing’s notorious smog, coal-fired power plants, the Three Gorges dam, toxic runoff in rivers, endangered species, and displaced families. These images illustrate the severity of environmental degradation in contemporary China, which anyone who has spent even a day in a Chinese city would not deny. The question is: how has China become the way it is today? In this course, you will learn about how modernization and industrialization transformed China and its environment in the 20th and 21st centuries. Through a variety of materials such as literary and historical narratives, films, and scholarly essays, you will study the interplay between modern Chinese culture, society, and environment. This course is designed for undergraduates with little or no background in Chinese language and culture. Students interested in Asian languages and cultures are encouraged to enroll. All class discussions, assignments, and materials will be in English, and students have the option of reading Chinese materials in the original.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate global competency by recalling major events relevant to modern Chinese culture, society, and environment
- 2) understand the relationship between text and society by interpreting literary and historical narratives and cultural artifacts in their social, cultural, and historical contexts
- 3) communicate your ideas effectively by improving your ability to think critically and write academic papers
- 4) develop information literacy and professional skills by completing and presenting a culminating project on modern China

Teaching Method

This course is *activity-based*: you will spend the majority of class time performing in-class activities such as discussing texts, working on worksheets, responding to discussion questions, writing analytical reports, giving presentations, and engaging in group discussions

Required Course Materials

- 1) *Wolf Totem*, Jiang Rong, trans. Howard Goldblatt
Penguin, ISBN-13: 9780143115144
- 2) Lillian Li, *Fighting Famine in North China*
Stanford Univ. Press, ISBN-13: 9780804771818
- 3) Robert Marks, *China: An Environmental History* (2nd edition)
Rowman & Littlefield, ISBN-13: 9781442277885
- 4) Judith Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges* (2nd edition)
Polity, ISBN-13: 9780745698649
- 5) Other texts will be available as PDFs on BlackBoard > Course Materials
- 6) Films will also be available online: go to BlackBoard > Course Materials; click on the appropriate link to be redirected to YouTube; click on the "cc" icon to activate English subtitles

Assignments and Exams

10%	<i>weekly</i>	Attendance and In-class Participation
40%	<i>weekly; 4/18</i>	Quizzes and Final Exam
15%	<i>4/11, 25; 5/2, 9</i>	Student Presentation
35%	<i>5/16</i>	Term Paper

Attendance and In-class Participation (10%)

To do well in this category, you need to attend class regularly and participate actively. You are asked to speak up at least once per class session. If you need to be absent for any foreseeable reason such as minor illnesses, job interviews, planned family events, or official university obligations, you need to email the instructor at least one (1) day in advance. No absences will be excused on the day of or after the fact unless there is a documented emergency. The instructor will consider all scenarios, including emergencies of any kind, on a case-by-case basis and make the final decision. Work and vacations are never excused.

Quizzes and Final Exam (40%)

Quizzes will be given at anytime without prior notice to reward students who keep up with the reading. The Final Exam will take place in class on 4/18. No early or make-up quizzes and exams.

Student Presentation (15%)

You will present a Culminating Project on 4/25, 5/2, or 5/9 depending on the nature of your project. You will be graded on the design concept, quality of execution, and effort. You must present your plan to the instructor by 4/11 and receive his approval before working the project.

Term Paper (35%)

You can submit your Term Paper (3,000 words) at any time during the semester, but no later than 5/16 at the beginning of class. Papers will be lowered one (1) full letter grade per calendar day late and may be lowered a portion of a letter grade, if received late on the due date.

Classroom Expectations

- After class, you can make or receive phone calls, text, sleep, eat, check your emails, go online, solve your crossword puzzle, etc.
- We're in a learning environment, so let's keep the atmosphere respectful.
- As we explore different ideas in class, make sure you explain how your comments and questions are relevant to the discussion.

UMBC Statement of Values for Academic Integrity

"Academic integrity is an important value at UMBC. By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal."

Title IX Procedures and Protections

Further information on the USM Policy on the Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect and UMBC's Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Other Related Misconduct Policy and Procedures can be found at <http://humanrelations.umbc.edu/sexual-misconduct>.

Student Resources

Tutoring at the Academic Success Center – <http://lrc.umbc.edu/tutor>

The Writing Center – <http://lrc.umbc.edu/tutor/writing-center>

Academic Writing Guide – <http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials>

First-Year Seminars – <http://fye.umbc.edu/programs/fys>

Financial Aid and Scholarships – <http://financialaid.umbc.edu/types-of-aid>

University Health Services – <http://www.umbc.edu/uhs>

Office of International Education Services – <http://ies.umbc.edu>

Office of Student Disability Services – <http://sds.umbc.edu>

Education Abroad Office – <http://studyabroad.umbc.edu>

Intercultural Living Exchange - <http://mlli.umbc.edu/ile/>

Changes to the Syllabus

The instructor may make adjustments to the syllabus as needed. All changes will be announced and discussed before they are finalized.

Weekly Class Schedule

The following schedule lists the materials that you will need to read (or view) in their entirety before each class session.

