



BEIJ SOCS260 Issues in Contemporary Chinese Society and Culture
The Alliance for Global Education China Now: Development, Politics
and Social Change Program
Professor Matt Ferchen

Course Description

This course will provide a broad overview of a range of contemporary Chinese social, cultural and political issues. Drawing from interdisciplinary sources, although with an emphasis on social science readings, the course will cover issues from orphanages and adoption, to urban planning, to the importance of China's emerging middle class. Although oriented towards urban issues, many topics such as migration, the environment and street vendors will touch on the increasingly complex interactions between rural and urban Chinese society. In addition to lecture and discussion classes, there will be regular field trips to sites around Beijing where students can observe contemporary Beijing first-hand.

Course Requirements

For each class session students will be expected to complete the required readings, which will primarily consist of book chapters as well as journal and newspaper articles. In addition to active participation in class discussions each student will be responsible for selecting two (2) class sessions for which s/he will write a response paper of between 2-3 pages and will then act as a discussant or co-discussant during the class. The response papers must be sent by email to everyone in the class within 24 hours of the session for which it has been prepared and the discussant(s) will then be responsible for helping to guide the in-class discussion. These response papers are not meant to be book reviews that summarize the readings, but instead are an opportunity for students to draw connections between themes in the readings, to provide critical feedback on ideas and arguments in the readings themselves or to simply present questions about the readings.

Finally, students will be responsible for completing a Capstone Project for which they will write an approximately 12-page paper and make an in-class presentation during the final week of class. Students will select the project theme through consultation with the instructor and program director and we will discuss research strategies during the first week of the course. The Capstone Project is designed to allow students to learn more in-depth about a topic of interest to them by using traditional written research materials available to them at their home universities in addition to hands-on fieldwork in Beijing or elsewhere in China. The work for the Capstone Project will be divided up over the course of the semester. After the initial consultations with the program director and myself an abstract of the project (one page), accompanied by an initial bibliography and specification of the type of research methods to be used will be due the third week of class. A rough draft of the final paper (around 7-8 pages) will be due during week 12, and during the

last week of class students will submit the final draft and make an in-class presentation. At all stages of the Capstone Project students are encouraged to include newly acquired and/or relevant Chinese language vocabulary and references.

In addition to normal class sessions held on campus, we will on occasion also go to sites around Beijing where we can observe first-hand the topic for that week.

Grading

Preparation and Class Discussion: 20%

Response Papers/Discussant: 30%

Capstone Project: 50% (Abstract 5%, Rough Draft 10%, Final Presentation 15 %, Final Paper 20%)

Important Note on Deadlines, original work and class etiquette: All work must be handed in on time in order to receive full credit. For each day that an assignment is late you will lose a full letter grade. If you are ill and are not able to hand an assignment in on time you should notify me or the program director before the deadline and we will make alternative arrangements.

All course work must be completely original. You should be careful to cite and reference any work that is not your own. Plagiarism will be strictly punished, with the minimum being an F for the assignment in question with the possibility of stricter penalties including expulsion from the class and the program. Please refer to the Alliance program rules for more details.

The class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. You are expected to come prepared to each class and to engage in discussions. You are encouraged to bring a critical eye to the readings, to the teacher's arguments and to the comments of fellow students. This all should be done in a spirit of mutual respect. As such, no cell phone use in class is permitted and laptops should be used strictly for class related purposes.

Course Meeting and Readings Schedule

Week 1 (January 25-29)

1. Introduction

a. Course Introduction

b. Field Work and Methodology; Discussion of Capstone Project Topics

- i. O'Brien, Kevin J. 2006. "Discovery, Research (Re)design, and Theory Building." In Maria Heimer and Stig Thøgersen, eds., *Doing Fieldwork in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- ii. Solinger, Dorothy. 2006. "Interviewing Chinese People: From High-level Officials to the Unemployed." In Maria Heimer and Stig Thøgersen, eds., *Doing Fieldwork in China*. University of Hawaii Press.

2. Historical Background I

- a. *China: A Century of Revolution, 1949-1976*. PBS Documentary

Week 2 (February 1-5)

3. Conclusion of *Century of Revolution* documentary

4. Historical Background II: What to Make of Mao (Discussant: Matt)

- a. Gray, Jack. 2006. "Mao in Perspective." *China Quarterly* 187: 659-679.
- b. Selden, Mark. 2006. "Jack Gray, Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of Chinese Development." *China Quarterly* 187: 680-685.
- c. Bramall, C. 2006. "The Last of the Romantics? Maoist Economic Development in Retrospect." *China Quarterly* 187: 686-692.

Week 3 (February 8-12)

Field Trip to Walmart and Ikea

- Davis, Deborah. 2005. "Urban Consumer Culture," *The China Quarterly* 183: 677-694.
- Pierson, David. 2009 (August 25). "Beijing Loves Ikea – But Not for Shopping." *Los Angeles Times*. Article can be accessed at <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-china-ikea25-2009aug25,0,7736661.story>.

