

# INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall Semester, 2016

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### Course Description

This course introduces overall development of contemporary China and examines contemporary Chinese society and social change. It has two main objectives: (1) to understand contemporary Chinese society from historical and development perspectives, and explore the causes and consequences of social change; (2) to examine the social institutions and structures shaping everyday life, and the major sources of differentiation and inequality in Chinese society.

#### Lecturer and Tutor

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#### Tutor:

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#### Mode of Delivery and Workload

The course is delivered on campus, and taught through 3 contact hours (1.5 lectures and 1.5 discussions and presentations) per teaching week. Students are expected to attend lectures, discussions and presentations actively, and take notes on the lectures. You will need to spend approximately 1 hours per week reading and reflecting on the materials relating to the course.

#### Learning outcomes:

Students will acquire a historically informed, up to date knowledge of the structures, institutions and processes shaping contemporary Chinese society and social change; draw on key concepts in sociology and anthropology to evaluate debates about the nature of contemporary Chinese society, the relationship between historical continuity and change/development in Chinese society, and major social issues facing China; develop their research and analytical skills by participating in discussions/presentations.

**Time:** 13:30-16:15, every Monday afternoon, from 5 Sep, 2016 to 9 Jan, 2017.

**Venue:** Teaching Building No. 2, Room 115.

## Course Outline

Week (Start date)	Lecture topic	Notes
1 (5 Sep)	Introduction	
2 (12 Sep)	<i>To Live</i>	Movie
3 (19 Sep)	Chinese culture and customs	
4 (26 Sep)	Traditional Chinese instrumental music	Prof. Bu Xiaomei
5 (3 Oct)	<i>Public Holiday</i>	
6 (10 Oct)	Beliefs and values	<b>Quiz 1</b>
7 (17 Oct)	Chinese politics	
8 (24 Oct)	Social institutions	
9 (31 Oct)	Education	<b>Quiz 2</b>
10 (7 Nov)	Social stratification and inequalities	
11 (14 Nov)	<i>Field visit to Migrant Workers' Museum</i>	Fieldtrip
12 (21 Nov)	Kinship and <i>Guanxi</i>	
13 (28 Nov)	<i>Last Train Home</i>	Movie
14 (5 Dec)	Changing family forms	<b>Quiz 3</b>
15 (12 Dec)	Environment and health	Jennifer Holdaway
16 (19 Dec)	Chinese martial arts	Prof. Wang Jianhua
17 (26 Dec)	<b>Examination</b>	

## Assessment Details

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The lecturer will discuss with and explain to students the assessment system in classes during the first weeks of the semester.

Assessment Item	Value
Class attendance	15%
Class participation	10%
Discussion and presentation	15%
Quiz	30%
Examination	30%

### Assessment item 1: Class attendance (15%)

All students are expected to participate in lectures and discussions/presentations on time, if you arrive more than 10 minutes late, 1 score will be deducted.

Your tutor/lecturer will keep a record of your attendance. More than 2 unexplained absences render a student liable for exclusion from the course.

### Assessment item 2: Class participation (10%)

At the first lecture, students will be divided into 3-5 groups; each group consists of 3-4 students.

All students are expected to participate actively in lectures and discussions/presentations, by demonstrating that they have read the readings recommended for each topic, offering interpretations of the readings, and presenting questions to the discussion/presentation group.

### Assessment item 3: Discussion and presentation (15%)

Students are required to choose a presentation topic from the questions for discussion listed at the end of each topic; also, the presenter(s) should prepare two questions for group discussion.

Presentations may be given by one (or two) participants who MUST coordinate their presentation to ensure there is no repetition. Presenters must have read ALL the required readings, and preferably some of the supplementary readings.

Each week the presentation should be given after the lecture. Each presentation should last from 10 to 15 minutes. Presenters should NOT read from a prepared text. Instead, they should speak to key points. The aim of the presentation (and the criteria according to which your presentation is assessed) is to elucidate, and critically assess the analytical usefulness of the concepts and arguments used in the readings each week and, through raising insightful questions, stimulate discussion among other members of the group. Do not simply summarize the readings.

