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 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 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**

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Orientation Week</th>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Introduction: Chinese Society in Transition</th>
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**Week 3**

**Social Norms and Everyday Interaction**
(1) Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui, “Guanxi Dialects and Vocabulary”, in Yang 1994

**Week 4**

**Ethnic Relations**

**Week 5**

**National Day Break**
No Class

**Week 6**

**Gender in Transformation**

**Quiz 1**

**Week 7**

**New Class Society**
(1) Zhang, Li “Private Homes, Distinct Lifestyle: Performing a New Middle Class”, in Zhang and Ong, 2008.

**Week 8**

**Migrant Workers**
(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**

**Week 11**

**Search for Self and the Rise of Private Life**
(1) Yan Yunxiang “Domestic Space and the Quest for Privacy”, in Yan 2003.
Research Paper Proposal Due

Week 12 Urban Redevelopment

Week 13 Social Space and Civil Mobilization
(1) Benjamin L. Read. “Property Rights and Homeowner Activism in New Neighborhoods” In. Zhang and Ong 2008

Quiz 2

Week 14 Sexual Revolution

Documentary Film: Queer China, “Comrade China” (2008, Cui Zi’en)

Week 15 Final Research Paper Due and Class Presentation

Bibliography


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.