



East China Normal University, Shanghai, China

Course name: Issues in Contemporary Chinese Society
Language of instruction: English
Term: Fall 2013
Instructor: Dr. Wei Wei
Office hours: TBA

Course Description

China's transition to a market economy and return to the global community have huge impacts over the lives of its people, as well as the rest of the world. While covering other fields such as anthropology, political science, gender studies and urban studies, this course mostly employs a sociological perspective to examine issues in contemporary Chinese society. Topics examined include not only these well-known aspects of Chinese society such as *guanxi* and face, collectivism and family-centered culture, but also the emerging civil society, ongoing sexual revolution, and increasing social polarization that are more likely associated with the enormous social change over the past three decades. Students will be asked to critically and creatively think about change and continuity in contemporary China in relation to the dynamic and complex interaction of local factors and global forces.

Course Hours:

52 course hours. One course hour equals to 45 mins.

Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course are 1) to expose students to a broad overview of social issues in contemporary China; 2) to deepen students' understanding of historical change and continuity, cultural diversity and the complexity of Chinese society; 3) to enable students to analyze social issues of relevance in China and beyond from critical and comparative perspectives; 4) to familiarize students with available resources for learning about Chinese society; and 5) to facilitate students' exploration of the city life in Shanghai.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Class Participation (10%)

All assigned readings, lectures, and discussions will be the basis for examinations. Students must read the assigned readings in a timely fashion before each class meeting. I expect you to be prepared to actively participate in class discussions and share your experiences and ideas that are relevant to the class. The more you attend and participate in class, the more prepared you will be to complete the assignments and exams. For these reasons, class attendance and participation are essential.

Based on the assigned readings, students are **required** to submit one discussion question to my email address wwei@soci.ecnu.edu.cn by 10pm each Mon, start from week 3. Missing 2 or more discussion questions out of total 10 would lead to a grade of zero for participation.

Quizzes (20%)

There are two 30-minute quizzes, scheduled on ****/**** and ****/****. Comprising short answer questions, the quizzes will test students on the main concepts and theories discussed in class and in the assigned readings. **No make-up.**

Mid-Term Exam (30%)

Due on ****/****, the mid-term exam will be an open-book exam containing several essay questions. Student will have one full-day to finish it at home. The test will ask students to demonstrate a clear grasp of course materials and offer critical discussions of issues raised in readings. . **No make-up.**

Final Research Paper (40%)

In lieu of a final exam, students will develop and present a final paper on a topic of their choice, with approval of the instructor.

- The paper will be on a topic relevant to contemporary Chinese society. Ideally, it could directly and critically engage any one of themes discussed in class. At least part of data for the final paper should be original. To fulfill this requirement, students may consider interviewing people in town, participating and observing a current event, citing stories from Chinese mass media, etc. The paper should include the discussion of at least four scholarly articles not included on this syllabus and can also include references to non-academic sources.

- Students will be asked to submit and present their proposal in the class of ****/****. You should address questions in your proposal such as: what is the subject of your final research paper? What data do you plan to use in your paper? How are you going to collect the data? What help do you need to finish this course project? It should be between 1-2 pages, double spaced.

- The presentation of final paper is scheduled on the last class on ****/****. Students are encouraged to use multi-media technology in their presentations. The final paper should be between 8-10 pages, double spaced. **Only hard-copy accepted.**

- **No late paper accepted.** .

Grading

For this course, students will be assessed according to the following:

1. Class Participation:	10%	20 points
2. Two Quizzes :	20%	40 points
3. Midterm Exam :	30%	60 points
4. Final Research Paper		
a. Proposal	5%	10 points
b. Presentation	10%	20 points
c. Paper	25%	50 points
Total	100%	200 points

Weekly Schedule

Week 1	Orientation Week No class
Week 2	Introduction: Chinese Society in Transition

- (1) Tang Wenfang and William Parish "The Urban Social World", in Yang and Parish 2000.
 (2) Tang Wenfang and Yang Qing "The Chinese Urban Caste System in Transition", *The China Quarterly*, 196, 2008

Week 3 Social Norms and Everyday Interaction

- (1) Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui, "Guanxi Dialects and Vocabulary", in Yang 1994
 (2) Bian, Yanjie, "Institutional Holes and Job Mobility Processes: Guanxi Mechanisms in China's Emergent Labor Market.", in Gold al. 2004

Week 4 Ethnic Relations

- (1) Yi, Lin, "Ethnicization through Schooling: The Mainstream Discursive Repertoires of Ethnic Minorities", *The China Quarterly*, 192, 2007
 (2) Zang Xiaowei, "Affirmative Action, Economic Reforms, and Han-Uyghur Variation in Job Attainment in the State Sector in Urumchi " *The China Quarterly*, 202, 2010.

