

# Research on Strengthening History Education in the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Chinese Colleges and Universities

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**How to cite this paper:** Song, Y. X. (2022). Research on Strengthening History Education in the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Chinese Colleges and Universities. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10, 116-122.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2022.107010>

**Received:** May 30, 2022

**Accepted:** July 9, 2022

**Published:** July 12, 2022

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## Abstract

Integrating history education into the teaching of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities can effectively prevent the infiltration of bad ideas of historical nihilism, guide the majority of young students to have the emotion of loving the party, the country, and socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strengthen their political beliefs. There are many problems in the education of ideological and political theory in China. This paper elaborates on three aspects, and proposes corresponding measures. A high degree of integration between history education and ideological and political theory course teaching has been achieved through the three measures of “transmitting a correct view of history through innovative teaching channels” “enriching teaching practice and teaching historical knowledge” and “improving teaching level and paying attention to students’ historical learning” and more students will be trained as Young people who contribute to society.

## Keywords

China, History Education, Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities, Education Mode

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## 1. Introduction

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee, led by Comrade Xi Jinping, has placed a high value on historical education and proposed a number of requirements. In January 2020, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in his important speech at the educational summary conference on the theme of “don’t forget your original intention

and keep your mission in mind”: “it is necessary to study and implement the party’s innovative theory as the top priority of ideological arming, and to study Marxism at the same time. The fundamental principles are integrated and combined with the study of the Party’s history, New China’s history, the history of reform and opening up, and the history of socialist development” (Xi, 2020).

In April 2021, the General Office of China’s Ministry of Education required schools in all regions of the country to strengthen the education of the “four histories” in ideological and political courses as a concrete manifestation of the implementation of major Party Central Committee decisions and deployments, and to fully play the role of the main channel of ideological and political theory courses. The “four histories” education, which focuses on party history education, effectively improves students’ political, ideological, and emotional identities, and establishes clear guidelines for implementing history education in ideological and political theory courses. Strengthening the history learning and education of college students can give full play to the ideological and political education function of history, which can make college students understand the problem of “where we came from and where we are going”.

## **2. Problems Existing in History Education in the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory**

### **2.1. The Bad Influence of Historical Nihilism on Youth Thought**

In recent years, the pseudo-scientific wind of historical nihilism has risen, and bad ideas have influenced the ideological field of colleges and universities. In the history education of youth groups, there are cases of arbitrarily distorting historical facts, “entertaining” historical events, questioning and smearing historical heroes, thus shaking the youth group’s sense of identity with historical truth. The advancement of science and technology has resulted in changes in the social environment. The rise and popularity of the Internet has made it easier for historical nihilists to spread their false ideas. Inappropriate remarks and opinions capture college students’ attention with bizarre titles, and confuse them by distorting history. They gave a piecemeal explanation of the relevant history of the leadership of the Communist Party, deliberately distorted historical facts, caused confusion in the ideological field, and had a certain impact on the academic authority of the Chinese Communist Party. College and university students are characterised by unstable and immature thoughts. The influence of historical nihilism on young people’s thinking in colleges and universities should not be underestimated. The relevant leaders of colleges and universities should be highly vigilant, and certain actions and methods should be taken to prevent the spread of its adverse effects.

### **2.2. Young People Themselves Do Not Pay Enough Attention to History Learning**

As Marx and Engels pointed out in “the movement to recall the past is bene-

ficial to young people, otherwise, they will think that everything should be attributed to them” (Marx & Engels, 1972: p. 237). Some college students have the wrong ideological identity when it comes to history education; they believe that the process of learning history is boring, are unwilling to accept rigid education methods, and are unwilling to calm down and study history. Therefore, young people in colleges and universities only pay attention to the study of their professional courses most of the time in college and do not pay attention to the elective courses related to party history education. They learn professional courses well, master certain professional skills, and find a good job in the future as the greatest success; as long as you do not engage in related work in the future, you do not need to learn historical knowledge. Individual young people, in addition to ideological deviations in learning, lack a comprehensive understanding of contemporary China’s national conditions. College students now live in a superior environment with abundant living materials, and they are hesitant to learn about history. It is necessary to learn more about history, and there is no need to carry forward the excellent revolutionary spirit. This common misconception about “the futility of history” has caused problems and obstacles in the study and education of history in colleges and universities.