Part I: Literary and Historical Narratives of China's Environment

Week 1

Monday 1/29 – Introduction

- Introduction to the course, teaching method, and expectations
- View in class: *Under The Dome* 穹顶之下 (dir. Chai Jing 柴静, 2015)

Wednesday 1/31 – General Background

- Library of Congress, "Country Profile: China"
- Patricia Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*
- Christopher K. Tong, "The Paradox of China's Sustainability" in *Chinese Environmental Humanities*

Week 2

Monday 2/5 – *Wolf Totem: The Inner Mongolian Grassland*

- Materials
 - o Jiang Rong 姜戎, *Wolf Totem* 狼图腾, pp. vii-ix, 1-83
- Focus questions
 - o According to the novel, what functions do wolves perform in the grassland ecosystem?

Wednesday 2/7 – *Wolf Totem: The Place of Wolves in Mongolian Cosmology*

- Materials
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 84-135
- Focus questions
 - o Why do Mongols (as represented in this novel) worship wolves as their totem?

Week 3

Monday 2/12 – *Inner Mongolia: Between Mongolia and the PRC*

- Materials
- o Uradyn Bulag, *The Mongols' at China's Edge*
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*

Wednesday 2/14 – *Inner Mongolia's Natural and Built Environments*

- Materials
 - o Dee Mack Williams, *Beyond Great Walls*
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*

Week 4

Monday 2/19 – *Wolf Totem: Cultural Revolution on the Frontier*

- Materials
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 136-213
- Focus questions
 - o How do Bao's policies wreak havoc on the grassland?

Wednesday 2/21 – *Wolf Totem: CR's Ecological Ramifications*

- Materials
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 214-258
- Focus questions
 - o What are Bao's justifications for such policies?

Week 5

Monday 2/26 – *Mao's War against Nature*

- Materials
 - o Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature*
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*

Wednesday 2/28 – *Comparing Literary and Historical Narratives of CR*

- Materials
 - o Kerry Brown, "The Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia 1967-1969"
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*

Week 6

Monday 3/5 – *Wolf Totem: Interspecies Relations*

- Materials
- o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 259-340
- Focus questions
 - o Why is it a taboo to raise a wolf cub?

Wednesday 3/7 – *Wolf Totem: Limits to Human-Nonhuman Interactions*

- Materials
- o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 341-390
- Focus questions
 - o What are Chen's personal and official reasons for keeping a wolf cub?

Week 7

Monday 3/12 – *Wolf Totem: Inner Mongolia's Modernization*

- Materials
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 391-472
- Focus questions
 - o What is your reaction to the destruction of the Inner Mongolian grassland?

Wednesday 3/14 – *Wolf Totem: The Destruction of the Grassland*

- Materials
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*, pp. 473-524
- Focus questions
 - o Why is environmental degradation portrayed with a sense of inevitability?

Week 8

Monday 3/19 – *Spring Break (NO CLASS)*

Wednesday 3/21 – *Spring Break (NO CLASS)*

Week 9

Monday 3/26 – *Historical Perspectives on Wolf Totem*

- Materials
 - o David Sneath, *Changing Inner Mongolia*
 - o Jerry Varsava, "Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem*," pp. 283-297
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*

Wednesday 3/28 – *Ecocritical Perspectives on Wolf Totem*

- Materials
 - o Karen Thornber, *Ecoambiguity*, pp. 380-389
 - o He Chengzhou, "The Wolf Myth and Chinese Environmental Sentimentalism in *Wolf Totem*," pp. 781-798
 - o Jiang, *Wolf Totem*

Part II: Environmental Histories of China and Its Frontiers

Week 10

Monday 4/2 – *China and Inner Asia*

- Materials
 - o Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*
 - o Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*

Wednesday 4/4 – *The Chinese State and Its Environments*

- Materials
 - o Li, *Fighting Famine in North China*
 - o David Bello, *Across Forest, Steppe and Mountain*

Week 11

Monday 4/9 – *China's Environment over the Longue Durée*

- Materials
 - o Marks, *China: An Environmental History*
 - o Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*

Wednesday 4/11 – *Academic Writing and Presentations*

- Materials
 - o Handout on academic writing
- Peer review of your Term Paper's abstracts
- Turn in your plan for the Student Presentation

Week 12

Monday 4/16 – *Review Session*

- Bring your books for the review session and in-class writing practice

Wednesday 4/18 – *Final Exam in class*

Part III: In-depth Analysis and Student Presentations

Week 13

Monday 4/23 – Environmental Change in 19th- and 20th-century China

- Materials
 - o Marks, *China: An Environmental History*, pp. 1-13, 257-410

Wednesday 4/25 – Student Presentations

- Materials
 - o Student presentations on Marks, *China*

Week 14

Monday 4/30 – Agriculture and Disaster Relief in the Land of Famine

- Materials
 - o Li, *Fighting Famine in North China*, pp. 283-386

Wednesday 5/2 – Student Presentations

- Materials
 - o Student presentations on Li, *Fighting Famine in North China*

Week 15

Monday 5/7 – Environmental Challenges in Contemporary China

- Materials
 - o Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, pp. xi-112, 192-206

Wednesday 5/9 – Student Presentations

- Materials
 - o Student presentations on Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*

Week 16

Monday 5/14 – Paper Workshop

- Bring your Term Paper for any last-minute questions and consultation

Wednesday 5/16 – Concluding Discussion

- Term Paper due at the beginning of class
- Closing presentation by the instructor

Have a Nice Summer!

