

Columbia University
HSEA W4867
Civil Society, Public Sphere, and Popular Protest in Contemporary China
Fall 2005
Instructor: Guobin Yang

Overview and Goals

This seminar explores the multiple dimensions, sources, and dynamics of grassroots social change in contemporary China from the angles of civil society, the public sphere and popular protest.

Civil society and public sphere are concepts with Western intellectual origins. Some scholars have questioned whether they may be used to analyze non-Western societies. Others have used ready-made definitions to measure the existence of a civil society or public sphere in a particular country.

We start by clarifying the conceptual and definitional issues surrounding these two concepts. Then we look at the first wave of scholarly debates in this area in the field of China studies, represented by a 1993 special issue of the journal *Modern China*. The rest of the seminar is devoted to the concrete analysis of various aspects of civil society developments in China. These include the development of civic associations, the transformation of mass media, the impact of the internet, and popular protest activities since the 1989 student movement. Our goal is to understand the nature and dynamics of Chinese civil society and its role and limits in the democratization of China.

In addition, the seminar will provide a tool-kit of basic social science theories, concepts, and methodologies for analyzing civil society, the public sphere, and social movements. The broad spectrum of empirical issues introduced should be useful to students who are looking for research topics in these and related areas. To help students develop strong analytical and writing skills, the seminar requires intensive class discussions and writing exercises.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and class participation (10%)

Attendance is required and active participation in class discussion is essential.

2. Ten response essays on reading assignments (50%)

Students are required to submit response essays for every week when there are required reading assignments. This adds up to a total of ten essays throughout the semester. Instead of just a summary, each essay should respond to one or more key issues/themes/arguments in any **TWO** of the assigned reading materials for that week. The essay should be about 500 words (less than 2 pages, double space). Email your essay to me at gyang@barnard.edu with "W4847 Essay #" before 6pm Tuesday, the day before class.

2. Class presentation. (10%)

Each student will orally present at least one response essay in class. Presentations will be assigned in advance.

3. Final paper (30%).

The paper should be 10-12 pages (double-space) and examine a topic related to the theme of this course. It may be an analysis based on secondary literature, or research based the use of primary materials. Email me a 1-page proposal by November 2, present a draft in class on Nov. 30 or Dec.7, and submit a final draft on December 15.

Readings

Required reading assignments for each class are marked with an asterisk (*). Those not marked are recommended for further reading and research reference. Most of the required journal articles and book chapters will be posted on the course web site; a few will be put on reserves in Barnard College Library and Butler Library. The following books are required:

Baranovitch, Nimrod. 2003. *China's New Voices: Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics, 1978-1997*. Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press.

Perry, Elizabeth and Mark Selden, eds. 2003. *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance* 2nd ed. Taylor & Francis.

Further References

For each week, I have listed some further references. These may be especially useful when it comes to writing the term paper. In addition, the course will expose students to the major scholarly journals in the field of China studies, especially those that focus on social science research. It is important to know these journals as they carry up-to-date research reports. My professional web site contains links to these journals at <http://bc.barnard.columbia.edu/~gyang/China.html#journal>. All of them are accessible via the online databases of the Columbia Library at <http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/app/rti/index.jsp>.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (9/7) Introduction

Week 2 (9/14) What is civil society? What is the public sphere?

*Alagappa, Muthiah. 2004. *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa. Stanford: Stanford University Press. "Introduction," pp. 1-21; "Civil Society and Political Change: An Analytical Framework." Pp. 25-57. On reserve.

*Ferree, Myra Marx, William A. Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards & Dieter Rucht. 2002. "Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies," *Theory and Society* 31: 289-324.

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Calhoun, Craig, "Introduction," in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, 1992).

Carnoy, Martin. 1984. "Gramsci and the State." Pp. 65-88 in Martin Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fraser, Nancy. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." Pp. 109-142 in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. "The Public Sphere," in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*, edited by Steven Seidman. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hall, John A. 1995. "In Search of Civil Society" in *Civil Society: Theory, History, and Comparison*, ed. John A. Hall. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 1-31.

Week 3 (9/21) Can Western concepts be used to analyze Chinese reality? Why are there such heated debates about civil society in China?

*Huang, Philip C. 1993. "'Public Sphere'/'Civil Society' in China? The Third Realm Between State and Society." *Modern China* 19(2): 216-240. [Download](#)

*Rowe, William T. "The Problem of "Civil Society" in Late Imperial China," *Modern China*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1993): pp. 139-157. [Download](#).

*Rankin, Mary Backus, "Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere." *Modern China*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1993): 158-182. [Download](#).