**Week 5 National Day Break
No Class**

Week 6 Gender in Transformation

- (1) Shi, Lihong, "Little Quilted Vests to Warm Parents' Hearts": Redefining the Gendered Practice of Filial Piety in Rural North-eastern China *The China Quarterly*, 198, 2009.
 (2) Yang, Jie, "The Crisis of Masculinity: Class, Gender and kindly Power in Post-Mao China", *American Ethnologist*, Vol.37, No.3, 2010

Quiz 1

Week 7 New Class Society

- (1) Zhang, Li "Private Homes, Distinct Lifestyle: Performing a New Middle Class", in Zhang and Ong, 2008.
 (2) Wu, Fulong. 2004. Urban Poverty and Marginalization under Market Transition: The Case of Chinese Cities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2)

Week 8 Migrant Workers

- (1). Pun Ngai and Chris Smith "Putting Transnational Labor Process in Its Place: The Dormitory Labor Regime in Post-Socialist China", *Work, Employment and Society*, 21, 1, 2007
 (2) Wu, Jieh-Min "Rural Migrant Workers and China's Differential Citizenship: A Comparative Institutional Analysis", in Whyte 2010

Week 9 Mid-Term Exam

Documentary Film: *Last Train Home* (2009, Fan Lixin)

Week 10 Religion

- (1) Daniel L. Overmyer, "Chinese Religious Traditions from 1900-2005: An Overview", in Louie 2008.
 (2) Yang, Fenggang. "Lost in the Market, Saved at McDonald's: Conversion to Christianity in Urban China". *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (4), 2005

Week 11 Search for Self and the Rise of Private Life

- (1) Yan Yunxiang "Domestic Space and the Quest for Privacy", in Yan 2003.
 (2) Yan Yunxiang ""The Good Samaritan's New Trouble: A Study of the Changing Moral Landscape in Contemporary China." *Social Anthropology* 17 (1), 2009.

Research Paper Proposal Due

- Week 12** **Urban Redevelopment**
(1) He, Shenjing and Wu Fulong. . Property-led Redevelopment in Post-reform China: A Case Study of Xintiandi Redevelopment Project in Shanghai. *Journal of Urban Affairs* (1), 2005
(2) Him Chung, "Building an image of Villages-in-the-City: A Clarification of China ' s Distinct Urban Spaces" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2), 2010

- Week 13** **Social Space and Civil Mobilization**
(1) Benjamin L. Read. "Property Rights and Homeowner Activism in New Neighborhoods" In. Zhang and Ong 2008
(2) Jessica Teets. "Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China? ", *The China Quarterly*, 198, 2009

Quiz 2

- Week 14** **Sexual Revolution**
(1) Pan Suiming, "Transformation in Primary Life Circle: The Origins and Nature of China's Sexual Revolution", in Jeffreys 2006.
(2) James Farrer, "Sexual Citizenship and the Politics of Sexual Story-Telling", in Jeffreys 2006.
- Documentary Film: Queer China, "Comrade China" (2008, Cui Zi'en)

- Week 15** **Final Research Paper Due and Class Presentation.**

Bibliography

- Gold, Thomas, Doug Guthrie and David Wank, *Social Connections in China Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.
Jeffreys, Elaine, *Sex and Sexuality in China*. Routledge, 2006.
Louie, Kam, *The Cambridge Companion of Modern Chinese Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Tang, Wenfang and William L. Parish, *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Whyte, Martin K. *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Inequalities in Contemporary China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
Yan, Yunxiang, *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949-1999*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
Yang, Mayfair Mei-Hui, *Gifts, Favors and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
Zhang, Li and Aihwa Ong, *Privatizing China: Socialism from Afar*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Academic Honesty

Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. Students are expected to comply with the university regulations. Failure to adhere to the rules of academic integrity and honesty will be reported and dealt with accordingly.