



ENGAGE. EXPERIENCE. EMBRACE. EDUCATE.

## Study Center in Shanghai, China

<b>Course name:</b>	Issues in Contemporary Chinese Society
<b>Course number:</b>	EAST 3005 SCGC/SOCI 3001 SCGC
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>Semester Credits:</b>	3 semester/4.5 quarter hours
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2017

### **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, 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.

### **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 Prerequisites**

No prerequisites, only curiosity and the desire for learning.

### **Methods of Instruction**

The class will combine lectures, academic readings, class discussions, films and field trips.



### **Assessment and Final Grade**

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

1. Class Participation: Discussion Questions	15%	30 points
2. Group project on Urban Space	30%	60 points
3. Research Proposal	15%	30 points
4. Final Paper	40%	80 points
a. Presentation	15%	30 points
b. Paper	25%	40 points

---

Total	100%	200 points
-------	------	------------

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Attendance and Class Participation (15%)**

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](mailto:wwei@soci.ecnu.edu.cn) by 10pm each Monday, start from Week 3. Missing 2 or more discussion questions out of total 10 would lead to a grade of zero for participation.

#### **Group Project on Urban Space Ethnography (30%)**

For this exercise, you should choose a location in the city – a particular social space and observe it intensively with your group. You should visit the site no less than 3 times throughout the semester and with each visit no shorter than 1.5 hours. Detailed instruction will be provided. Research Proposal for Final Paper (15%)

Develop a research proposal inspired by her/his observation from the group project. Students should first identify a research topic of their choice, and then conduct a literature research on this topic. The paper should include the discussion of at least five scholarly articles not included on this syllabus and can also include references to non-academic sources. It is due on 11/15.

#### **Final Paper (40%)**

Conduct further research on the topic of choice. The paper must demonstrate a “sociological imagination” by linking what you observe in particular urban space to a social issue in today’s China. Highlight important findings and major critiques of your own research.

NO LATE PAPER ACCEPTED

## Weekly Schedule

- Week 1** Orientation Week No class
- Week 2** Introduction: Chinese Society in Transition
- Week 3** Gender, Marriage and Family Sandy To, "Understanding Sheng Nu ("Leftover Women"): the Phenomenon of Late Marriage among Chinese Professional Women", *Symbolic Interaction*, 36:1, 2013.  
Lisa Eklund, "Son Preference Reconfigured? A Qualitative Study of Migration and Social Change in Four Chinese Villages", *The China Quarterly* 224, 2015.
- Week 4** Ethnic Relations  
Ma Rong, "A New Perspective in Guiding Ethnic Relations in the Twenty first Century: 'De-politicization' of Ethnicity in China, *Asian Ethnicity*, 8:3, 2008.  
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** New Class Society  
Deborah Davis and Wang Feng, "Poverty and Wealth in Postsocialist China: An Overview", in Davis and Wang 2009.  
Ching Kwan Lee, "From Inequality to Inequity: Popular Conceptions of Social (In)justice in Beijing", in Davis and Wang 2009.
- Week 6** **Migrant Workers**  
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, 2007.  
Xiong Yihan. "The Broken Ladder: Why Education Provides No Upward Mobility for Migrant Children in China" *The China Quarterly* 221, 2015.
- Week 7** **Internet Culture**  
Joyce Y. M. Nip and King-wa Fu "Challenging Official Propaganda? Public Opinion Leaders on Sina Weibo" *The China Quarterly* 225, 2016.  
Rongbin Han "Defending the Authoritarian Regime Online: China's "Voluntary Fiftycent Army" *The China Quarterly* 224, 2015. Group Project Due and Presentation
- Week 8** **Weeklong Program Fieldtrip**  
No Class.
- Week 9** **Religion**  
Karrie J. Koesel, "The Rise of a Chinese House Church: The Organizational Weapon" *The China Quarterly*, 2013.  
Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, "The Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple: State, Association, and Religion in Southeast China", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 65, 2006.

- Week 10**      **Weeklong Spring Break**  
No Class
- Week 11**      **Individualization**  
Yan Yunxiang “The Good Samaritan’s New Trouble: A Study of the Changing Moral Landscape in Contemporary China.” *Social Anthropology* 17 (1), 2009.  
Mette Halskov Hansen, “Learning Individualism: Hesse, Confucius, and Pep-Rallies in a Chinese Rural High School” *The China Quarterly* 213, 2013. Research Proposal Due
- Week 12**      **Urban Redevelopment**  
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  
Amy Hanser “Street Politics: Street Vendors and Urban Governance in China” *The China Quarterly* 226, 2016.
- Week 13**      **Social Space and Civil Mobilization**  
Zhengxu Wang, Long Sun, Liuqing Xu and Dragan Pavličević . Leadership in China’s Urban Middle Class Protest: The Movement to Protect Homeowners’ Rights in Beijing. *The China Quarterly*, 214, 2013.  
Anthony J. Spires,”Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China’s Grassroots NGOs”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 117, 2011.
- Week 14**      **Sexual Revolution**  
Everett Yuehong Zhang, “China’s Sexual Revolution”, in Kleinman et al. 2010  
Pei Yuxina and Petula Ho Sik Ying, “Gender, self and pleasure: young women’s discourse on masturbation in contemporary Shanghai”, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 11, 2009.
- Week 15**      **Final Paper Due and Class Presentation.**



ENGAGE. EXPERIENCE. EMBRACE. EDUCATE.

### **Readings**

- Davis, Deborah and Wang Feng. *Creating Wealth and Poverty in Postsocialist China*. Stanford University Press.
- Gold, Thomas, Doug Guthrie and David Wank, *Social Connections in China Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Kleinman, Arthur, Yunxiang Yan, Jing Jun, Sing Lee, Everett Zhang, Pan Tianshu, Wu Fei and Guo Jinhua. *Deep China: The Moral Life of the Person*. University of California Press, 2010.
- Osburg, John. *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality among China's New Rich*. Stanford University Press, 2013.

### **Course Instructor**

WEI Wei received his BA in Sociology from Peking University (1996) and his MA and Ph.D. in Sociology from Loyola University Chicago (2003, 2006). Currently he is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Development, East China Normal University, Shanghai. In addition to authoring two Chinese books *Going Public: The Production and Transformation of Queer Spaces in Chengdu, China* (2012) and *Queering Chinese Society: Urban Space, Popular Culture and Social Policy* (2015), he has published in the areas of LGBT identity and communities, feminist movement and Chinese masculinity in both Chinese and English peer-reviewed journals.