*Wakeman, Frederick Jr., "The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate: Western Reflections on Chinese Political Culture," *Modern China*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1993): 108-138. [Download](#)

*Yang, Guobin. "Civil Society in China: A Dynamic Field of Study." *China Review International* Vol.9, No.1 (Spring 2002), pp. 1-16. [Download](#)

Chamberlain, Heath B. "On the Search for Civil Society in China," *Modern China* 19, no. 2 (1993): 209.

Ma, Shu-yun, "The Chinese Discourse on Civil Society," *The China Quarterly* 137 (1994), 180-193.

Madsen, Richard. 1993. "The Public Sphere, Civil Society and Moral Community: A Research Agenda for Contemporary Chinese Studies." *Modern China* 19(2): 183-198.

Perry, Elizabeth J. 1994. "Trends in the Study of Chinese Politics: State-Society Relations." *The China Quarterly*, No. 139. pp. 704-713.

Week 4 (9/28) Civic Associations (I): How do civic associations exist in China's political environment? What is the relationship between business associations and state agencies? Why are business associations not necessarily forces of democratization?

*Saich, Tony. 2000. "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China." *The China Quarterly* 161: 124-141. On reserve.

*Baranovitch, Nimrod. 2003. *China's New Voices*, Introduction, pp. 1-9.

*Dickson, Bruce. 2002. "Do Good Businessmen Make Good Citizens? An Emerging Collective Identity Among China's Private Entrepreneurs." Pp. 255-287 in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, edited by Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. On reserve.

*Foster, Kenneth W. 2002. "Embedded within State Agencies: Business Associations in Yantai." *The China Journal* 47: 41-65. [Download](#)

Bruce J. Dickson. 2003. *Red Capitalists in China: The Party, Private Entrepreneurs, and Prospects for Political Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gold, Thomas. 1998. "Bases for Civil Society in Reform China." Pp. 163-188 in *Reconstructing Twentieth-Century China: State Control, Civil Society, and National Identity*, edited by Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard and David Strand. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nevitt, Christopher Earle. 1996. "Private Business Associations in China: Evidence of Civil Society or Local State Power?" *The China Journal*, No. 36: 25-43.

Pearson, Margaret. 1994. "The Janus Face of Business Associations in China: Socialist Corporatism in Foreign Enterprises" *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 31. (Jan), pp. 25-46.

Pearson, Margaret. 1997. *China's New Business Elite: The Political Consequences of Economic Reform*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

White, Howell and Shang Xiaoyuan, *In Search of Civil Society: Market Reform and Social Change in Contemporary China*, Chapter 5, "The Rise of New-Style Social Organizations at the National Level."

Week 5 (10/5) Civic Associations (II): Who are China's intellectuals? How has economic reform shaped their relationship with the state?

Abstract of term paper due in class today.

*Goldman, Merle. 1996. "Politically-engaged Intellectuals in the Deng-Jiang Era: A Changing Relationship with the Party-State," *The China Quarterly*, No. 145 (March 1996). [Download](#)

*Ogden, Suzanne. 2004. "From Patronage to Profits: The Changing Relationship of Chinese Intellectuals with the Party-State." Pp. 111-137 in *Chinese Intellectuals Between State and Market*, edited by Edward Gu and Merle Goldman. RoutledgeCurzon. On reserve.

*Naughton, Barry. 2002. "China's Economic Think Tanks: Their Changing Role in the 1990s." *The China Quarterly* 171: 625-35. Go to [No. 171 of The China Quarterly](#) and download from there.

Tanner, Murray Scot. 2002. "Changing Windows on a Changing China: The Evolving "Think Tank" System and the Case of the Public Security Sector." *The China Quarterly*, Volume 171, September 2002, pp 559-574.

Gu, Edward X, "Plural Institutionalism and the Emergence of Intellectual Public Spaces in China: A Case Study of Four Intellectual Groups," in Suisheng Zhao (ed.), *China and Democracy: The Prospect for a Democratic China*, pp.141-172.

Sidel, Mark, "Dissident and Liberal Legal Scholars and Organizations in Beijing and the Chinese State in the 1980s," in Deborah S. Davis, Richard Kraus, Barry Naughton, and Elizabeth Perry, eds., *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China* (Washington, D.C. and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 326-346.

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N. and Liu Xinyong, "Student Associations and Mass Movements." In Davis et al, eds., *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China*, pp. 362-393.

Week 6 (10/12) Civic Associations (III): Can there be NGOs in China? What are some of the most recent developments in civic organizing?

*Howell, Jude. 2004. "New Directions in Civil Society: Organizing Around Marginalized Interests." Pp. 143-171 in *Governance in China*, edited by Jude Howell. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. On reserve.

