

EAST 303: The Great Urban Transformation: Cities in Modern China

WF 10:05-11:25AM, BIRKS 111

Instructor

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Course Overview

Over the past three decades, China has undergone rapid urbanization on a massive scale. What was the role of cities in China before this period? How were cities planned? What can they tell us about Chinese politics and society? What did everyday life in them look like and how has that changed? This course explores the history of Chinese cities from the 1800s to the present day. It considers the changing spaces, practices, and regulations that have come to define urban life in China. We will analyze what constitutes a city or urban space; how such spaces are formed, changed, lived in, and experienced; and the impact of material-technological development and redevelopment.

The course is divided into four sections, each focused on a different historical period. Section one details cities during the late Qing (1800-1911), section two looks at the Republican and Maoist periods (1912-1976), section three considers the changes during the early reform era (1976-2000), and the final section deals with the past two decades (2000-the present).

Outcomes

- Critically reflect on theories of urbanization and how they can be applied to cities in China.
- Gain an understanding of the different ways urbanization has occurred in China depending on time and place.
- Read and analyze academic writing in terms of research questions, methodologies, and forms of argumentation.
- Learn to synthesize complex ideas and comment on or critique the ideas in short written assignments.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation 10%

- Students are expected attend class, have completed the assigned readings beforehand, and be prepared to discuss them with the group.

Think Pieces 10% (1% each x 10)

- A short reflection or analysis of one or multiple readings. Each think piece should be 100-200 words long. This is not a summary of the readings and will serve as the basis of the discussion section of class. Each student must complete think pieces for ten classes in total. Think pieces must be posted on the discussions section of myCourses by 11:00 pm the night before class.

Assignment 1 (10%)

- Respond to one of two questions using citations from course readings. Each response should be 750-

1000 words. Further instruction on the structure and grading of these assignments will be included with the assignments. Assignments are due on September 25.

Assignment 2 and 3 (40% [20% each x 2])

▪ Respond to two of three questions using citations from course readings. Each response should be 750-1000 words. Further instruction on the structure and grading of these assignments will be included with the assignments. Assignments are due on October 18, and November 8.

Final Project (30%)

▪ A 2500-3000 word research paper exploring a theme relating to cities in modern China covered in the course. A more detailed hand-out about the format of the paper will be distributed in class. Due Wednesday, December 11 via email.

Readings

- All readings are posted on myCourses
- Readings are subject to change. Any change will be listed on myCourses.

Late Submissions

10% of the value of an assignment will be subtracted for each day that the work is late, unless permission is obtained from the instructor before the due-date of the work. Under exceptional circumstances, alternative arrangements may be made.

Course Schedule

Section One: Cities in the Late Qing (1800-1911)

Week 1: What is a City?

September 4: Introduction to the Course

- No readings!

September 6: Cities in China and Elsewhere

- Trevor Hogan. 2018. "Twenty First Century Asian Urban Imaginaries and the Longue Duree." In *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity Past and Present*, edited by Tim Bunnell and Daniel P. S. Goh. Berlin: Jovis
- Henri Lefebvre. 1996. "The Right to the City." In *Writings on Cities*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Screening: *Noise* (Wang Wo, dir. 2007).

Week 2: Urban Society in the Late Qing

September 11: The Capital

- Susan Naquin. 2000. "The Imperial World." *Peking: Temples and City Life: 1400-1900*. University of California Press.

September 13: Provincial Cities

- Kristin Stapelton. 2000. "Late Imperial Chengdu, Provincial City." In *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895-1937*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.
- Paolo Santangelo. 1993. "Urban Society in Late Imperial Suzhou." In *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China*, edited by Linda Cooke Johnson. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Week 3: Walls and City Gods in the Late Qing

September 18: The City God

- Angela Zito. 1996. "City Gods and their Magistrates." In *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez. Princeton University Press.
- Vincent Goossaert. 2016. "The Shifting Balance of Power in the City God Temples, Late Qing to 1937." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 43.1: 5-33.

