

GGR343H1F: Changing Geography of China

May-June 2014

Meeting time: Mondays and Wednesdays 12-2
Meeting place: SS1085

Note: This syllabus may change to better accommodate students' learning needs with the agreement of a simple majority of the class.

Instructor: Jessica Wilczak
Office hours: Mondays 3-4 in SSH 5038 or by appointment
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1. Course description

China has become a hot topic in recent years: its cities have become famous for their hyper-modern architectural wonders, and the nation is poised to overtake the United States as the world's largest economy. At the same time, environmentalists criticize the high costs of China's growth, evident in the air pollution that plagues China's cities and the severe water shortages in the north of the country. What is driving China's current growth? What are some of the problems associated with China's developmental successes? And as good geographers we should also ask, what are some of the key spatial changes connected to this boom?

This course explores patterns of socio-spatial change and continuity in China since 1949. By the end of this course you will have a good grasp of the historical factors driving current trends in agriculture, industry, urbanization, environmental pollution, and population dynamics, as well as their geographic unevenness. One of the overall aims is to enable you to unpack popular narratives of "rising China" circulating both inside and outside of China.

In order to get to this point, this course will require you to:

1. Memorize important place names and geographical features of China.
2. Identify significant events and political figures in 20th century Chinese history.
3. Evaluate different sources of information about China.
4. Apply key concepts in human geography.
5. Build views based on evidence and support them in written form.

This is a third-year course, and you will be expected to perform at an upper year level by demonstrating critical thinking and independent study skills. You are not required to have prior knowledge of China or Chinese, but should have taken at least one geography (or related social science) course.

2. Ground rules

* **Electronic devices:** All cellphones must be set on silent during class. If you wish to record any part of the class please get permission from me first.

* **Email etiquette:** I will respond to emails within two working days. I will generally not respond to emails on weekends or after regular work hours (9 am to 5 pm). If your question requires a long and complex response, it's probably best to speak with me after class or during office hours.

* **Late assignments:** Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. Ten minutes after class starts (i.e. after 12:10), the assignment will be considered late. I will deduct 3% per day for late assignments (including 3% on Saturday and 3% on Sunday) unless you provide a doctor's note or have received an extension from me beforehand. You can submit late assignments **until 5:00 pm** in the box outside the Geography Department office on the fifth floor of Sidney Smith Hall. At 5:00 pm the office closes and any assignments in the box are date stamped. Keep in mind that if you submit it after class on the day it is due, it will be still be considered one day late. I will not accept assignments more than one week after the due date unless you have obtained prior permission from me in the case of documented illness or other extenuating circumstances (see next point).

* **Extensions and missed tests:** Extensions on assignments will be granted sparingly in the case of illness or other emergencies. For illness, you must have a health care professional fill out the official University of Toronto medical certificate. Please consult your College Registrar if you are having difficulties during the term that prevent you from completing your course work. If you miss the midterm test due to illness or other emergency, email me as soon as possible, no later than one week from the date of the test.

3. Course materials

* **Readings:** All readings are available through Robarts Library. Citation information for course readings is provided in the syllabus. I will also provide links to the readings on Blackboard or pdf files where possible. If a link is broken, you must search for the reading on the library website. You are responsible for making sure you can access all readings, and you are expected to read the assigned reading before each class. **These readings will help you understand the material I cover in lectures, and should be considered fair game for the midterm test and final exam.**

* **Blackboard:** Make sure to check the Blackboard site frequently. I will post course announcements on the Blackboard home page for the course. Each week under the "Classes" heading I will post: (1) the lecture slides; (2) the readings for the class; and (3) some reading questions to help highlight important content.

