



## **CIEE Global Institute - Shanghai**

<b>Course name:</b>	Environmental Conditions and Public Perception in Contemporary China
<b>Course number:</b>	ENVI 3101 SHCN
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Open Campus
<b>Open Campus Track:</b>	Sustainability and Environmental Science
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2020

### **Course Description**

This course examines the current state and recent changes in environmental conditions in China, including pressing issues like over-utilization of natural resources, urban expansion into farmlands, desertification, loss of grasslands, pollution and waste management issues, and cross-border impacts, as well as conservation efforts, and distribution and protection of endangered species. The course also looks at changing public perceptions and awareness of environmental issues, as well as the work of environmental NGOs and individual activists, and the functions of mainstream Chinese media. The course includes a dedicated part on methodologies for sustainability assessment.

### **Learning Objectives**

By completing this course, students will:

- Distinguish the main features of China's natural geography socioeconomic features, and environmental governance, and will be able to measure their impact on sustainability;
- Differentiate between objective indicators and subjective perceptions of sustainable development, critically assess the importance and value of both;
- Evaluate and critique the common sustainability indicators and their application in policy decisions;
- Analyze the interrelated roles that government institutions and officials, the media, NGOs, activists, and ordinary Chinese people play in China's environmental crisis.

### **Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course; however previous experience in the social and environmental sciences is beneficial.

### **Methods of Instruction**



The course will combine lectures with a more participative approach. Presentations and other material will be shown in class to illustrate the different topics and active student participation will be expected at all time and will contribute to their final assessment. The students will be asked to prepare the assigned readings and be actively involved in the discussion in class. At least once during the semester they will be requested to facilitate the discussion via a presentation and this activity will be part of their final assessment.

Students will also be stimulated to share their personal experiences, both in China and abroad, on the various environmental issues discussed in class and they will be asked to help forming a deeper understanding of the subject by comparing their own experience and knowledge with the specific characteristics of the Chinese situation.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Short response assignments	20%
2. Discussion leading:	15%
3. Mid-term exam	10%
4. Research paper:	25%
5. Final exam:	10%
6. Class participation:	20%
TOTAL:	100%

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Short response assignments**

There will be four short response assignments during the course, designed to help you better understand the readings. Each assignment will be a question that required a written response of 500 words.

#### **Discussion leading**

In cooperation with the instructor, you provide a 10 minute presentation at the beginning of the class. Sign-up for all sessions of the course will take place during the first class meeting. Before the class that you sign up to present, you will coordinate the presentation with the instructor.

The presentation should introduce the key topics and themes discussed in the readings assigned for that class.

You will be graded based on the clarity and thoroughness of your analysis of the assigned reading demonstrated in a written plan for the presentation that you have to submit to the instructor no later than midnight the Sunday before the scheduled discussion (1/2 of the grade) and the presentation itself (1/2 of the grade).

#### **Mid-term exam**

The mid-term closed-book written exam will consist of a series of questions to test your grasp of the topics covered during the first half of the course. Choose to answer 3 out of



4 open-ended questions that require you to summarize and appraise key factors and developments in China's environmental conditions and governance.

Succinct, precise, and well-formulated answers of at least 300 words for each question will be expected.

### **Research paper**

You will be asked to prepare a research paper of 3000 words, double spaced, on a relevant environmental issue in China, agreed with the teacher. The paper will need to make use of the concepts and instruments discussed in class and present an original analysis of the subject.

In order to help you organize your workload, you will define with the teacher a timeline that indicates intermediate steps during the construction of your research and that will include opportunities to discuss with the teacher and receive guidance and feedback along the way.

The research paper must contain a clear research question, hypothesis, and conclusion clearly answering the research question. A consistent citation style is required.

### **Final exam**

The final closed-book written exam will consist of a series of questions to test your grasp of the topics covered during the course. Choose to answer 2 out of 4 open-ended questions that require you to analyze concepts covered in class, defend and critique their application in measuring sustainability and China's environmental performance.

Succinct, precise, and well-formulated answers of at least 400 words for each question will be expected.

### **Class Participation**

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course.

Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.



For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; <b>written warning</b>
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 language classes	Automatic <b>course failure</b> , and possible expulsion

### **Weekly Schedule**

Please note this schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.

#### **Week 1:**

Class 1.1 Introduction to the class and to China’s geography  
Introduction to sustainability and the role of environment and geography.

Readings: Pintér et al. 2012, Veeck 2007 (Chapter 2: “China’s Natural Environments”)



**Sign up for discussion leading.**

Class 1.2 Environmental History of China

A history of the environment and its modifications in China.

Readings: Elvin 1993. The environmental policies during Mao era, Shapiro 2001 (Chapter 2: "Deforestation, famine...")

**Assignment Due: Short response 1 due.**

**Week 2:**

Class 2.1 The Condition of Land and Land Cover – Part 1

A review of the state of agricultural land in China and its capacity to fulfill the country's needs. Agricultural land management is juxtaposed to the protection of grasslands and its impact on pastoralist's life

Readings: Smil 1999, Yeh 2005

Class 2.2 The Condition of Land and Land Cover – Part 2

Forest management and wood supply. An analysis of China's forest sector and the challenges to achieving sustainable forest management. This is compared to the issues of desertification, its causes and impacts, in China.