Assignment: Capstone Project Research Abstracts Due by Friday February 12, 5pm

Week 4: (February 15-19)

Spring Festival Holiday and Alliance Field Study Trip: No Classes

Week 5: (February 22-26)

Spring Festival Holiday and Alliance Field Study Trip: No Classes

Week 6: (March 1-5)

5. State, Economy and Society, Part I: Regulatory State, Developmental State or Partial Reform

- a. Yang Dali. 2004. "Economic Transformation and State Rebuilding in China." In Barry J. Naughton and Dali L. Yang, eds., *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- b. Pearson, Margaret. 2005. "The Business of Governing Business in China: Institutions and Norms of the Emerging Regulatory State." *World Politics* 57: 296-322.
- c. Pei Minxin. 2006. "The Dark Side of China's Rise." *Foreign Policy* (March/April).

6. State, Economy and Society, Part II: The Chinese Debate Between Neoliberals and the New Left

- a. Liu Junning. 2000. "Classical Liberalism Catches on in China." *Journal of Democracy* 11(3): 48-57.
- b. Mishra, Pankaj. 2006. "China's New Leftist." *The New York Times*, October 15.

- c. Fewsmith, Joseph. 2005. "China under Hu Jintao." *China Leadership Monitor* 14: 1-9.

Week 7: (March 8-12)

Field Trip: Beijing Urban Planning Museum

Week 8: (March 15-19)

7. Population, Gender, and Adoption

- a. Anagnost, Ann. 1995. "A Surfeit of Bodies: Population and the Rationality of the State in Post-Mao China." In *Conceiving the New World Order*, Ginsburg, Faye and Rapp, eds., 22-41.
- b. Banister, Judith. 2003. "Shortage of Girls in China Today." *Journal of Population Research* 21(1): 19-45.
- c. Zhang Weiguo. 2006. "Who Adopts Girls and Why? Domestic Adoption of Female Children in Contemporary Rural China." *The China Journal* 56: 63-82.

8. Migration and Migrants

- a. Solinger, Dorothy. 1999. "China's Floating Population." In Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*. Harvard University Press: 220-240.
- b. Li Zhang. 2001. "Contesting Crime, Order, and Migrant Spaces in Beijing." In Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang and Lyn Jeffery, eds., *China Urban*. Duke University Press: 201-222.

Week 9: (March 22-26)

Individual Travel Vacation: No Classes

Week 10: (March 29-April 2)

Field Trip: American Chamber of Commerce or US Embassy

Week 11 (April 5-9)

9. Urban Workers

- a. Solinger, Dorothy. 2002. "Labour Market Reform and the Plight of the Laid-Off Proletariat." *China Quarterly* 170: 304-326.
- b. Blecher, Marc. 2002. "Hegemony and Workers Politics in China." *China Quarterly* 170: 283-303.
- c. Hurst, William. 2004. "Understanding Contentious Collective Action by Chinese Laid-Off Workers: The Importance of Regional Political Economy." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 39(2): 94-120.

10. Marginalized Professions

- a. Fernandez-Stembridge, Leila and Richard P. Madsen. "Beggars in the Socialist Market Economy." In Perry Link, Richard P. Madsen and

Paul G. Pickowicz, eds., *Popular China: Unofficial Culture in a Globalizing Society*. Rowman and Littlefield: 207-231.

- b. Goldstein, Joshua. 2006. "The Remains of the Everyday: One Hundred Years of Recycling in Beijing." In Madeleine Yue Dong and Joshua Goldstein, eds., *Everyday Modernity in China*. University of Washington Press.
- c. Hyde, Sandra Teresa. 2001. "Sex Tourism Practices on the Periphery: Eroticizing Ethnicity and Pathologizing Sex on the Lancang." In Nancy Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang and Lyn Jeffery, eds., *China Urban*. Duke University Press: 143-162.

Week 12: (April 12-16)

11. Individual Capstone Meetings

Assignment: Capstone Project Rough Drafts Due by Friday, April 16th, 5pm

Week 13 (April 19-23)

Field Trip: China Ethnicities Park and Museum

Week 14: (April 26-30)

12. State and Economy, Part III: The Informal Economy

- a. Tsai, Kellee. 2002. *Back-Alley Banking: Private Entrepreneurs in China*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1.
- b. Ferchen, Matt. 2007. "The City Appearance Administration and Street Vendors: Regulating Market Order in Nanjing." Dissertation Chapter.

13. Tuesday, May 19: Where Is China's Middle Class? (Discussants: Rob)

- c. Tsai, Kellee. 2005. "Capitalists Without a Class: Political Diversity Among Private Entrepreneurs in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 38(9): 1130-1158.
- d. "A Capitalist Paradise: The Urban Middle Class Has a Lifestyle that Looks Familiar." 2005. *U.S. News and World Report* (June 6).
- e. Ford, Peter. 2007. "Consumer Tidal Wave on the Way: China's Middle Class." *Christian Science Monitor* (January 2).

Week 15: (May 3-7)

14. Final Capstone Presentations

Assignment: Final Capstone Papers Due Saturday, May 8th, 5pm