

Section 5: CHINA

- How have the events on Tiananmen Square in 1989 shaped Chinese politics and society?

This lesson will focus on the events on Tiananmen Square in the spring and early summer of 1989. It is taught in the context of studying the IB Regional Option *China: the Regional Superpower from mid 20th century to 2000* to a mixed group of Juniors and Seniors. The intention of this unit of study is to introduce students to major periods and important events that structured the second half of twentieth century Chinese history. Tiananmen will be explored with an emphasis on visual sources at a time of challenge to Communist Party rule and opportunity for democratic change with important consequences for today’s political configuration of the PRC. Work on this lesson unfolds in one week in three one hour sessions. If the entire documentary *Gate of Heavenly Peace* is shown, two additional hours are required.

This unit of study also connects to the two other IB Regional Options, in particular the study of Japanese aggression and expansion into S and SE Asia in the 30s and 40s in the context of study of the *Impact of the World Wars on S and SE Asia*, and the growth of China into an economic and political superpower when we study the *Global Impact of Asia* in the second half of the twentieth century.

From a Montessori perspective, the main developmental task of the older adolescent (15 - 18) is preparation for adult life. When I create a course (or lesson) I evaluate everything I prepare from that perspective. Concretely I ask the question of relevance, for history that is: "how have we come to the here and now?", and the question of personal engagement: "how can I (the adolescent) relate?". In order to create and maintain engagement, I aim to draw the student in with a "hook" that (sometimes unconsciously) appeals to the adolescent, given her needs for orientation to the adult world of the here and now. The purpose of the history course is to explain the contemporary world the adolescent is about to enter as a contributing member through exploration of the past, and hence enable her to project and be part of a better future.

In Montessori pedagogy, a lesson is structured in three periods: the first period provides essential information, often in didactic format; it could be a "sweep story" to provide overview; the second period is a period of exploration: students actively work with texts, materials, do research, etc. to deeply engage with the topic. Second period work is often driven by student interest and questions and offers choice. Third period is the time to synthesize and share in a variety of formats such as research papers, debates, presentations, performances, e.g. dramatis personae.

First Period: Didactic lesson, supported by a keynote, to introduce students to the background, developments, and immediate aftermath of the events on Tiananmen Square.

Second period: Students read a number of texts, including an overview text, essay, poetry, and Charter 08 to explore the events through primary and secondary sources as well as memory and political consequences of the pro-democracy movement to this date. They also watch a one-hour excerpt of the documentary *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (the film will be available to students outside of class so they may watch the entire documentary).

Third Period: Lesson, readings, and film will be discussed in a Socratic seminar. Students bring any factual, two interpretive, and optional evaluative questions to seminar. Texts are handed out one week prior to seminar. Questions are submitted electronically before seminar.

Assessment: Students' understanding will be assessed in class participation, seminar preparation and participation, and, at the end of the quarter, in a review exam, as well as in IB external assessments at the end of students' senior year.

Section 6:

Resources:

First Period Resources:

Hsu, Immanuel C.Y.. 1995. *The Rise of Modern China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fairbank, John K. and Merle Goldman. 2006. *China: A New History*. Cambridge: Belknap Press.

Schoppa, Keith. 2004. *Twentieth Century China. A History in Documents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zhao, Dingxin. 2001. *The Power of Tiananmen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Second Period Resources:

In class, we view the last hour of the documentary, however students may watch the entire film after school.

Gordon, Richard and Carma Hinton. 1995. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. DVD. 189 min. Center for Asian American Media.

The following sources offer an essay based on first-hand testimonies, two poems that reflect on Tiananmen Square a number of years after the events, and Charter 08, a manifesto for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law conceived in admiration of Charter 77 that, together with the lesson and documentary make a diverse, informative, and moving reading packet for seminar.

Liu, Xiaobo. 2012. "Listen Carefully to the Voices of the Tiananmen Mothers". In Liu Xiaobo, Link Perry E, Tienchi Martin-Liao, Xia Liu and Vaclav Havel. *No Enemies, No Hatred*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Liu, Xiaobo. 2012. "Your Seventeen Years" and "Standing Amid the Execrations of Time". In Liu Xiaobo, Link Perry E, Tienchi Martin-Liao, Xia Liu and Vaclav Havel. *No Enemies, No Hatred*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Liu, Xiaobo et al.. 2012. "Charter 08". In Liu Xiaobo, Link Perry E, Tienchi Martin-Liao, Xia Liu and Vaclav Havel. *No Enemies, No Hatred*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/jan/15/chinas-charter-08/>.

Hsu, Immanuel C.Y.. 1995. "The Violent Crackdown at T'ienanmen Square, June 3-4, 1989". In Hsu, Immanuel C.Y.. *The Rise of Modern China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 926 - 941.

Third Period Resources:

Reminder of keys for Socratic seminar:

Nature of Shared Inquiry Questions

Factual: has only one correct answer that can be supported with evidence from the text.

- * Use for quizzes
- * Comprehension check

Interpretive: has more than one answer that can be supported with evidence from the text.

- * Character motivation
- * Striking or unusual use of language
- * Prominent detail
- * Words or phrases with multiple interpretations
- * Connections between passages, characters, and incidents

Evaluative: asks us to decide whether we agree with the author's point of view in light of our own values, opinions, or life experiences.

- * Naturally evolves from discussion
- * Good prompts for journal entries

Keys to Seminar as Great Conversation

- Thoughtful reading of the text
(short factual quiz)
- The interpretive question
(practice and references)
- Precise guidelines for grace and courtesy
- The circle
- The text
- The written question
- The evaluation
- Follow up:
- The journal response
- Written feedback on the evaluation
- Overview summary on whiteboard