September 20: Transforming the Capital

- Madeleine Yue Dong. 2003. "From Imperial Capital to Republican City." *Republican Beijing: The City and its Histories*. Berkeley: California University Press.

[Section Two: Republican and Maoist Cities \(1912-1976\)](#)

Week 4: Cities in Republican China

September 25: New Urban Spaces in Shanghai and Beijing

- Leo Ou-fan Lee. 1999. "Shanghai Modern: Reflections on Urban Culture in China in the 1930s." *Public Culture*, 11.1: 75-107.
- Shi Mingzheng. 1998. "From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing." *Modern China*, 24.3: 219-254.

September 27: The Southwestern City and the Coming Revolution

- G William Skinner. 2017. "Preface" and "Working out the Market Network as the PLA Approaches: December 13-24." In *Rural China on the Eve of Revolution: Sichuan Fieldnotes, 1949-1950*, edited by Stevan Harrell and William Lively. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Week 5: The Work Unit, Household Registration, and Urban Life in Maoist China

October 2: Urban Transformation under Mao

- Zhu Qian. 2016. "Political Campaigns and Urban Transformation in Maoist China, 1949-1976." *International Development Planning Review*, 38.2: 113-133.

October 4: Changing City Spaces

- Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden. 1997. "The Construction of Spatial Hierarchies: China's Hukou and Danwei Systems." In *New Perspectives on State Socialism in China*, edited by Julian Chang, Timothy Cheek and Tony Saich. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- David Bray. 2005. "From the Government of Space to the Spatialization of Government: The Emergence of Revolutionary Spatial Practice." In *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform*. Stanford University Press.

Week 6: Cities and the Cultural Revolution

October 9: Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside

- Jeremy Brown. 2012. "Purifying the city: the deportation of political outcasts during the Cultural Revolution" and "Neither Urban nor Rural: In-Between Spaces in the 1960s and 1970s." In *City versus Countryside in Mao's China: Negotiating the Divide*. Cambridge University Press.

October 11: Urban Development during the Cultural Revolution

- Zhu Qian. 2014. "China's pre-reform urban transformation: the case of Hangzhou during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)." *International Development Planning Review*, 36.2: 181-203.

Section Three: Cities in the era of Reform and Opening Up (1976-2000)

Week 7: The Post-Mao City

October 16: Dismantling the Work Unit

- Deborah S. Davis. 1995. "Introduction: Urban China." In *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China*, edited by Deborah S. Davis, Richard Kraus, Barry Naughton, and Elizabeth J. Perry. Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press.
- Piper Rae Gaubatz. 1995. "Urban Transformation in Post-Mao China: Impacts of the Reform Era on China's Urban Form." In *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China*, edited by Deborah S. Davis, Richard Kraus, Barry Naughton, and Elizabeth J. Perry. Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press.

October 18: Urban Consumption

- Hanglong Lu. 2000. "To be Relatively Comfortable in an Egalitarian Society." In *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*, edited by Deborah S. Davis. University of California Press.
- Amy Hanser. 2005. "The Gendered Rice Bowl: The Sexual Politics of Service Work in Urban China," *Gender & Society*, 1.5: 581-600.

Week 8: Rural-Urban Migration

October 23: Rural Migrants in Urban Villages

- Helen Siu. 2007. "Grounding Displacement: Uncivil Urban Spaces in Postreform South China." *American Ethnologist*, 34.2: 329-350.
- Huang Shu-min. 1998. "Village Change in the 1990s." In *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village Through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader*. Waveland Press Inc.

October 25: Writing the Migrant Experience

- Sections of Sheng Keyi. 2016. *Northern Girls: Life Goes On*. Penguin Books China.

