

Kate Merkel-Hess
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ACADEMIC POSITION

- 2017 – Present Associate Professor of History, The Pennsylvania State University,
University Park, Pennsylvania
- 2010 – 2017 Assistant Professor of History and Asian Studies, The Pennsylvania
State University, University Park, Pennsylvania

EDUCATION

- 2009 University of California, Irvine, Ph.D., History
- 1999 Yale University, B.A., East Asian Studies

PUBLICATIONS

Books

The Rural Modern: Reconstructing the Self and State in Republican China (The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

Reviewed in: *American Historical Review*, *Twentieth-Century China*, *Agricultural History*, *The China Journal*, *China Review*, *Education Quarterly*, *The Historian*

China in 2008: A Year of Great Significance, co-edited with Kenneth L. Pomeranz and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

“A New Woman and Her Warlord: Li Dequan, Feng Yuxiang, and the Politics of Intimacy in Twentieth Century China,” *Frontiers of History in China*, 11.3 (2016): 431-457.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “The Tiananmen Protests and Their Aftermath, 1989-1999,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

“The Public Health of Village Private Life: Reform and Resistance in Early Twentieth Century China,” *Journal of Social History*, 49.4 (Summer 2016): 881-903.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Popular Views of State Violence in China: The Tiananmen Incident,” in *State Violence in Asia*, ed. Sung Chull Kim and Narayanan Ganesan (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 2013), 105-128.

“Acting Out Reform: Theater and Village in the Republican Rural Reconstruction Movement,” *Twentieth-Century China* 37, no. 2 (May 2012): 161-180.

“Reading the Rural Modern: Literacy and Morality in Republican China,” *History Compass* 7, no. 1 (2009): 44-54.

“Introduction: China in 2008: Reflections on a Year of Great Significance,” in *China in 2008*, ed. Merkel-Hess et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 1-11.

Works in Progress

Women and Their Warlords: Gender, Family, and Political Power in Modern China (Book manuscript in preparation).

“Training Readers for the Nation: Organizing and Institutionalizing Rural Knowledge in Republican China” (Journal article in preparation)

Book Reviews and Review Essays

State-Sponsored Inequality: The Banner System and Social Stratification in Northeast China by Shuang Chen. *Journal of Social History* (Summer 2019).

Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China by Louise Edwards. *Twentieth-Century China* 43.1 (January 2018).

Buy Me the Sky by Xinran. *The Times Literary Supplement*. May 27, 2016: 26.

Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution by Brian DeMare. *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*. 9.4 (2015): 672-4.

I Stand Corrected by Eden Collinworth, *The Times Literary Supplement*. December 5, 2014: 27.

“Forbidden Memories of 1989,” (review of Evan Osnos’s *Age of Ambition* and Louisa Lim’s *People’s Republic of Amnesia*). *Current History* 113.764 (September 2014): 252-3.

- “Online, Just Inside the Lines,” (review of *This Generation: Dispatches from China’s Most Popular Blogger* by Han Han). *The Times Literary Supplement*. January 4, 2013: 30.
- “Country People” (review of Gail Hershatter’s *Gender of Memory* and Jacob Eyferth’s *Eating Rice from Bamboo Roots*). *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. October 12, 2011.
- “Modern Homes for Modern Families in Tianjin, China, 1860-1949” (review of Ph.D. dissertation by Elizabeth LaCouture). *Dissertation Reviews*. October 3, 2011.
- “I See No Wall” (review of *The Great Wall* by Carlos Rojas). *The Times Literary Supplement*. June 10, 2011. (Translated and republished in *Books* (Paris) as “Quelle Grande Muraille?” November 3, 2011.)
- “Crossing the Red Line” (review of *Ai Weiwei’s Blog*). *The Times Literary Supplement*. May 27, 2011: 13. [Re-featured in TLS’s online “Then and Now” column on October 24, 2015.]
- “The Making of Charlie Chan” (review of *Charlie Chan* by Yunte Huang). *The Times Literary Supplement*. January 7, 2011: 30.
- The Modern Girl Around the World*, edited by Alys Eve Weinbaum, et al. *World History Connected*. October 2010.
- The Age of Openness: China Before Mao* by Frank Dikötter. *World History Connected*. June 2010.
- “The Revolution Will Be Digitized” (review of *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* by Guobin Yang). *Current History*. 108.719 (September 2009): 291-2.
- Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng’s China* by Susan Greenhalgh. *The Times Literary Supplement*. October 17, 2008: 28.
- China Road: One Man’s Journey into the Heart of Modern China* by Rob Gifford. *The Times Literary Supplement*. August 15, 2008: 27.
- The Battle for China’s Past: Mao and the Cultural Revolution* by Mobo Gao. *The Times Literary Supplement*. May 30, 2008: 31.
- Zhou Enlai: The Last Perfect Revolutionary* by Gao Wenqian. *The Times Literary Supplement*. May 9, 2008: 27.