### **2.3. Colleges and Universities Do Not Pay Enough Attention to Youth History Education**

The lack of attention to youth history education in colleges and universities is primarily manifested by two factors: a lack of teachers and a narrow scope of popularisation of history education in colleges and universities. First of all, history education is inseparable from the support of a team of teachers with strong professional knowledge and dedicated research. Teachers are critical to the success of ideological and political theory courses. Ideological and political teachers play a leading role in history education in colleges and universities. They are the teachers’ and students’ leaders. Improving teachers’ Party history literacy is a powerful guarantee for incorporating history into ideological and political theory courses. History teachers in colleges and universities, on the other hand, need to be further developed and expanded. Secondly, the lack of popularization of history education in colleges and universities mainly includes two aspects: on the one hand, teachers of history education in colleges and universities cannot only integrate history into modern teaching, nor can they only set up history education activities on school celebrations or national anniversaries. History should be integrated into all daily courses, and history education activities should be held on a regular and long-term basis. On the other hand, historical activities held in colleges and universities can attract the attention of students who are interested in history, and some students are not enthusiastic to participate, narrowing the scope of historical activities for people and weakening the function of history in educating people.

### **3. The Necessity of Strengthening History Education in the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory**

#### **3.1. Strengthening History Education Is a Necessary Choice to Implement the Fundamental Task of “Lide and Cultivate People”**

The ideological and political theory course combines education and educating people, and it uses party history education as an opportunity to integrate party history education into the ideological and political course select. The 100-year struggle of the Communist Party of China contains rich ideological and political education resources, clarifying the value and meaning behind the 100-year party history, and visualizing the abstract and incomprehensible basic principles and methodology of Marxism in historical practice, which can better understand the development of the Sinicization of Marxism, and further strengthen the function of ideological and political education. We guide young students to strengthen their ideals and beliefs in life while also shouldering the important task of the Chinese nation’s great rejuvenation through a variety of history education.

#### **3.2. Strengthening History Education Is a Necessary Measure to Prevent Historical Nihilism from Eroding Young Students’ Ideology**

“We must take a clear stand against historical nihilism, strengthen ideological guidance and theoretical analysis, clarify vague and one-sided understandings of some major historical issues in the party’s history, and better clarify the source and strengthen the source.” General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly stated (Xi, 2021a). History education should correctly apply scientific historical facts and materials to clarify rumors, restore the true face of history, and explain clearly and clearly how the leaders of the Communist Party of China lead the Chinese people to explore the socialist road and build a socialist system, how to develop socialist theory, and how to implement reform and opening up. History education is, at its core, a form of political wisdom education. In the process of observing the fate of the country and experiencing history, this political wisdom enables students to have a profound and scientific understanding, critical thinking, and political judgement. It also aids students in resisting the deterioration of historical nihilism. Young students’ knowledge reserves have significantly increased when compared to teenagers. The mode of thought has shifted from empirical to logical. When they look at things, they have a distinct way of thinking and a critical perspective. They are not afraid to express their own unique opinions, but they are also aware of the limitations of mental thinking. If Western countries use new media and other carriers to carry out a “colour revolution” on college students at this time, weak willed college students will lose faith in the Chinese Communist Party. Ideological and political educators must help students understand the fundamental laws of history, master the laws of social development, and increase political awareness in order to prevent historical nihilism.

### **3.3. Strengthening History Education Is a Requirement to Help Young Students Strengthen Their Beliefs in Life**

In the 100-year journey of the Communist Party of China, a large number of heroic and exemplary Characters have emerged, and moving stories that have changed the world have shaped a spirit that spans time and space. These spirits help students understand the history of the Communist Party of China, as well as the people's choice of the Communist Party of China and Chinese characteristics. The inevitability of the socialist road, and then identify with the Chinese road, understand the Chinese spirit, and unite Chinese forces. "People should prove the truth of their thinking in practice, that is, the reality and power of their thinking, the locality of their thinking." Marx said (Marx & Engels, 2012: p. 134). Young students can consciously transform beneficial spiritual culture into internal motivation and form correct life values under the influence of the Communist Party of China spirit.

