GGR343 The Changing Geography of China

Time: Winter 2018, Thursday 4-7 pm  
Instructor: Chao Wang  
Office: Sidney Smith 5004  
Office Hour: TBA  
Email: icschao.wang@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to socio-spatial change and continuity in China. It aims to provide concepts from human geography to examine a wide range of key spatial patterns (regional divide, rural-urban divide, socio-spatial divide) and processes (industrialization, urbanization, globalization) that have shaped China’s human landscapes since 1949. After exploring the basic physical and human geographical contexts of China, the course will focus on different aspects of China’s on-going development trajectories that are closely in relation to major geographical issues, including geographical unevenness, industrial and agricultural development, cultural landscape, urban governance, migration, and environment. This course adopts both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom up’ approach to understand not only the forces behind the changing landscapes but also how people react to, adapt to, and sometimes struggle with the changes.

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

1. Introduce important aspects of human geography in China.
2. Introduce key concepts and debates from geography for an understanding of China’s socio-spatial transformation.
3. Students will be able to identify and understand major geographical issues in China since 1949.
4. Students will explore and be able to understand the development trajectories shaping China’s urban and rural areas.
5. Students will enhance their critical thinking and writing skills.

Course Evaluation and Deadlines

In-class writing exercises 5%

Writing assignment:
- Essay #1 20% March 1 (750-1000 words)
- Essay #2 25% March 29 (1000-1500 words)

Mid-term 20% February 15 (Room – to be announced)
Final Exam 30% TBA

Course Materials

All required course readings, unless otherwise noted, are available on the Blackboard course page through the University of Toronto Libraries.

The Blackboard course page is available on the Blackboard site: http://portal.utoronto.ca/.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

- Coming to the class and completing the readings are key for your success in this course. The lectures for this course will be designed to link up with the required readings. For the writing assignments, you will need to be engaging with ideas from the lectures. I suggest you do an initial review of the readings, focusing on core arguments and context, each week before the class and revisit them after the class.
- You do not need to grasp every single detail of the course material. What I encourage is to make sense how the main idea is presented and how different approaches are used by different authors to frame their questions and understandings. I also encourage you to compare and make connections between the readings in order to develop your own critical understanding of specific topic.
- “Recommended readings” are NOT REQUIRED. They are supplementary to the required readings, in most cases selected because they provide an alternative perspective. I encourage you to use them to supplement the assigned readings and lectures. You may find them useful based on your interests in the
topic or need for further insights for your assignments.

I reserve the right to adjust the following course schedule in order to better meet the needs of the class. I will notify you via Blackboard of any revisions.

Week 1: January 4  Introduction

Week 2: January 11  Physical landscape, Regions, and Frontiers

Recommended:

Week 3: January 18  Locating China’s Development in the Global Political Economy

Recommended:
Harvey, D. & Paik, N. (2017) “How capital operates and where the world and China are going: a conversation between David Harvey and Paik Nak-chung,” Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, 18:2, pp. 251-268

Week 4: January 25  Regional Disparity

Recommended:

Week 5: February 1  Rural-Urban Divide I: Socialist Industrialization and Its legacies

Recommended:

**Week 6:** February 8  Rural-Urban Divide II: Institutions and Development Pathway

Recommended:

**Week 7:** February 15  *Midterm exam  >> See Blackboard for room assignment.

**Week 8:** March 1  Experiencing Urbanization
*Assignment 1 due at the beginning of the class*

Recommended:

**Week 9:** March 8  Seeking Urbanity
Oakes, T. (2016) “Villagizing the city: turning rural ethnic heritage into urban modernity in southwest

Recommended:

**Week 10: March 15  Space of Rurality**

Recommended:

**Week 11: March 22  Contesting space**

Recommended:

**Week 12: March 29  Greening China?**
*Assignment 2 due at the beginning of the class*

**Wrap up and Introduction to the Final Exam**
Guidelines

Course Evaluation

(1) In-class writing exercises (5%)
There will be six short in-class writing exercises. The in-class writing exercises will be simple questions based on the readings and class material for that day. Evaluation will be based on both the number and quality of the writing exercises you submit. Each writing exercise is worth 1% of the final course grade. I will choose the top five (out of six) of the responses you submit for your final mark of this part. If you miss the class for legitimate reasons (please refer to “Extensions and missed tests”), you have the option to submit a one-page reading response to the readings for that class in lieu of an in-class writing exercise. All such writing exercises must be submitted no later than one week after the missed class.