### Assessment item 4: Quiz (30%)

There are three quizzes following the lecture of the week during the semester: in week 6 at October 10<sup>th</sup>, week 10 at November 7<sup>th</sup> and week 15 at December 12<sup>th</sup>. The quiz is designed to test your knowledge learned in the last 3-4 lectures. It involves multiple-choice test and a short essay question. A quiz takes 30-45 minutes.

#### **Assessment item 4: Examination (30%)**

The examination tests your knowledge of each lecture topic. Your learning materials include the lecturer's PPT presentation and your lecture notes. PPT presentation will be uploaded to the SSDPP intranet at least three days before the lecture. It consists of four multiple-choice test and two essay questions out of the following seven:

#### **Essay topics:**

- 1 How do you explain patterns of change and continuity in Chinese politics over the last few decades since 1949?
- 2 What are the similarities and differences between familial and extra-familial relationships in contemporary China?
- 3 What changes have occurred in family composition and family relations over the last few decades? What has caused these changes?
- 4 Use a case study to discuss how the household registration system has shaped the life chances of a particular group or in a particular social context.
- 5 What are the main sources of social stratification in China today? In what ways does this differ from the Maoist period? In what ways does it remain the same?
- 6 Choose one source of advantage and disadvantage in China today. In what ways does this differ from the Maoist period? In what ways does it remain the same?
- 7 What would be the best ways (policy options) for a developing country like China to maintain its economic development speed and at the same time secure its environment and natural resource supply?

## **Learning resources, prescribed texts and readings**

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In addition to the required and supplementary readings set for each week (see below, at the end of this course outline), the following are recommended:

(The books may not be available in the library, contact the lecturer if you are interested in any of the following books).

### **Edited collections and textbooks**

The following books will be useful throughout this course:

Dutton, Michael, *Streetlife China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Perry, Elizabeth and Mark Selden, *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance* (Routledge, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2010).

Hasmath, Reza and Jennifer Hsu (eds) *China in an Era of Transition: Understanding Contemporary State and Society Actors* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Hsing, You-tien and Ching Kwan Lee, *Reclaiming Chinese Society: The New Social Activism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

Link, Perry, Richard P. Madsen, and Paul G. Pickowicz (eds), *Popular China: Unofficial Culture in a Globalizing Society* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

Stockman, Norman, *Understanding Chinese Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

### **Ethnographies**

We recommend the following ethnographies for rich accounts of everyday life in different parts of China.

Chan, Anita, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2009).

Gillette, Maris Boyd, *Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption among Urban Chinese Muslims* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Jankowiak, William R., *Sex, Death, and Hierarchy in a Chinese City: An Anthropological Account* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

Liu, Xin, *In One's Own Shadow: An Ethnographic Account of the Condition of Post-Reform Rural China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

Yan, Yunxiang, *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village 1949-1999* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Zhang, Li, *In Search of Paradise: Middle-Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis* (Ithaca, Cornell U. Press, 2010).

### **Films, fiction and reportage**

Fictional and documentary films, short stories and novels, and reportage are often a wonderful way of getting a feel for a society. We recommend the following:

## **Reportage**

Chang, Leslie, *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China* (USA: Random House, 2009).

Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao, *Will the Boat Sink the Water? The Struggle of Peasants in 21<sup>st</sup> Century China* (London: Fourth Estate, 2006).

Sang Ye, *China Candid: The People on the People's Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Zha Jianying, *Tide Players: The Movers and Shakers of a Rising China* (New York and London: The New Press, 2011).

Zhang Xinxin and Sang Ye, *Chinese Lives: An Oral History of Contemporary China* (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

## **Fiction**

Ha Jin, *Waiting* (New York: Vintage International, 2000)

Wang Shuo, *Please Don't Call Me Human* (Qian wan bie ba wo dang ren) (Hyperion Books, 2000).

