

Contemporary Chinese Society

Sociology 225, Fall 2009

Time: 2:30-3:45pm, Tuesday/Thursday

Location: Microbial Sciences 1420

Instructor: Professor Sida Liu

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Office Hours: 11:00am-12:00pm, Tuesday/Thursday

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a basic historical, social, cultural, and political “literacy” of contemporary China, defined loosely as Chinese society since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. It is listed in the sociology catalog, but the nature and orientation of the course are interdisciplinary, incorporating readings in history, sociology, political science, anthropology, and law. The aim is to demystify China, to make it accessible to you, and to give you the basic tools and motivation to pursue further engagement with China – be it through language study, travel, a higher-level class on China, or any other form.

The course is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the main institutions of traditional Chinese society and investigates how these institutions have been changed in the revolutions and upheavals of the 20th century, particularly under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. The second part focuses on the post-1978 reform period and discusses the rapid social changes in various aspects of contemporary Chinese society, including the family, the political system, the economy, the legal system, the urban/rural divide, and international relations.

REQUIREMENTS

The course is designed as a combination of lectures and seminars, and therefore both careful reading and active class participation are important. The instructor reserves the rights to take class attendance randomly and to call individual names for answering questions concerning the readings or the lecture. Please communicate with me if you become ill or emergencies arise so that I will be aware of your circumstances. Reading and class attendance will account for 20% of the final grade.

An in-class mid-term exam is scheduled on October 20 (Tuesday). Out of a concern for fairness to all students, there will be no make-up exams except in the case of documented extreme illness. Please mark your calendar now with the exam time so that you can ensure your attendance. If you cannot attend, you should not take the course this semester. The mid-term will account for 40% of the final grade.

The final exam is a take-home exam. You are encouraged to use course readings and additional reference materials from newspapers and the internet when answering the exam questions. Four exam questions will be given on December 10 (Thursday), and every student is required to choose two of the four questions and write two 5-page (double-spaced) essays to answer them. The final essays are due by email to sidaliu@ssc.wisc.edu by 5:00pm on December 20 (Sunday). The final exam accounts for 40% of the final grade.

READINGS

Three textbooks are used in this course and are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. You are required to get them if you take this course. All the other readings are available in electronic format at Learn@UW. After logging in to the course website, please click on the “Content” button at the upper-left corner of the webpage. All the readings are in PDF format under the “readings” folder.

Fei, Xiaotong. 1992. *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*, trans. G. G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (2nd edition). New York: W.W. Norton.

Chan, Anita, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger. 2009. *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization* (3rd Edition). Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

The three textbooks are complementary and they represent three distinct perspectives for understanding Chinese society. *From the Soil* is a classic book written by Fei Xiaotong, arguably the most distinguished Chinese sociologist in the 20th century, who offers a systematic theory of the organizing principles of traditional Chinese society in this book. *Governing China* is a standard textbook that introduces the macro-level changes in the governance of Chinese society since the late 19th century, focusing on changes in the central leadership and the bureaucracy. In comparison, *Chen Village*, an ethnographic study on a single village in south China, provides a micro-level history of social change in China from the 1960s to the present.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Course Introduction

September 3 (Thursday)

Course introduction – no reading.

Week 2: Introducing China

September 8 (Tuesday)

Naughton, Barry. 2007. “The Geographical Setting” (Chapter 1), pp. 17-32 in *The Chinese Economy: Transition and Growth*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lieberthal, “The Legacies of Imperial China” (Chapter 1), pp. 5-26.

September 10 (Thursday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “Chen Village and Its Leaders” (Chapter 1), pp. 13-40.

Week 3: Foundations of Chinese Society

September 15 (Tuesday)

Fei, Chapters 1-7, pp. 37-93.

September 17 (Thursday)

Fei, Chapters 8-14, pp. 94-140.

Week 4: The Rise of Communism

September 22 (Tuesday)

Lieberthal, “The Republican Era” and “The Maoist Era” (Chapters 2 and 4), pp. 27-56, 84-122.

**In-Class Film: *China: A Century of Revolution* (Disc Two, Part I, “Catch the Stars and Moon”).

September 24 (Thursday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “The Big Four Cleanups” and “Studying Chairman Mao” (Chapters 2-3), pp. 41-102.

Week 5: The Cultural Revolution

September 29 (Tuesday)

Walder, Andrew G. 2002. “Red Guard Factionalism: Social Interpretations Reconsidered.”