Commentaries, Shorter Pieces, and Online Writing

"We're a Long Way from 2008," *ChinaFile*, August 7, 2018.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Xi Jinping's Authoritarianism Does a Diservice to China's Nuanced Political Tradition," *WorldPost*, September 8, 2016. (Reprinted in *New Perspectives Quarterly* 33.4: October 2016, 15-22).

"Talking Rural Reconstruction, Books, and Blogs with Kate Merkel-Hess," The China Blog, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 3, 2016.

"Family and Gender in Modern Chinese History," *Backlist*, February 10, 2016.

"Kenneth Pomeranz," American Historical Association Presidential Biography, January 2014.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "The Many Chinas." *TIME* (Online and Asia and Pacific print editions). January 24, 2011.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "How Many Dissidents Are There in China?" *London Review of Books* blog. October 14, 2010.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Will the Real Chinese Internet Please Stand Up?" *Dissent* (online edition). February 11, 2010.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Nanjing by the Numbers." *Foreign Policy* (online edition). February 9, 2010.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "A Country on the Move: China Urbanizes." *Current History*. 108: 717 (April 2009): 167-172. (Reprinted in Dean W. Collinwood, *Japan and the Pacific Rim*, 10th ed. (Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill, 2011.)

"Coal Miner's Daughter," "Revolutionary Anniversaries," and (with Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom) "Digital China: Ten Things Worth Knowing About the Chinese Internet." In *China in 2008*, eds. Merkel-Hess et al. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "The Meaning of Obama's Election for China." *History News Network*. December 8, 2008. (Reposted at *Huffington Post*, December 11, 2008.)

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "What Time is it in China?" *Far Eastern Economic Review* (web exclusive). October 6, 2008.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Beyond Beijing." *The Nation* (web exclusive). August 8, 2008.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Five Things We Wish George W. Bush Would Read Before His Olympic Visit to China." *Huffington Post*. August 3, 2008.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Five China Myths to Watch and Listen for During the Olympics." *Huffington Post*. July 15, 2008.

With Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. "Digital China: Ten Things Worth Knowing About the Chinese Internet." *Huffington Post*. July 7, 2008.

"The May Fourth Movement" and "Ding Ling: A Novelist's Political Career" in *Urbanatomy: Shanghai 2008*, ed. Nick Land (Beijing: Wuzhou zhuanbo chubanshe, 2007), 234, 243. [Reissued, *Urbanatomy: Shanghai 2009*, 174-5, 479.]

Media

Quoted in JR Thorpe, "11 Overlooked Women from History, According to 10 Female Historians," *Bustle.com*. March 14, 2019.

New Books in History Podcast, interview on *The Rural Modern: Reconstructing the Self and State in Republican China*. November 2, 2016.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

External Fellowships and Grants

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, 2017-18

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 2016

Mellon/ACLS Recent Doctoral Recipients Fellowship, 2009-2010

Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship, 2008-2009

AAS-CIAC (Association for Asian Studies-China and Inner Asian Council) Small Grant, Sept. 2008

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Grant, 2006-2007

Grant-in-Aid, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, NY, Aug. 2006

University Fellowships and Grants

Institute for the Arts and Humanities Resident Scholar, Penn State University, Fall 2013

Kent Forster Memorial Fund Award, Department of History, Penn State University, 2011

Summer Mentoring Award (with Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom), School of Humanities,
University of California, Irvine, 2008

Center for Asian Studies Travel Grant, University of California, Irvine, Sept. 2008

Glenn Schaeffer Dissertation Writing Fellowship, International Center for Writing and
Translation, University of California, Irvine, 2007-2008

Pacific Rim Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant, University of California, 2007

Beijing University-UCI Exchange Scholar, Spring 2007

Center for Asian Studies Grant, University of California, Irvine, Spring 2007

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, History Department, University of California,
Irvine, 2005

Humanities Research Grant, University of California, Irvine, 2004

Humanities Center Grant, University of California, Irvine, 2004

Center for Asian Studies Grant, University of California, Irvine, 2004

Taiwan Ministry of Education Fellowship for language study in Taiwan, 2004

Glenn Schaeffer Fellowship in creative non-fiction, International Center for Writing and
Translation, University of California, Irvine, 2002-2003

John Linck Summer Fellowship, Ezra Stiles College, Yale University, Summer 1998

Richard U. Light Fellowship for language study in Asia, Yale University, 1997

PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations

“An Unlikable Woman: Song Meiling and the Unified Republic.” Association for Asian
Studies annual meeting, Boston, MA, March 2020 (presenter and panel organizer)
(upcoming).

