Unit Description
This unit offers an introduction to the history of modern China, and to the historiographical themes which dominate it. Its focus is the ‘Boxer’ rising and war of 1899-1900, a peasant uprising and Sino-foreign military conflict that became a key turning point in modern Chinese history, and in Sino-foreign relations. We will examine the nature of foreign imperialism in China from the ‘Scramble for concessions’ after 1895, to the Boxer War and its consequences, and the nature and course of the Boxer movement. The unit will also engage with contemporary and subsequent debates about and interpretations of the crisis. Examining how and why the Boxers have been portrayed as part of the ‘Yellow Peril’, as superstitious xenophobes and as stout-hearted peasant nationalists, underpins this introduction to modern China, and to the making and remaking of history.

Contact Hours and Mode of Teaching:
10 x 2 hour seminars.
This unit is taught at the same time as the associated Special Topic Project.

Methods of Assessment:
1 x 2 hour exam (100%)

Essential Reading:
Peter Fleming, The siege at Peking (1959)
The Yi Ho Tuan Movement of 1900 (1976)

Further Information:

Date written: 10/03/09               Date revised: 18/04/10