Readings: Demurger et al 2009, Wang and Wu 2005

**Assignment Due: Short response 2 due**

**Week 3:**

Class 3.1 Environmental Governance in China – Part 1

The role of national government. The structure of control over China's environment and the challenges of managing such vast, complex country. Particular attention will be paid to the role of NGOs and participation of citizens in the environmental debate through NGOs and GONGOs.

Readings: Shapiro 2012 (Chapter 3 "State-led environmentalism"), Shapiro 2012 (Chapter 5 "Public participation and...")

Class 3.2 Environmental Governance in China – Part 2



Pressures from civil society: The role of citizens. Analysis of the growth of environmental protests and the role of citizens in shaping environmental policy.

Readings: Johnson 2010

**Mid-term exam at the beginning of session.**

**Week 4:**

Class 4.1 The Evaluation of Sustainability

A review on the inadequacies of GDP to represent progress/wellbeing and an analysis of the peculiarities of sustainability assessment methods.

Readings: Hall and Matthews 2008, Costanza 1997.

Class 4.2 China's Urbanization

A history of the urban growth in China, from its early history to the acceleration over the last decades, with a focus on the recent growth of the ecological cities and other urban-based environmental initiatives.

Readings: Bai *et al.* 2014, White 2002

**Short response 3 due.**

**Week 5:**

Class 5.1 Water resources and management in China

A discussion on the problems of water management in China and various impacts of large hydroelectric projects in China.

Readings: Liu and Speed 2009, Hvistendahl 2008

Class 5.2 China's Energy Policy

A discussion on the various aspects of energy policy in China.

Readings: TBA (a recent energy market analysis report)

**Short response 4 due.**

**Week 6:**

Class 6.1 Air Pollution



A review of the characteristics and causes of the air pollution problem in China.

Readings: Fang et al 2009 & Tilt 2009 (Chapter 4: "The environmental costs of progress")

Class 6.2 Waste production and management

A discussion on the problem of waste management in a fast growing consumer society.

Readings: Zhang et al 2010

**Final exam at the beginning of class.  
Research paper due at noon last day of program.**

### Readings

Xuemei Bai, Peijun Shi and Yansui Liu. "Realizing China's urban dream". *Nature* 509 (2014): 158–160

Costanza et al. "The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital." *Nature* 387 (1997): 253–260

Démurger, Sylvie, Hou Yuanzhao, and Yang Weiyong. "Forest Management Policies and Resource Balance in China An Assessment of the Current Situation." *The Journal of Environment & Development* 18.1 (2009): 17-41.

Elvin, Mark. 1993. "Three thousand years of unsustainable growth: China's environment from archaic times to the present." *East Asian History* 6.

Fang, Ming, Chak K. Chan, and Xiaohong Yao. "Managing air quality in a rapidly developing nation: China." *Atmospheric Environment* 43.1 (2009): 79-86.

Friedmann, John. *China's urban transition*. London, 2005.

Hall, Jon, and Erica Matthews. "The measurement of progress and the role of education." *European Journal of Education* 43.1 (2008): 11-22.

Hvistendahl, Mara. "China's Three Gorges dam: an environmental catastrophe?" *Scientific American* 25 (2008).

Johnson, Thomas. "Environmentalism and NIMBYism in China: promoting a rules-based approach to public participation." *Environmental Politics* 19.3 (2010): 430-448.



Liu, Bin, and Robert Speed. "Water resources management in the People's Republic of China." *Water Resources Development* 25.2 (2009): 193-208.

Pintér, László, et al. "Bellagio STAMP: Principles for sustainability assessment and measurement." *Ecological Indicators* 17 (2012): 20-28.

Shapiro, Judith. 2001. *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China* (Studies in Environment and History).

Shapiro, Judith. 2012. *China's environmental challenges*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Smil, Vaclav. 1999. "China's agricultural land." *The China Quarterly* 158, pp. 414-429.

Tilt, Bryan. *The Struggle for Sustainability in Rural China: Environmental Values and Civil Society*. Columbia University Press, 2010.

Veeck, Gregory, ed. *China's geography: globalization and the dynamics of political, economic, and social change*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Wang, Tao and Wei Wu "Sandy desertification in northern China" In Kristen A. Day *China's environment and the challenge of sustainable development* (2005): 233-247.

White, Rodney. *Building the ecological city*. CRC Press, 2002.

Yeh, Emily T. "Green governmentality and pastoralism in western China: 'Converting pastures to grasslands'." *Nomadic peoples* 9.1-2 (2005): 1-2.

Zhang, Dong Qing, Soon Keat Tan, and Richard M. Gersberg. "Municipal solid waste management in China: Status, problems and challenges." *Journal of Environmental Management* 91.8 (2010): 1623-1633.