4. Breakdown of course themes

This is a third-year intensive summer course taught over six weeks. In this brief (only eleven classes!) time we will cover the following topics:

Class 1 | May 12 | Reading China: course introduction

- **Latham, A.** (2001). China in the contemporary American geopolitical imagination. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 28(3), 138-145.
- **Mann, J.** (1999). Framing China. *Media Studies Journal*, Winter: 102-107.
- **Standen, N.** (2013). Introduction: the creation of history in China. In N. Standen (ed.) *Demystifying China: New Understandings of Chinese History* (1-12). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- **Video:** *They Chose China*, https://www.nfb.ca/film/they_chose_china (excerpts)
- Syllabus
- Maps

Class 2 | May 14 | China's regional diversity

- **Blum, S.** (2000). China's many faces: ethnic, cultural, and religious pluralism. In T. Weston and L. Jensen (Eds.), *China Beyond the Headlines* (69-95). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- **Veeck, G. et al.** (2011). China's natural environments. In G. Veeck et al. (Eds.), *China's Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic, and Social Change* 2nd Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- **Video:** *Taste of China*, Episode 1, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYjc0ziF3cw> (excerpts)

***** Monday May 19 is a holiday *****

Class 3 | May 21 | State spaces: historical and political foundations

- **Naughton, B.** (2007). The socialist era, 1949-1978: Big Push industrialization and policy instability. In Naughton, B., *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (55-84). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- **Video:** *24 City* (excerpts)

Class 4 | May 26 | Rural spaces: from revolution to reform * ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE *

- **Gao, M.B.** (1999). Rural education. In *Gao Village: Rural Life in Modern China* (92-121) Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- **Unger, J.** (2002). Disbanding collective agriculture. In *The Transformation of Rural China* (95-118). Armonk: ME Sharpe.
- **Video:** *Red Flag Canal* (excerpts)

Class 5 | May 28 | Urban spaces: from producers to consumers

- **Hsing, Y.T.** (2010). Land and urban politics. In *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China* (1-19). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

and

- **Bray, D.** (2005). *Danwei* space. In *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform* (123-156). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

or

- **Pow, C.P.** (2009). Urban reform, the new middle class and the emergence of gated communities in Shanghai. In *Gated Communities in China: Class, Privilege and the Moral Politics of the Good Life* (34-52). London & New York: Routledge.

Class 6 | June 2 | * MIDTERM TEST *

- **Guest lecture:** Chao Wang

Class 7 | June 4 | Migration, population regulation, and the implications for China's youth

- **Chan, K.W.** (2009). The Chinese *hukou* system at 50, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 50(2), 197-221.
- **Pratten, N.** (2012, October 7) China's 'left behind children': it's not what you think. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/chinas-left-behind-children-its-not-what-you-think-8197950.html>.
- **Video:** *Last Train Home* (excerpts)

Class 8 | June 9 | Spaces of protest

- **Pun, N. and Chan, J.** (2013). The spatial politics of labor in China: life, labor, and a new generation of migrant workers. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 112(1): 179-190.
- **Tang, L.** (2013). The politics of flies: mocking news in Chinese cyberspace. *Chinese Journal of Communication* 6(4): 482-496.
- **Wasserstrom, J.** (2009). Middle class mobilization. *Journal of Democracy*, 20(2): 29-32.
- **Video** of Pun Ngai discussing SACOM: <http://london.indymedia.org/videos/10782>
- **Video:** *Manufactured Landscapes* (excerpts)

Class 9 | June 11 | China's changing food systems

- **Schneider, M.** (2011). *Feeding China's Pigs: Implications for the Environment, China's Smallholder Farmers, and Food Security*. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: <http://www.iatp.org/documents/feeding-china%E2%80%99s-pigs-implications-for-the-environment-china%E2%80%99s-smallholder-farmers-and-food>.
- **Zhang, Q.F. and Donaldson, J.** (2008). The rise of agrarian capitalism with Chinese characteristics: agricultural modernization, agribusiness and collective land rights. *The China Journal*, 60: 25-47.
- **Video:** *What's for Dinner?* (excerpts)

Class 10 | June 16 | Environmental problems... and solutions?