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The Term Paper

Due date: Term Paper (3,000 words) due by the beginning of class on Wed. 5/16

Format: Double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, word count on the first page, no title page necessary

The objective of this assignment is to develop a well-informed interpretation of Jiang Rong’s *Wolf Totem*. I’m primarily interested in your original thoughts about the text and your ability to apply the methods of interpretation that we’ve learned so far. As a first step, you may want to ask yourself:

What is intriguing, significant, or unsettling about this text? What do you want to say about the text? Why is it significant (to you and to other readers)? How would you phrase your arguments as a thesis? Is your thesis disputable? Which interpretation are you most confident in making? Which interpretation are you less sure about?

Once you have some ideas collected about the paper, you can try to rewrite them into an essay. Your paper should be inspired by your answers to these questions, but not necessarily in the first person (“I picked this text, because...”). There is no single prompt for this essay, since we’ve covered numerous topics in the worksheets you have received. Therefore, please refer to those worksheets, find a combination of prompts that speak to your interest, and use them as a guide for your paper.

However, there is one specific parameter to this assignment: it’s writing on a “difficult” topic. Meaningful interpretations often come from questions that are difficult to answer. For the term paper, I want you to write on a “difficult” topic, one that you find intriguing but challenging to understand. What exactly does “difficult” mean? It depends on the person, but the premise is the same for everyone: you learn the most, when you work on a complex task, as opposed to a simple one. I encourage you to consult with me as you conceptualize your topic.

You’re welcome to refer to ideas discussed in the worksheets and any of the assigned readings (e.g. Bulag, Williams, Brown, Sneath, Di Cosmo, Lattimore, Bello, Varsava, Thornber, He, Marks, Li, Shapiro, etc.). I’m interested in your original interpretations of the text, so avoid simply summarizing *other* people’s viewpoints. If you use other sources, remember to cite them properly to avoid plagiarism.

As you write your paper, make sure you cite specific words, phrases, and lines in the text as well. Refer to the Academic Writing handout for details on how to use footnotes. Remember that the instructor is familiar with the texts. Rather than summarizing or describing the

texts again, go straight to your *interpretation*. Be as specific as you can when you analyze phrases, lines, and passages, and remember to explain why they are important to understanding the entire work.

If you have any questions regarding the paper, feel free to email me or speak with me. Don't wait until the last minute! If your paper is late, it will be penalized one letter grade per calendar day late (or a portion thereof, if it's less than a calendar day).

I will grade electronic documents submitted on BlackBoard only (no paper copies or email attachments). Go to "File – Save As" in your word processor. Save your document in "Word 97-2004" .doc format. This format will help me enter comments most efficiently. No .docx or .pdf formats, because those document types are difficult to comment on. Name your document like so: "LastnameFirstname-TermPaper" (for example, "TongChristopher-TermPaper"). Submit your paper on BlackBoard > Assignments. No need to send me a notification: your document will be time-stamped. Budget plenty of time to do this!

I will take points off, if you do not follow these instructions on submitting the paper.

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Student Presentation

Due dates

- Your plan for the Student Presentation uploaded to “Assignments” by 4/11
- Depending on its content, present your project on 4/25, 5/2, or 5/9 in class

The objective of this assignment is to apply a spectrum of academic and creative skills to the materials in our course. You are welcome to give a traditional academic presentation or be as creative as you’d like, since this is your opportunity to bring outside skills into the classroom. In the past, in addition to traditional PowerPoint presentations, I’ve seen projects that include music, video, visual or sculptural art, architectural designs, computer apps, graphic or interactive narratives, maps, educational games, etc. I will show you some examples in class. As long as you can articulate how your project is related to the reading and course, you have the freedom to create what you envision.

In addition to turning in the project on time, you will be graded on the design concept, quality of execution, and effort. You may work on the Student Presentation individually or as a team. If you work as a team, you need to submit a list of teammates by 4/11. Members of each team will usually receive the same grade, so make sure you communicate well and divide the work in a fair manner.

You are encouraged to consult with the instructor in person or through email before drafting a plan for your Student Presentation. You must upload your plan to BlackBoard by 4/11 and receive the instructor’s approval before starting on the Student Presentation. Explain your concept, timeline, estimate of how many hours you expect to spend on the project, and the materials you will use. If you work on the project without the instructor’s approval, you may have to redefine or restart your project.

Go to “File – Save As” in your word processor. Save your document in “Word 97-2004” .doc format. This format will help me enter comments most efficiently. No .docx or .pdf formats, because those document types are difficult to comment on. Name your document like so: “LastnameFirstname-Project” (for example, “TongChristopher-Project”). Submit your paper on BlackBoard > Assignments. No need to send me a notification: your document will be time-stamped. Budget plenty of time to do this!