## **4. Methods of Strengthening History Education in the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory**

### **4.1. Innovating Teaching Channels to Convey the Correct Historical View**

With the rapid development of the Internet in today's society, the Internet has become the primary means for contemporary young people to obtain information and broaden their horizons. A plethora of software emerges in an endless stream, and the format of short and small videos is more appropriate for today's youth's "fast food era". Therefore, to strengthen history education in colleges and universities, we must also keep up with the changes of the times, keep pace with the times, and spread history and culture in a way that young people like. Based on the dissemination of correct ideas, the correct orientation of public opinion, and the correct authority of information, it is necessary to make full use of various media software to spread knowledge, make history electronic, make history live, and be used in an easy-to-understand and interesting way by young people in colleges and universities remember. Use modern methods to tell historical stories, correctly analyze historical figures, overcome historical nihilism, spread correct ideas about party history, and spread Chinese voices. They convey a correct view of history and instill in young people in colleges and universities a sense of historical responsibility as well as a sense of real crisis.

### **4.2. Enriching Teaching Practice and Teaching Historical Knowledge**

To be more alive, theory must be combined with practice. History education should also include social practice in the classroom and encourage college students to go out and learn history at historical sites. Xi Jinping, General Secretary, stated: "Revolutionary museums, memorial halls, party history museums, martyrs' cemeteries, and so on are the party and country's red gene pool. We must

tell the stories of the party, the revolution, the base, the heroes and martyrs, and the revolutionary tradition must be strengthened. Education, patriotism education, and ideological and moral education for young people will pass on the red gene well.” (Xi, 2021b) To improve history education in colleges and universities, we must use social practice as a tool and fully exploit historical landmarks’ hidden educational function. History education can be extended to interesting social practice activities by organising research activities, visiting old revolutionary bases, and so on, in order to increase the historical curiosity of young people in colleges and universities and improve their interest in learning. We will remember the great achievements of revolutionary martyrs, arouse the spirit of struggle among young people in colleges and universities, and improve their sense of historical responsibility and realistic mission by commemorating major events and important figures, and organising commemorative or sacrificial activities.

### **4.3. Improve Teaching Level and Pay Attention to Students’ History Learning**

In order to fully utilize history’s ideological and political education function, college teachers should study and research history on a systematic basis, increasing historical knowledge reserves and improving education and teaching skills. To begin, teachers should promote self-learning. By reading a large number of historical books and historical documents, teachers of ideological and political courses should grasp the historical context with a big historical perspective, based on the theme of the century-old history of the Communist Party of China, focus on the essence of the mainstream, and continuously deepen the scientific understanding of major theoretical viewpoints. Second, take part in specialized training. It is necessary to actively organise teachers of ideological and political theory courses to participate in various types and levels of historical special training, to fully utilize the educational resources of the online learning platform, and to first educate educators. Third, plan for group lesson preparation. Build a platform for teachers’ collective discussion and resource sharing, organise ideological and political teachers to participate in collective lesson preparation inside and outside the school, exchange and discuss the teaching content, teaching methods, teaching process design, and teaching priorities and difficulties, etc., to ensure the correct direction of teaching content and improve the effectiveness of incorporating history education into courses on ideological and political theory.

## **5. Conclusion**

Socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new historical stage in China’s development. Recent changes have occurred in the world, the country, and the party. The main contradictions in domestic society have shifted, global competition is fierce, and interests and values are becoming increasingly diverse.

Risks and challenges from all sides are intertwined and superimposed, jeopardizing the country's long-term stability. The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 is a new challenge. When China is dealing with the risks brought about by the epidemic itself, it must also deal with the public opinion risk of some Western politicians and media distorting the facts of the epidemic, especially using the epidemic to smear and attack China, denying the history of the Communist Party of China, trying to dispel the historical basis for the emergence of the socialist system, thereby denying the leadership of the Communist Party of China. As a result, strengthening young students' historical education in the new era is an unavoidable requirement of ideological and political education, as well as a real requirement for maintaining China's ideological security.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper is related to "Research on the Reform of the Trinity Teaching Mode of 'Classroom, Network and Practice' in Ideological and Political Courses" supported by Education Reform Project of Beijing Jiaotong University (No. 356572535). Thanks to this project for supporting and helping my research.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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