



CIEE Global Institute – Shanghai

Course name:	Issues in Chinese Society
Course number:	EAST 3005 SCGC / SOCI 3001 SCGC
Programs offering course:	Shanghai Accelerated Chinese Language, Shanghai Business, Language and Culture, Shanghai China in a Global Context
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3 semester/4.5 quarter hours
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

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	20%
2.	Group project on Urban Space	30%
3.	Research Proposal	10%
4.	Final Paper Presentation	20%
5.	Final Paper	20%
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	Total	100%



Course Requirements

Class Participation (20%)

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 the email address disc_ques@126.com by 10pm each Sunday, starting 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. An essay-type report should be submitted after group presentation in classroom.

Research Proposal for Final Paper (10%)

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.

Final Paper Presentation (20%)

Scheduled in the last class meeting, the presentation should highlight important findings and major critiques of the final paper. Stay within an 8-minutes time frame

Final Paper (20%)

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. After incorporating feedbacks from the instructor, the final paper will be due on the day one week from the last class meeting.

NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Introduction: Chinese Society in Transition

After reviewing the syllabus and discussing course requirements with the students, the instructor will provide a brief introduction of the course, with a focus on the major paradigms developed in the China studies.

No-reading is needed.

Week 2

Gender, Marriage and Family

This lecture looks at the rapid transformation of gender, marriage and family in the Chinese society. Besides the key features of Chinese families, some related issues including one-child policy, left-over women and unbalanced sex ratio will also be discussed.

(1) To 2013, 1-20

(2) Davis 2014, 551-577

Week 3

Ethnic Relations

After introducing key models in ethnic relations from a comparative perspective, the lecture will examine the change of PRC's ethnic policies as well as its impacts.

(1) Rong 2008, 8:199-217

(2) Joniak-Lüthi 2013, 849-871

Week 4

New Class Society

Students will be first introduced major theoretical perspectives on class. The pattern of social stratification, as well as the changing class structure, in contemporary China will be focus of this class.

(1) Davis 2009, 3-19

(2) Lee 2009, 213-231

Week 5

Migrant Workers

The images of rural-to-urban migrant workers serve as a major metaphor of the contemporary China. Some critical issues related to this group will be introduced. The recent policy from the government will also be examined.

(1) Xiaoli 2015, 464-489

(2) Yihan 2015, 161-184

Week 6

Urban Redevelopment

Employing the theoretical perspective of new urban sociology, this class critically examines Chinese urbanization in recent decades driven by the interacted forces between state, market and society.

(1) He 2005, 1-23

(2) Hanser 2016, 363-382

Week 7

Religion

In relation to these key sociological theories on modern religion, the class takes a



look at important features of Chinese religion, as well as how they have been shaped by policies of the state.

- (1) Koesel 2013, 572-589
- (2) Ashiwa 2006, 337-359

Group Project Due and Presentation

Week 8

Internet Culture

In this class, students will be introduced with these features of Chinese Internet culture, with a particular attention to the dynamic interactions between the state and the society.

- (1) Nip 2015, 1006-1025
- (2) Szablewicz 2014, 259-275

Week 9

Individualization

China is known as a collectivism-oriented society. The recent individualization of Chinese society signified an important departure from its long tradition. Some critical issues arising from the process will also be examined.

- (1) Yunxiang 2009, 9-24, 2009
- (2) Hansen 2013, 60-77

Research Proposal Due

Week 10

Social Space and Civil Mobilization

The past 30 years witnessed the expanded social space in the Chinese society, which has contributed to the development of various social activism and civil mobilization. Taking home-owner activism and grassroots feminist movement as the examples, the lecture introduces important features of social movement in today's China.

- (1) Wang 2013, 411-431
- (2) Spires 2011, 1-45

Week 11

Sexual Revolution

This class examines the changing relationship between sex, love and marriage in contemporary China, which arguably led to the rise of Chinese sexual revolution. The comparison between China and the US regarding this topic will also be discussed.

- (1) Zhang 2009, 515-528

Week 12

Final Paper Presentation Due and Final Paper due one week after this day.



Course Materials

Readings

- Ashiwa, Yoshiko and Wank, David L. "The Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple: State, Association, and Religion in Southeast China." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 2006, 65: 337-359.
- Davis, Deborah and Wang Feng. *Creating Wealth and Poverty in Postsocialist China*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Davis, Deborah. "Privatization of marriage in post-socialist China." *Modern China*, 2014, 40: 551-577.
- Davis, Deborah and Feng, Wang. "Poverty and Wealth in Postsocialist China: An Overview," *Davis and Wang* 2009, 3-19.
- Hanser, Amy "Street Politics: Street Vendors and Urban Governance in China." *The China Quarterly* 2016, 226: 363-382.
- Hansen, Mette Halskov. "Learning Individualism: Hesse, Confucius, and Pep-Rallies in a Chinese Rural High School." *The China Quarterly* 2013, 213: 60-77.
- 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* 2005, 27: 1-23.
- Joniak-Lüthi, Agnieszka. "The Han Minzu, Fragmented Identities, and Ethnicity" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 2013, 72: 849-871.
- 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*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Koesel, Karrie J. "The Rise of a Chinese House Church: The Organizational Weapon." *The China Quarterly* 2013, 215 572-589.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. "From Inequality to Inequity: Popular Conceptions of Social (In)justice in Beijing", *Davis and Wang* 2009, 213-231.
- Nip, Joyce Y. M. and Fu, King-wa. "Challenging Official Propaganda? Public Opinion Leaders on Sina Weibo." *The China Quarterly*, 2015, 224: 1006-1025.
- Rong, Ma. "A New Perspective in Guiding Ethnic Relations in the Twenty first Century: 'De politicization' of Ethnicity in China," *Asian Ethnicity*, 2008, 8:199-217.
- Spires, Anthony J. "Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China's Grassroots NGOs." *American Journal of Sociology*, 2011, 117: 1-45.
- Szablewicz, Marcella. "The 'Losers' of China's Internet: Memes as 'Structures of Feeling' for Disillusioned Young Netizens." *China Information*, 2014, 28: 259-275.
- Sandy. "Understanding Sheng Nu ('Leftover Women'):" The Phenomenon of Late Marriage among Chinese Professional Women", *Symbolic Interaction*, 2013, 36:1 20.
- Tian, Xiaoli and Deng, Yunxue. "Organizational Hierarchy, Deprived Masculinity, and Confrontational Practices: Men Doing Women's Jobs in a Global Factory." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 2015 46: 464-489.
- Wang, Zhengxu, et al. "Leadership in China's Urban Middle Class Protest: The Movement to



- Protect Homeowners' Rights in Beijing." *The China Quarterly*, 2013, 214: 411-431.
- Yan, Yunxiang "The Good Samaritan's New Trouble: A Study of the Changing Moral Landscape in Contemporary China." *Social Anthropology*, 2009, 17: 9-24.
- Yihan, Xiong. "The Broken Ladder: Why Education Provides No Upward Mobility for Migrant Children in China." *The China Quarterly* 2015, 221: 161-184.
- Yuxina, Pei, and Ying, Petula Ho Sik. "Gender, self and pleasure: young women's discourse on masturbation in contemporary Shanghai." *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 2009, 11: 515-528.
- Zhang, Everett Yuehong. "China's Sexual Revolution." in Kleinman et al. 2010: 106-142.