## **Films**

*The Long Bow Trilogy* (DVD)

*To Live* (huozhe) (DVD)

*Yellow Earth* (Huang Tudi) (DVD)

*Blind Shaft* (Mang Jing) (DVD)

*The Story of Qiu Ju* (Qiu Ju Da Guansi) (DVD)

*Together* (He ni zai yiqi) (DVD)

*Not One Less* (Yige dou bu neng shao) (DVD)

## **Journals, magazines and newspapers**

You are advised to read widely and to keep up with the current literature in key journals as they arrive in the library. Journal articles that are available on-line, via UNLOC, are not in Short Loan. The following journals are particularly important:

*The China Quarterly*

*The China Journal*

*Journal of Contemporary China*

*Modern China*

*China Information*

For those of you who read Chinese, the China Academic Journals online database is an extremely useful database of journal articles, available via the BNU library website. If you need help using the database, please contact Darrel Dorrington in the Menzies Library.

## **On-Line resources**

- ❖ <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/whitepaper/home.html> (White papers of the Chinese government)
- ❖ <http://www.chinatoday.com/law/a.htm> (Chinese laws)
- ❖ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm> (Xinhua)
- ❖ <http://english.people.com.cn/> (Peoples Daily)
- ❖ <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/> (China Daily)
- ❖ <http://english.caijing.com.cn/> (Caijing, one of China's leading economic newspapers)
- ❖ <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/china/index.html>
- ❖ <http://www.brookings.edu/cnaps.aspx> (Research at the Brookings Institute)
- ❖ <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/>

If you find that these links do not work, please inform us so that we can update the list.

## SYLLUBUS

### WEEK 1 (5 Sep): Introduction

LECTURE: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND CHINA

#### *Questions for Discussion*

- How much do you know about China?

### WEEK 2 (12 Sep): *To Live*

MOVIE: TO LIVE

Film: *To Live* (Huozhe) (DVD) Instead of a reading, a feature film, *To Live*, by the movie director Zhang Yimou, will be shown before the lecture. The movie portrays a fictional family whose lives are thrown into turmoil by the Chinese civil war of the 1940s and by the revolution and political campaigns that ensue over the following several decades in Mao-era China. The strength of the movie—and the reason it is worth watching in this course—is that it provides a sense of China’s recent history and how this affected several ordinary people.

#### *Questions for Discussion*

- How do you think of people’s lives in the late 1800s and early 1900s?

### WEEK 3 (19 Sep): Chinese culture and customs

LECTURE: CHINESE CULTURE AND CUSTOMS

#### *Questions for Discussion*

- What is the most important festival in your country? How do you compare it with the Chinese Spring Festival?

### WEEK 4 (26 Sept): Traditional Chinese instrumental music

LECTURE: TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC

This lecture is given by Prof. Bu Xiaomei, one of the most well-known Erhu players and professors in China. Ancient Chinese have left a wealth of music instruments and classic tunes. Erhu, Guzheng, Guqin, Xun, Pipa, and other traditional Chinese music instruments may alter your acquired definition of “music”. The great works that have been playing for hundreds or thousands of years may also echo in you.

Instead of “questions for discussion”, this lecture is followed by a **practice session**, which allows you to touch and make sound of the traditional Chinese music instruments.

### WEEK 5 (3 Oct): Public Holiday

## **WEEK 6 (10 Oct): Beliefs and Values**

LECTURE: CHINESE BELIEFS AND VALUES

### ***Questions for Discussion:***

- How do you understand Confucianism? Compare Confucianism with the ethical and philosophical system in your country.

## **WEEK 7 (17 Oct): Chinese politics**

LECTURE: CHINESE POLITICS

### ***Questions for Discussion***

- How do you explain patterns of change and continuity in Chinese politics over the last few decades since 1949?