Journal of Asian Studies 61: 437-471.

**In-Class Film: *China: A Century of Revolution* (Disc Two, Part II, “It’s Right to Rebel!”).

October 1 (Thursday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “The Cultural Revolution” and “The Cleansing of the Class Ranks” (Chapters 4-5), pp. 103-168.

Week 6: Reform and Opening Up

October 6 (Tuesday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “Plunging into a New Decade” (Chapter 8), pp. 213-235.

Lieberthal, “The Reform Era” (Chapter 5), pp. 123-148. (Note: only read until p. 148)

October 8 (Thursday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “The New Era” and “The Midas Touch” (Chapters 10-11), pp. 267-308.

Week 7: The 1989 Tiananmen Student Movement

October 13 (Tuesday)

Zhao, Dingxin. 2001. “A Brief History of the 1989 Movement” (Chapter 6), pp. 145-207 in *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**In-Class Film: *China: A Century of Revolution* (Disc Three, Part II, “The New Generation”).

October 15 (Thursday)

Zhao, Dingxin. 2001. “State Legitimacy, State Behaviors, and Movement Development” and “Ecology-Based Mobilization and Movement Dynamics” (Chapters 7-8), pp. 209-266 in *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 8: Mid-Term Exam

October 20 (Tuesday) – MIDTERM EXAM

In-class midterm exam – no reading.

October 22 (Thursday)

**In-Class Film: *To Live*

Week 9: Family and Romance

October 27 (Tuesday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “The Great Betrothal Dispute” (Chapter 7), pp. 186-212.

Davis, Deborah. 1993. “Urban Households: Supplicants to a Socialist State” (Chapter 3), pp. 50-76 in *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, eds. D. Davis and S. Harrell. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

October 29 (Thursday)

Farrer, James, and Sun Zhongxin. 2003. “Extramarital Love in Shanghai.” *China Journal* 50: 1-36.

Week 10: The Political System

November 3 (Tuesday)

Lieberthal, “The Organization of Political Power and Its Consequences: The View from the Outside” (Chapter 6), pp. 171-205.

November 5 (Thursday)

Lieberthal, “The Organization of Political Power and Its Consequences: The View from the Inside” (Chapter 7), pp. 206-242.

Week 11: The “Socialist Market Economy”

November 10 (Tuesday)

Gallagher, Mary E. 2002. “Reform and Openness: Why China’s Economic Reforms Have Delayed Democracy.” *World Politics* 54: 338-372.

November 12 (Thursday)

Tsai, Kellee S. 2000. “Banquet Banking: Gender and Rotating Savings and Credit Associations in South China.” *China Quarterly* 161: 142-170.

Week 12: The Rural Dilemma

November 17 (Tuesday)

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, “Globalization and Transformation” and “Lifestyle of a Middle Class Community” (Chapters 13-14), pp. 330-375.

November 19 (Thursday)

Michelson, Ethan. 2007. “Climbing the Dispute Pagoda: Grievances and Appeals to the Official Justice System in Rural China.” *American Sociological Review* 72: 459-85.

Week 13: The Legal Reform

November 24 (Tuesday)

Lubman, Stanley. 2000. “Bird in a Cage: Chinese Legal Reform After Twenty Years.” *Northwestern Journal of International Law & Business* 20: 383-423.

November 26 (Thursday) – THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

Thanksgiving holiday – no reading.

Week 14: Migration and Urbanization

December 1 (Tuesday)

Zhang, Li. 2001. "The Floating Population as Subjects" and "Commercial Culture, Social Networks, and Migration Passages" (Chapters 1-2), pp. 23-68 in *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Chan, Madsen, and Unger, "Outsiders" (Chapter 15), pp. 376-393.

December 3 (Thursday)

Zhang, Yue. 2008. "Steering Towards Growth: Symbolic Urban Preservation in Beijing, 1990-2005." *Town Planning Review* 79: 187-208.

Week 15: China in the Global Society

December 8 (Tuesday)

Lampton, David M. 2008. "Money" (Chapter 3), pp. 78-116 in *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

December 10 (Thursday)

Shirk, Susan L. 2007. "The Echo Chamber of Nationalism: Media and the Internet" (Chapter 4), pp. 79-104 in *China: Fragile Superpower*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 16: Course Review

December 15 (Tuesday)

Review for the final exam – no reading.