(2) Tests (50%)
● Midterm test (2 hours, room to be announced): A midterm test will be given during the period of class in Week 7 (Feb 15). It will be a combination of map questions, short answer questions and one long answer question. The test will also cover course concepts discussed in the first six weeks. This test will be worth 20% of the course grade.

● Final exam (3 hours): The final exam will include long and short answer questions that cover the whole term. I will provide study tips closer to the final date. The exam will be worth 30% of the course grade.

(3) Assignments (45%)
The assignments required in this course include two review papers. They should involve little if any library research. The goals of the assignments are to encourage you to do a close reading of course readings and related academic sources, to present a thoughtful synthesis and critical analysis of the ideas presented, and to strengthen your academic writing.

● Assignment 1 (20%, 750-1000 words): This assignment requires a short response based on course readings related to themes covered during Week 2 to Week 6. The paper is due at the beginning of class on March 1. After 4:20 pm, the essay will be considered late.

● Assignment 2 (25%, 1000-1500 words): This assignment requires an essay based on the readings from the Week 8 to Week 11. The essay is due at the beginning of class on March 29. After 4:20 pm, the essay will be considered late.

More details about the assignments (1 & 2) will be included in the assignment instructions to be circulated later in the term. They also will be explained in class.
**Assignment Submission and Late Penalty:**
Both print and electronic submissions are required, with time of submission based on receipt of print version, and electronic to follow within one day. The printed version of the essay is due at the beginning of class. Anything handed in after the 4:20 pm (Thursday, class day) deadline will be considered one day late. There will be a late-penalty of 5% for each day late (including weekends).

The electronic versions of your assignments should be submitted to Turnitin.com no later than 5 pm on the day after you submit the hard copy. For example, if you submit your paper on time, by Thursday 5 pm, you should post your electronic version by Friday 5 pm. The biggest risk here is that you will forget to follow through on the electronic submission. To minimize this risk, try to upload the assignment as you are printing out your final version and confirm you receive your electronic receipt via email. Remember also that the paper you submit electronically to turnitin.com must be the same version you hand in to me (I check for this).

**Email Policy**
Email correspondence should be carried out in a professional and courteous manner. Please use your UofT email account for correspondences and limit email content to very short questions. Please conduct as much course business as possible in-person after class or during office hours. You are encouraged to be in contact with each other to discuss the course, assignments, and “nuts and bolts” questions. I will respond to emails within two working days.

**Accessibility Services**
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 course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as

**Electronic Devices:**
All cell phones and other communications devices must be set on silent during class. Do not answer your phone or text message during class. If you use a laptop for taking notes, please do so in a way that does not disturb other students or distract the instructor (i.e., quiet on the keyboard, do not use computer for non-class related activities, turn off the internet function). No photographs or video recordings are permitted in lectures under any circumstances.

**Extensions and Missed tests:**
Extensions on assignments will be granted 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 test due to illness or other emergency, email me as soon as possible, no later than one week from the date of the test.
Submission of Assignments via Turnitin.com

Normally, students will be required to submit written assignments to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their assignments to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site (www.Turnitin.com). If you have an objection to the use of Turnitin for the submission of your work, please contact me to discuss alternatives, which may include submission of your working draft. Note that I will be setting up the Turnitin account such that your assignments will be stored only in the U of T institutional repository (i.e., not with Turnitin.com in the USA). Instructions on use of the system will be provided with assignment 1.

Academic Integrity

While I encourage you to have others read and comment on your assignments, I expect that the papers that you submit to be your own work. Note also that using information directly from sources such as books, articles, videos, the Internet or work of fellow students without proper citation is considered plagiarism. Quotation marks are required when using someone else’s words. Changing a few words in a sentence is not enough to make it your own. More fundamentally, for this course, we are not interested in reading a regurgitation of authors’ ideas – we are interested in your ideas about the materials you will be interpreting. 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.

For some useful information on documenting sources and problems of plagiarism, see “How not to plagiarize” at http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/

Be aware that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Nor should you submit any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought. The Department and University treat these all as serious offenses and sanctions are severe. You should be familiar with the university’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm. Students are expected to abide by this code.