Week 9: Leisure and Popular Culture

October 30: Television

- Junhao Hong, Yanmei Lu, and William Zou. 2009. "CCTV in the Reform Years: A New Model for China's Television?" In *TV China*, edited by Ying Zhu and Chris Berry. Indiana University Press.
- Lisa Rofel. 2007. "Yearnings: televisual love and melodramatic politics." In *Desiring China: experiments in neoliberalism, sexuality, and public culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.

November 1: Discos and Dance Halls

- James Farrer. 2000. "Dancing through the market Transition: Disco and Dance Hall Sociability in Shanghai." In *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*, edited by Deborah S. Davis. University of California Press.

Section Four: Infrastructure and Development in Contemporary China (2000-The Present)

Week 10: Parks and Airports

November 6: Parks

- Judith Farquhar and Qicheng Zhang. 2005. "Biopolitical Beijing: Pleasure, Sovereignty, and Self-Cultivation in China's Capital." *Cultural Anthropology*, 20.3: 303-327.
- Claudia Huang. 2016. ""Dancing grannies" in the modern city: consumption and group formation in

urban China." *Asian Anthropology*, 15.3: 1-17.

- Screening: *People's Park* (Libbie D. Cohn and J. P. Sniadecki, dirs. 2012).

November 8: Airports

- Marc Augé. 2008. "From Places to Non-Places." In *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso.
- Max Hirsh. 2017. "Simulating Global Mobility at Shenzhen 'International' Airport." *Learning from Shenzhen: China's Post-Mao Experiment from Special Zone to Model City*, edited by Mary Ann O'Donnell, Winnie Wong, and Jonathan Bach. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Week 11: Redevelopment Plans and Urban Villages

November 13: The Changing Faces of Migrant Workers

- C. Cindy Fan and Chen Chen. 2014. "The New-Generation Migrant Workers in China." In *Rural Migrants in Urban China: Enclaves and Transient Urbanism*, edited by Wu Fulong, Fangzhu Zhang, and Chris Webster. New York: Routledge.
- David Da Wei Wang. 2016. "Migrant City and Migrant Villages." In *Urban Villages in the New China: Case of Shenzhen*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

November 15: Redevelopment

- Samuel Y Liang. 2014. "Rebuilding Political Centers." In *Remaking China's Great Cities: Space and Culture in Urban Housing, Renewal, and Expansion*. Routledge.
- Wu Fulong. 2018. "Planning Centrality, Market Instruments: Governing Chinese Urban Transformation under State Entrepreneurialism." *Urban Studies*, 55.7: 1383-1399.

Week 12: Rural Urbanization

November 20: Rural Urbanization

- Xuefei Ren. 2017. "A Genealogy of Redevelopment in Chinese Cities." *Urbanization and Urban Governance in China Issues, Challenges, and Development*, edited by Lin Ye. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Neferti X.M. Tadiar. 2016. "City Everywhere." *Theory, Culture & Society* 33.7-8: 57-83.
- Tan Chee-Beng and Yuling Ding. 2008. "Rural Urbanization and Urban Transformation in Quanzhou, Fujian." *Anthropologica*. 50.2: 215-227.

November 22: **NO CLASS**, Instructor attending annual meeting of the American Anthropology Association.

Week 13: Chinese Cities and the World

November 27: Environment and Sustainability

- Lisa Hoffman. 2011. "Urban Modeling and Contemporary Technologies of City-Building in China: The Production of Regimes of Green Urbanism." In *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, edited by Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Federico Caprotti, Cecilia Springer, and Nichola Harmer. 2015. "'Eco' for Whom? Envisioning Eco-Urbanism in the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, China." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39.3: 495-517.

November 29: Concluding Thoughts

- Saskia Sassen. 2016. "The Global City: Enabling Economic Intermediation and Bearing its Costs." *City & Community*. 15.2: 97-108.
- Tom Looser. 2018. "21st Century City form in Asia: The Private City." In *The Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and the City*, edited by Setha Law. Routledge.

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