Chinese Christianity
Yale Divinity School Summer Course, June 2017

Course Description:

This course opens up the fascinating but surprisingly obscure story of Chinese Christianity, from the earliest Syriac-Chinese documents of the eighth century through to the sermons and micro-blogs of house-church pastors in the twenty-first century. We will consider how the Jesuit mission of Matteo Ricci and his confreres paved the way for a rich Chinese theological literature in the sixteenth century, and the questions of accommodation and theological synthesis it raised. We will look at the huge printing and education industry of the Protestant mission in the nineteenth century, before sitting at length at the feet of Chinese theologians of the early twentieth century. We will read (in English!) some short essays by theologians like Zhao Zichen, and consider what the legacy of imperialism meant for the new Chinese church in the early Republic. The devastation of the church during the Cultural Revolution forces us to confront the choices of the 1950s and church-state allegiances, while the reopening of Christian seminaries and churches in the 1980s invites a closer look at the bitter split between the state churches and the unregistered churches in the present, and what these mean for the church Catholic and Protestant in the future. We will watch some video extracts, look at texts and read some brief materials together in class as we ponder questions such as: what is Chinese theology and how does it differ from Western systematic forms? What does the contemporary Chinese church have to say to the rest of the world church? And how did the church grow to 80 million in just a few years?

Monday 5         From the “Nestorians” to Late Imperial China
Tuesday 6        Early Protestantism in China
Wednesday 7      Republican Era Church and Academy
Thursday 8       Fierce debates and church splits in the PRC
Friday 9         The Contemporary Scene: Registered and Unregistered church life

Readings for discussion (available online and in class). If you have a chance to read and digest before class, great. If not, we will catch up in class.

Monday:

Extra reading for interest:


R. Po-Hsia *A Jesuit in the forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Chs 1, 3, 10

Starr, *Chinese Theology*, Ch 1

Tuesday:

Liang Fa, trans. Starr, ‘Good Words to Exhort the World,’ 1832 (extract)

‘The Conversion of Liang Fa’ in *The Search For Modern China, A Documentary Source Book*


Extra reading for interest:


Wednesday:
Zhao Zichen, in Xiaochao Wang, ed., *The Collected English Writings of Tsu Chen Chao* (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua, 2009), 177-242

Wu Yaozong (Y. T. Wu) 'Christianity and Materialism' (extract)
Wu Leichuan, *Christianity and Chinese Culture* (extract)

Extra reading for interest:

Starr, *Chinese Theologians*, Chapters 2 - 5


Thursday:


Extra reading for interest:

Lian Xi, *Redeemed by Fire: The rise of popular Christianity in Modern China* (Yale University Press, 2010), Chapters 5


Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng), *The Spiritual Man*

Philip Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), Chapters 8, 10

Starr, *Chinese Theologians*, Chapters 7

Friday:

Wang Yi, ‘Spiritual Revival and Secularization: An Evaluation of House Churches in China,’ *Contemporary Chinese Thought*, 47.4 239-254 [To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10971467.2015.1262626]

See also: http://www.chinapartnership.org/blog/2015/08/95-theses-the-reaffirmation-of-our-stance-on-the-house-church

Extra reading for interest:

Xin Yalin, *Inside China's House Church Network* (Astbury Theolgical Seminary Series: Emeth Press, 2009), Chs 3, 4


**Bibliography (for reference)**

Some primary sources in English:

Lai Pan-chiu and Jason Lam, eds, *Sino-Christian Theology*, (Peter Lang, 2010). Twelve critical essays (including some by Taiwanese or US based Chinese) which also represent new theological thought


*Malek, Roman ed. The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ*, Volumes 3a, 3b (Sankt Agustin: Monumenta Serica). Selection of primary and secondary sources from various time periods.

Yang Huilin, trans. various, *China, Christianity and the Question of Culture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014)


Selection of secondary works:


Lai Pan-chiu and Jason Lam, eds, *Sino-Christian Theology,* (Peter Lang, 2010)


*Yang Huilin, *China, Christianity and the Question of Culture.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014.