“Rural Libraries, Mass Education, and the Individual in Republican China.” Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, Seattle, WA, April 3, 2016.

“New Women and their Warlords: Masculine Militarism, Feminine Revolution, and Communist Challenges to Gender Hierarchy.” Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, Philadelphia, PA, March 29, 2014 (presenter and panel organizer).

“A Nation of Villagers: Making Rural Citizens in Republican China.” Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, San Diego, CA, March 23, 2013 (presenter and panel organizer).

“On the China Beat: Teaching about Contemporary China to 21st Century Learners” (with Nicole Gilbertson). California Council for History Education 4th Annual Conference, Costa Mesa, CA, September 25, 2009.

“Tao Xingzhi’s ‘Rural Modern.’” Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast 43rd Annual Conference, Aliso Viejo, CA, June 20, 2009.

“The Rockefeller Foundation, the Rural Work Discussion Society, and the Remaking of Rural China.” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY, January 2009 (presenter and panel organizer).

“The Chinese Citizen in the Universal Nation: Modernizing Rural People, 1927-1937.” Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association Meeting, Pasadena, CA, August 2008 (presenter and panel organizer).

“Reading Texts, Reading Traditions, Reading the Nation: Literacy and Modernization in the Republican Rural Reconstruction Movement.” The Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, April 2008.

Invited Talks and Other Presentations

“Rebellious Devotion: Love and Patriotism in the Life of Traitorous General Zhang Xueliang,” Baylor University, February 13, 2020 (upcoming).

“I Got Into Graduate School! Now What?” Emerging Scholars Mentoring Program, Richards Civil War Era Center, Penn State, June 29, 2017.

“Online Education and the Job Market,” The University of Chicago, May 19, 2017.

“Women and Their Warlords: A History of the Nation through War, Love, and Family,” Phi Alpha Theta Ceremony, Penn State, March 31, 2017.

- “The Rural Modern: An Introduction,” Asian Studies New Book Symposium, Penn State, March 23, 2017.
- “Making a Rural Modern in Early Twentieth Century China,” Center for East Asian Studies, Stanford University, May 5, 2015.
- “A New Woman and Her Warlord: The Intimacies of Communist Conversion in Early Twentieth Century China,” for the Institute for Arts and Humanities Resident Fellows Lecture Series, Penn State, December 2, 2013.
- “Conflict, Culture, and Community: Reforming the Village in Republican China,” at the conference “Hinterlands and Divergences in Asian History and World History” University of California, Irvine, December 1, 2012.
- “A New Vision for Village China: The Republican Rural Reconstruction Movement and the Organization of Village Life,” at the workshop “China in Motion,” Penn State, September 19, 2011 (presenter and workshop co-organizer).
- “‘Spicy Stories’ and Other Tale-Telling: Incorporating Oral History into Your Curricula.” California History-Social Science Project Teacher Institute. University of California, Irvine. April 14, 2010.
- “Popular Views of State Violence in China: The Tiananmen Incident” (presenter; paper co-written with Jeffrey Wasserstrom). “State Violence and Political Transition in East Asia” at Hong Kong City University, sponsored by the Hiroshima Peace Institute, December 9-11, 2009.
- “A Rural Modern: Reconstructing China’s Rural Turn.” Humanities Center, University of California, Irvine, November 4, 2009.
- “Perspective on the Go: Teaching ‘Bias’ Through Travel Narratives” (with Nicole Gilbertson). World History Institute for Secondary Teachers, UCI/CHSSP (California History-Social Science Project), June 23, 2009.
- “Portraits of Contemporary China.” Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, VA, March 20, 2009.
- “Lettering Society: Education and the Rural Modern in the Republican Rural Reconstruction Movement.” Presented at “Rural China: From Late Imperial to Contemporary” workshop, University of California, Irvine, March 2008.
- “Creating Model Curriculum: Humanities Out There (H.O.T.) in the Classroom.” UCI/CHSSP (California History-Social Science Project), Irvine, CA, July 2006.

“Reforming Rural China: Imperial Times to the Present Day.” UCI/CHSSP (California History-Social Science Project), Irvine, CA, January 2006.

“The Agrarian Empire: Rural China in History.” UCI/CHSSP (California History-Social Science Project), Irvine, CA, June 2005.

“Making New Citizens: Local Government and Citizenship in Republican China.” UC Chinese History Graduate Student Conference, University of California, Berkeley, May 2004.

“Constructing the Secular in the State: State-building in the Guomindang’s Anti-Superstition Campaigns, 1927-1930.” History Graduate Students Association History and Theory Conference, University of California, Irvine, November 2003.

