

# MAYVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

## History 470 Special Topics: Modern East Asia

Fall 2025

### Course and Instructor Information

**Instructor Name:** John M. Pederson, Ph.D.

**Contact Information:**

Office: Classroom Building 111 A

Email: [john.pederson.2@mayvillestate.edu](mailto:john.pederson.2@mayvillestate.edu)

Work phone: 701.788.4668.

**Hours of Availability:**

Monday, and Friday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Tuesday and Thursday: 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Also available for meetings on other days and times by appointment.

**Instructional Mode:** On-campus face-to-face

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Course Dates:** August 27 – December 18, 2025

**Time Zone:** All times indicated throughout this syllabus reflect Central Time (CT).

Meeting Times and Location: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 10:00 - 10:50 AM; Education 102

**Final Exam Time and Location:** 10:00 AM to Noon, December 18, 2025, in Education 102

**Zoom Link:** [Zoom Meeting Link](#)

### Course Materials and Technologies

#### Required

[MSU Technology Requirements](#)

Dikötter, Frank. *Mao's Great Famine*.

Ebrey, Patricia and Walthall, Anne. *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History, Volume II: From 1600*. Third Edition.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence in this Course

You may use AI programs e.g. ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with under the relevant Mayville State policies.

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## Course Description

This course explores and the historical similarities, differences, and connections of modern China, Japan, and Korea. This course will consider the status of East Asia prior to European Imperialism, consider imperialism's impact during the nineteenth century, the impact of World War II, and emphasize China's great famine

## Course Objectives

To successfully complete this course, the learner will be expected to meet the following objectives, as aligned to Composite Social Science Education Program Approval Standards through North Dakota's Education Standards and Practices Board ([ND ESPB](#)):

The student will develop and demonstrate writing skills.

The student will demonstrate oral communication skills.

The student will identify historical differences between China, Japan and Korea with the West.

The student will identify historical similarities between China, Japan, and Korea with the West.

The student will be able to describe:

- the historical circumstances in China, Japan, and Korea prior to the onset of Western imperialism,
- social and cultural characteristics of Joseon Korea,
- social and cultural characteristics of Edo Japan,
- social and cultural characteristics of the Manchu Empire,
- the causes of Western Imperialism in China, Japan, and Korea,
- the causes, results and consequences of the Opium Wars,
- the impact and consequences of Western Imperialism in China, Japan, and Korea,
- the respective responses of China, Japan, and Korea to Western Imperialism,
- the causes, results, and consequences of the Taiping rebellion,
- the causes and consequences of the Meiji Restoration,
- the results of the Chinese Civil War and the reasons for the outcome,
- the causes of World War II in East Asia,
- the impact of World War II in East Asia,
- the Korean War's causes and consequences,
- the economic successes and challenges of China, Japan, and Korea over the past 50 years,
- historical similarities among China, Japan, and Korea,
- historical differences among China, Japan, and Korea,
- difference in East Asia's world view compared to the West,
- the causes and consequences of China's great famine, and
- the nature and magnitude of China's great famine.

The student will be able to persuasively argue who or what, if anything, bears responsibility for China's great famine.

## Standards Alignment (Composite Social Science Education Program Approval Standards-ND ESPB):

15035.1 In the social studies composite major curriculum the program requires the study of a broad base of social studies including history (eighteen semester hours) and at least two of the following three core areas: political science and civics (twelve semester hours), economics (twelve semester hours), and geography (twelve semester hours). Additional electives to the social studies composite may include: sociology (six

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semester hours) or psychology (six semester hours) or anthropology (six semester hours) or global studies (six semester hours).

## Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Addressed in This Course

As part of Mayville State's effort to demonstrate continuous improvement in achieving student learning outcomes, this course addresses Social Science and Social Science Education SLO 1: Students will explain and demonstrate content knowledge in various formats.

## Instructional Strategies and Learning Experiences

This course utilizes direct instruction, discussion, reading, cooperative learning, papers, PowerPoint, video presentations, movies, essays, and exams.

## Evaluation and Grading

Grades are not compensation for work, but measurements of achievement. Your grade will be determined by the score you earn on the following:

First Exam	100	Film Reaction	40
Second Exam	100	Participation	40
Great Famine Essay	100	Daily Questions	40
Final Exam	125	Discussion Facilitation	25

**Total: 570 points**

**Grading Scale:** A = 513 or more points (90 % +); B = 456 – 512 points (80 % +);  
C = 399 – 455 points (70 % +); D = 342 – 398 points (60 % +); F = 341 or fewer points

**Student-led discussion.** Between November 5 and 21, each student will be responsible for leading the discussion of one of the chapters from Dikötter's *Mao's Great Famine*. Students are to select the chapter they prefer, provided someone else has not selected it. On your day you will be expected to provide a 1 minute introduction to the reading, prepare 3 - 4 discussion questions, and a 1 minute summary to share at the end of the discussion.

## Course Expectations

Students are responsible for material assigned and presented in class, including any handouts and videos shown. Before each class students are to have prepared one question over the day's reading. Students will write the question on the class whiteboard and/or submit the sentence in Blackboard. These sentences are the daily questions identified in the grading. Instructions for the writing assignments will be accessible via Blackboard. Essays should be written in MLA format. Students are expected to be courteous and cooperative with the instructor and each other. Behavior that disrupts instruction and/or the learning of other students will not be tolerated. Student participation in discussion and daily attendance is expected. Attendance will be taken regularly throughout the semester. Given my faculty rank and degree, I prefer to be addressed as Dr. Pederson or Professor Pederson.

