Study Center in Shanghai, China

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 2018

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%  
   40 points
2. Group project on Urban Space  
   30%  
   60 points
3. Research Proposal  
   10%  
   20 points
4. Final Paper  
   40%  
   80 points

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**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 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.

**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 (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. Students will present their final paper that is scheduled in the last class.

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

Week 4  Ethnic Relations

Week 5  New Class Society

Week 6  Migrant Workers
Week 7  
**Urban Redevelopment**


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Week 8  
**Cultural Excursions**

No Class

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Week 9  
**Religion**


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Week 10  
**Weeklong Spring Break**

No Class.

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Week 11  
**Internet Culture**


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Week 12  
**Individualization**


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Week 13  
**Social Space and Civil Mobilization**


Week 14  
**Sexual Revolution**

(1) Everett Yuehong Zhang, “China’s Sexual Revolution”, in Kleinman et al. 2010

Week 15  
**Final Paper Due and Class Presentation.**

**Readings**


**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.