COURSES TAUGHT AT PENN STATE

Undergraduate

World History, 1500-Present (History 11)

What is Asia? (Asian Studies 100)

History of Modern East Asia (History 175)

Gender, Family, and Sexuality in East Asia (History 183)

The Pacific War (History 184)

Research Seminar: China and the World (History 302W)

Research Seminar: Gender and War in Twentieth Century Asia (Asian Studies 405Y)

China Since 1900 (History 486)

Graduate

Late Imperial and Modern China (History 581)

Women and Gender in Modern Chinese History (History 582)

Supervised Experience in College Teaching (History 601)

STUDENT MENTORING

Graduate Advisor for:

Matthew Douthitt, Department of History (2019-present)

Luo Yilan, Department of History (2018-present)

Dissertation Committee Member for:

Bin Chen, Department of History, “Religious Schools and the Educational-Religious Reform in Twentieth-Century China: A Comparative Study of Three Religious Academies” (May 2018).

Joo-hyun Sheen, Department of History, “Religious Hybridization and the Legacy of Jesuit Accommodationism in Early Modern East Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Apologetics by Early Catholics in China and Korea” (March 2018).

Darwin Tsen, Department of Comparative Literature, “Under Institutional Eyes: The Search for Collectivity in the Postsocialist Transpacific Novel,” (October 2016).

Hongyan Xiang, Department of History, “Land, Church, and Power: French Catholic Mission in Guangzhou, 1840-1930,” (May 2014).

Kevin Lowe, Department of History, “Baptized with the Soil: Christian Agrarians and the Crusade for Rural Community, 1910-1970” (October 2013).

Comprehensive Exam Committee Member for:

Xiaoran He (History, 2017)

Bin Chen (History, 2015)

Darwin Tsen (Comparative Literature, 2013)

Joo-hyun Sheen (History, 2013)

Hongyan Xiang (History, 2012)

Master’s Committee Member for:

Xiaoran He (History, 2016)

Emily Seitz (History, 2014)

Penn State Schreyer Honors College Thesis Advisor for:

Marlana Bosley, “Female Chinese Communist Leaders and the Question of Gender Equality,” 2016-17. Awarded the Penn State Center for Global Studies Thesis Prize Award, 2017.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

National and International Service

Associate Editor and member of the Editorial Board, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 2018-present

External Reviewer, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2019.

Founding Editor (2007-2010) and Consulting Editor (2010-2012), The China Beat (<http://www.thechinabeat.org/>), a group blog, written by academics and journalists, focused on historically contextualizing media issues and coverage of contemporary China.

University and College Service

Committee member, Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) Dissertation Research Fund Review Committee, College of the Liberal Arts, Penn State, 2019-2021

Committee member, Liberal Arts Festival Planning Committee, College of the Liberal Arts, Penn State, 2016

Student Mentor, University Fellowships Office, Penn State, 2014, 2015

Committee Member, Departmental Head Review Committee (AD-14), College of the Liberal Arts, Penn State, 2014-2015

Committee member, Global Studies Major Restructuring Committee, College of the Liberal Arts, Penn State, 2014

Participant, "The Innovators" group, Digital Media and Technology, College of Liberal Arts, Penn State, 2011-13

Departmental Service

Faculty mentor for untenured faculty members, History Department, Penn State, 2018-present

Chair, Search in Digital History, History Department, Penn State, 2018-19

Director of Undergraduate Studies, History Department, Penn State, 2016-2017

Faculty Advisor, History Roundtable, Penn State, 2016-2017

Faculty Marshal, Asian Studies Department, Penn State, May 6, 2017

Website Redesign Committee, History Department, Penn State, 2016-2017

Committee member, Undergraduate Committee, Asian Studies Department, Penn State, 2014-2017

Committee member, Latin American History Search, History Department, Penn State, 2015

Committee member, Policy Committee, History Department, Penn State, 2011-13, 2014-2015

Judge, Graduate Student Paper Competition, History Department, Penn State, 2013, 2015

Committee member, Ad-hoc Committee on Curricular Reform, History Department, Penn State, 2014-2015

Committee member, Digital History Search, History Department, Penn State, 2014-15

Associate Director of Graduate Studies, History Department, Penn State, 2011-14

Committee member, Department Website Redesign, History Department, Penn State, 2011-12

Committee member, Ad-hoc Committee on Graduate Education, History Department, Penn State, 2011

Co-organizer, "China in Motion (a workshop)," Penn State, September 18-19, 2011 (funded by the Penn State Confucius Institute)

Committee member, Ming/Qing China Search, History Department, Penn State, 2010-11

Committee member, Global Asias 2011 Conference Planning Committee, Asian Studies Program, Penn State, 2010-11

Manuscript Reader for: *College Literature*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Journal of Chinese History*, *Journal of Women's History*, *Modern China*, Oxford University

Press, *positions: east asia cultures critique, Twentieth-Century China*, University of Michigan Press

Member: American Historical Association, Association for Asian Studies