- **May, S.** (2008). Ecological citizenship and a plan for sustainable development: lessons from Huangbaiyu. *City*, 12(2): 237-244.
- **Ren, X.** (2012). "Green" as spectacle in China. *Journal of International Affairs*, (65)2: 19-30.
- **Video:** *Beijing Besieged by Waste* (excerpts)

Class 11 | June 18 | Today's "geopolitical imaginaries" * ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE *

- http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com/2010_08_01_archive.html (blog of Deborah Brautigam)
- **Sautman, B. and Yan, H.** (2007). Friends and interests: China's distinctive links with Africa. *African Studies Review*, 50(3): 75-114.
- **Video:** *When China Met Africa* (excerpts)

5. Assessment and deadlines

Participation	See below	5%
Assignment 1	May 26	15%
Midterm test	June 2	15%
Assignment 2	June 18	30%
Final exam	TBA	35%

*** Participation:** The participation grade will be awarded based on **five in-class responses**. The in-class responses will be simple questions based on the readings and class material for that day. They will be graded on a pass/ fail basis (pass = 1%, fail = 0%). If you miss the class for legitimate reasons, you have the option to submit a one-page reading response to the readings for that class in lieu of an in-class response. All such responses must be submitted no later than one week after the missed class.

*** Midterm test (75 minutes):** The midterm will cover all of the material up to and including the class on June 2. It will involve multiple choice and short written responses. I will also provide you with a blank map of China and a list of provinces and geographical features. You will be asked to label the map.

*** Assignment 1 (no more than 750 words):** The first assignment will require you to read the academic article from the first class and analyze a current event involving China during 2010-2014. More details about the assignment will be provided in class. Assignments are due as hard copies **at the beginning of class** on May 26. After the first ten minutes of class (i.e. after 12:10), the assignments will be considered late.

*** Assignment 2 (no more than 1500 words):** The second assignment will be a short essay that builds on the research you carry out in Assignment 1. More details about the assignment will be provided in class. The final version of the essay is due **at the beginning of class** on June 18. After the first ten minutes of class (i.e. after 12:10), the essay will be considered late.

* **Final exam (3 hours):** The final exam will cover all the material covered in the course up to and including the class on June 18. It will involve short and long written responses. I will provide study tips closer to the final date.

6. How to succeed in the course

The first part of the semester can be intense because it is intended to build up (quickly!) a foundational knowledge of China's geography, history, and politics. You will probably see a lot of new names and terms. Don't be intimidated—look these up online, and actively develop your “China vocabulary.”

There are a lot of readings to do in a short time. I will debrief you in class about the readings and provide you with a set of reading questions each week to help you focus on important content. Use these questions—they are intended to make the readings less work for you, not more!

Finally, please visit me during office/ discussion hours or make an appointment as soon as you are having problems (not the night before the exam).

7. Support and accommodation

* **Accessibility:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or the course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

* **English language support:** If English is your second (or third, or fourth!) language and you need some help developing your English language skills, please visit the University's English Language Learning site for a great list of the resources available: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

* **Writing and research:** Visit the Writing at the U of T website for a list of helpful resources: www.writing.utoronto.ca. You can also consult your College Registrar's Office for information on writing skills labs and writing courses.

* **Mental health:** If you have mental health concerns, you are not alone! Over half of the undergraduates in a recent University of Alberta student survey reported feeling extreme anxiety or hopelessness. Please contact Counseling and Psychological Services for help: www.caps.utoronto.ca.

8. Academic integrity

While I encourage you to discuss the class topics and assignments with others, I expect that the essays you submit are your own work. This includes learning how to properly cite and summarize information from other sources. For help with this, see the very useful document, “How not to plagiarize”: www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offences at the University of Toronto, and I expect you to be familiar with and abide by the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

Plagiarism is quoting or paraphrasing the work of another author (including the work of fellow students) without proper use of citations (and quotations marks when using an author's words). You also should not be submitting any academic work for which you have previously obtained (or are currently seeking) credit without first discussing this with me.