## **WEEK 8 (24 Oct): Social Institutions**

LECTURE: HOUSEHOLD REGISTRATION, WORK UNITS AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES

### ***Questions for discussion:***

- How has household registration (hukou) shaped the life chances and status of rural citizens and rural-to-urban migrants?
- What are the social consequences of the shift in urban governance from work unit to residential community in contemporary China?

## **WEEK 9 (31 Oct): Education**

LECTURE: EDUCATION IN CHINA

### ***Questions for discussion:***

- What is the education system in your country? Compare the difference between the education system in China and in your country.

## **WEEK 10 (7 Nov): Social stratification and inequalities**

LECTURE: Social stratification and inequalities

### ***Questions for Discussion***

- What are the main sources of social stratification in China today? In what ways does this differ from the Maoist period? In what ways does it remain the same?
- Who or what is 'the middle class'? What is its social significance?

### **WEEK 11 (14 Nov): Field visit to Migrant Workers' Museum**

The museum is situated in Picun, a village in north-western Beijing. Its exhibition halls include displays on the history of migration from the countryside, on women workers, and the children of migrant workers. Most of the exhibits were donated by the workers themselves. The museum also has a small community cinema.

Participants should gather at the main east gate of BNU at 1:00pm. It takes around one hour to Picun by bus. The group will spend about 1.5 hours in the museum and come back to BNU at about 5:00pm.

### **WEEK 12 (21 Nov): Kinship and guanxi**

LECTURE: KINSHIP, LINEAGE AND GUANXI

#### ***Questions for discussion***

- In what ways does the term "patrilineal kinship" capture and fail to capture practices of kinship in today's China and earlier?
- What are the similarities and differences between familial and extra-familial relationships in contemporary China?
- How does the imagination of ideal familial relationships affect the formation of relationships outside of the family?

### **WEEK 13 (28 Nov): *Last Train Home***

*Last Train Home* is a 2009 documentary film directed by Lixin Fan and produced by Daniel Cross and Mila Aung-Thwin of EyeSteelFilm. It won the Best Documentary Feature at 2009 IDFA and has been distributed by Zeitgeist Films in the US. Every spring, China's cities are plunged into chaos as 130 million migrant workers travel back to their home villages for the New Year's holiday. This exodus is the world's largest human migration, an epic spectacle that exposes a nation tragically caught between its rural past and industrial future.

Working over several years in classic cinéma vérité style, director Lixin Fan travelled with one couple who have embarked on these annual treks for almost two decades. Like many of China's rural poor, the Zhangs have left their native village of Huilong in Sichuan province and their newborn daughter to find work in Guangzhou in a garment factory for 16 years and see her only once a year during the Spring Festival. Their daughter Qin, now a restless and rebellious teenager, bitterly resents her parents' absence and longs for her own freedom away from school and her rural hometown, much to the dismay of her parents. She eventually leaves school, against the wishes of her parents, to work in the city. Emotionally

charged and starkly beautiful, Last Train Home examines one fractured family to shed light on the human cost of China's ascendance as an economic superpower.

### **WEEK 14 (5 Dec): Changing family forms**

LECTURE: URBAN AND RURAL FAMILIES

#### ***Questions for Discussion***

- What changes have occurred in family composition and family relations over the last few decades? What has caused these changes?
- What aspects of families have *not* changed over the last few decades? Why not?

### **WEEK15 (12 Dec): Environment and Health**

LECTURE: ENVIRONEMNT AND HEALTH

#### ***Questions for discussion:***

- Please identify and discuss the major environmental problems in China during the last two decades.
- Why environmental problems affect human health? Discuss the major environmental health issues you find out in your everyday life in China.

### **WEEK16 (19 Dec): Chinese martial arts**

LECTURE: CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS

This lecture is given by Prof. Wang Jianhua, one of the most famous martial arts experts in contemporary China. It provides an overview of different styles and schools of Chinese martial arts which have been heavily shaped and influenced by the comprehensive Chinese culture. It also invites you to play!

### **WEEK 17 (26 Dec): Examination**

Time: 2 hours from 13:30 to 15:30

Venue: Teaching Building No.2, Room 115