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## Instructor / Student Communication

My preferred method of communication is face-to-face during office hours. You may call my office phone or e-mail if stopping by my office is not feasible. 6 PM Sunday through 3 PM on Friday you can anticipate a response to your e-mail or phone call within 24 hours. For e-mails and phone class after 3 PM on Friday through midnight on Sunday, I intend to respond by 10:00 PM the following Monday. Students are accountable for all academic communications sent to their Mayville State University e-mail address. Please note that my listed telephone number on the syllabus is my office phone. Text messages to it may not be accurately received. Given my degree, tenure and rank at Mayville State University, I prefer to be called, “Dr. Pederson” or “Professor Pederson.”

## Enrollment Verification

The U.S. Department of Education requires instructors to conduct an activity which will validate student enrollment in this course. Class attendance will be used to verify enrollment in on-campus courses. If you do not attend, your enrollment in this course will be at risk.

## Important Student Information

In the Help & Resources for Students section of the Blackboard Institution Page, you can view and download the Important Student Information document for the current academic year. It includes information about:

- ✓ Land Acknowledgement Statement
- ✓ Academic Grievance Concerns and Instructor English Proficiency
- ✓ NetTutor - Online Tutoring Program
- ✓ Starfish - Student Success System
- ✓ Students with Documented Disabilities
- ✓ Student Learning Outcomes / Essential Learning Outcomes
- ✓ Academic Honesty\*
- ✓ Emergency Notification
- ✓ Continuity of Academic Instruction for a Pandemic or Emergency
- ✓ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
- ✓ Diversity Statement (Title IX)

**\*Consequences:** When a student commits academic dishonesty, he/she may be answerable to one or more of the following consequences:

1. receive an “F” for the assignment with no opportunity to redo it
2. receive an “F” for the course
3. referral of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for further disciplinary action

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	INTASC Principles covered in this course:
1	The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he/she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for the students.
4	Content knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
5	The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6	The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7	The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
8	The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

## Course Schedule

The following schedule is tentative and remains subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>READING</u>
<b>AUGUST</b>			
1	W – 27	Course Introduction	
	F – 29	Joseon Korea	Ebrey, 247 – 263
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
2	M – 1	Labor Day Holiday	No Class
	W – 3	The Manchu Empire	Ebrey 270 - 287
	F – 5	Edo Japan	Ebrey 288 – 303
3	M – 8	Pre 1800 East Asia, Catchup	Ebrey, 264 – 269, 304
	W – 10	Opium Wars, Taiping Rebellion	Ebrey, 314 - 322
	F – 12	China: The Boxer Rebellion	Ebrey, 322 – 332
4	M – 15	Japan's Discontents	Ebrey, 333 – 340
	W – 17	Overthrowing the Shogun	Ebrey, 342 – 346
	F – 19	The Meiji Restoration	Ebrey, 347 – 355
5	M – 22	The Meiji Transformation	Ebrey, 355 – 362
	W – 24	19 <sup>th</sup> Century Korea	Ebrey, 363 – 379
	F – 26	Imperialism, catchup	Ebrey, 306 – 313, 380
6	M – 29	 <b>First Exam</b>	
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
	W – 1	Japan as an Imperialist Power	Ebrey 382 – 386
	F – 3	Interwar Japan	Ebrey, 386 – 399

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<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>READING</u>	
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
7	M – 6	Korea and Colonial Rule	Ebrey, 400 – 414	
	W – 8	China 1911	Ebrey, 415 – 425	
	F – 10	China, 1919 - 1937	Ebrey, 425 – 429, 439 – 448	
8	M – 13	Asia's Road to World War II	Ebrey 430–433, 448–451, 456–458	
	W – 15	WW II – Japan (Homefront)	Ebrey 458 – 461	
	F – 17	<i>Letters from Iwo Jima</i>		
9	M – 20	Assessment Day	No Class	
	W – 22	<i>Letters from Iwo Jima</i>		
	F – 24	WW II Asian Mainland ➤ Film analysis paper due	Ebrey, 433 – 448	
10	M – 27	 <b>Second Exam</b>		
	W – 29		China's Civil War and the PRC	Ebrey, 451 – 454, 472 - 474
	F – 31		Japan Occupied	Ebrey, 461 – 465
<b>NOVEMBER</b>				
12	M – 3	The Korean War	Ebrey, 475 – 476 , 490 – 494	
	W – 5	China: Pursuing Utopia	Dikötter, 3 – 33	
	F – 7	China: Pursuing Utopia	Dikötter, 34 – 63	
13	M – 10	Causes of the Famine	Dikötter, 67 – 107	
	W – 12	The Famine and Consequences	Dikötter, 108 – 154	
	F – 14	Consequences of the Famine	Dikötter, 155 – 196	
14	M – 17	China: Surviving the Famine	Dikötter, 197 – 241	
	W – 19	The Vulnerable, Dying	Dikötter, 245 – 291	
	F – 21	China and the Great Famine	Dikötter, 292 – 338	
15	M – 24	Japan's Economic Miracle	Ebrey, 465 – 471, 510 – 520	
	W – 26	Thanksgiving Break	No Class	
	F – 28	Thanksgiving Break	No Class	
<b>DECEMBER</b>				
16	M – 1	China, Cultural Revolution ➤ Great Famine Essay due	Ebrey 476 – 489	
	W – 3	China After Mao – to 1989	Ebrey 524 – 532, 535 – 536	
	F – 5	Korea post 1953	Ebrey 494 – 508	
17	M – 8	Japan's Lost Decades	Ebrey 520 – 523	
	W – 10	China Since 1989	Ebrey, 532 – 535, 537 - 539	
	F – 12	East Asia in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Ebrey 540 – 544, 509	
<b>Th – 18</b>  <b>FINAL EXAM</b>				