*Yang, Guobin. 2005. "Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China." *The China Quarterly* No. 181, pp. 46-66. [Download](#)

*Zhang Xin and Richard Baum. 2004. "Civil Society and the Anatomy of a Rural NGO," *The China Journal*, No. 52, pp. 97-112. Download.

Keith, Ronald C., Zhiqiu Lin, and Huang Lie. 2003. "The Making of a Chinese NGO: The Research and Intervention Project on Domestic Violence." *Problems of Post-Communism* (November/December 2003): 38-50.

Qiusha Ma, "Defining Chinese Nongovernmental Organizations," *Voluntas*, Vol. 13, No. 2(2002), pp. 113-130.

Read, Benjamin L. 2003. "Democratizing the Neighbourhood? New Private Housing and Home-Owner Self-Organization in Urban China." *The China Journal* 49 (January 2003), pp. 31-59.

Schwartz, Jonathan. 2004. "Environmental NGOs in China: Roles and Limits." *Pacific Affairs* 77(1): 28-50.

Shang, Xiaoyuan. 2002. "Looking for a Better Way to Care for Children: Cooperation between the State and Civil Society in China." *Social Science Review* (June): 203-228.

Week 7 (10/19) Public Sphere (I): How has economic reform reshaped mass media in China? Can Chinese mass media contribute to public opinion?

*Li, Xiaoping. 2002. "'Focus' (Jiaodian Fangtan) and the Changes in the Chinese Television Industry." *Journal of Contemporary China* 11(30): 17-34. [Download](#)

*Roya Akhavan-Majid . "Mass Media Reform in China: Toward a New Analytical Framework ," *Gazette*, Volume 66, Number 6 (December 2004), pp. 553-565. On reserve.

*Zhao, Yuezhi. 2000. "From commercialization to conglomeration: the transformation of the Chinese press within the orbit of the party state." *Journal of Communication*, 2000, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 3-26. [Download](#)

Huang, C. (2000) "The Development of a Semi-Independent Press in Post-Mao China: An Overview and a Case Study of Chengdu Business News," *Journalism Studies* 1(4): 649-64.

Huang Yu, "Peaceful Evolution: the Case of Television Reform in Post-Mao China," *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 16 (1994), pp. 217-241.

Liu, Hong, "Profit or Ideology? The Chinese Press Between Party and Market." *Media, Culture & Society* 20 (1998): 31-41.

McCormick, Barrett L. "Recent Trends in Mainland China's Media: Political Implications of Commercialization." *Issues & Studies* 38, no.4/39, no.1 (December 2002/March 2003): 175-215.

Zhang Yong. "From Masses to Audience: changing media ideologies and practices in reform China." *Journalism Studies*, Volume 1, Number 4 (November 1, 2000), pp. 617-635.

Zhao Bin. "Mouthpiece or money-spinner?: The double life of Chinese television in the late 1990s." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Volume 2, Number 3 (December 1, 1999), pp. 291-305.

Zhao, Yuezhi. 1998. *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Week 8 (10/26) Public Sphere (II): How has the internet shaped political participation and public discourse? What are the main challenges facing public use of the internet?

*Kathleen Hartford, "Dear Mayor:/Online Communications with Local Governments in Hangzhou and Nanjing." *China Information*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 217-260 (2005). Download.

*Thornton, Patricia. 2003. "The New Cybersects: Resistance and Repression in the Reform era." In Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

*Yang, Guobin. 2003. "The Internet and Civil Society in China: A Preliminary Assessment." *Journal of Contemporary China*. Volume 12, Number 36 (August 2003), pp.453 - 475.

[Download](#)

Chase, Michael S. and James C. Mulvenon, *You've Got Dissent! Chinese Dissident Use of the Internet and Beijing's Counter-Strategies* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002).

Hartford, Kathleen, "Cyberspace with Chinese Characteristics," *Current History* (September 2000): pp. 255-62.

Hung, Chin-fu. "Public Discourse and 'Virtual' Political Participation in the PRC: The Impact of the Internet." *Issues and Studies*, 39 (December 2004), pp.1-38.

McCormick, B., and Liu Qing. (2003). "Globalization and the Chinese Media: Technologies, Content, Commerce and the Prospects for the Public Sphere." Pp. 139-158 in C.C. Lee (Ed.), *Chinese Media, Global Contexts* (London: RoutledgeCurzon).

Lokman Tsui, "The Panopticon as the Antithesis of a Space of Freedom: Control and Regulation of the Internet in China." *China Information* Vol. 17, No. 2 (2003), pp. 65-82.

Yang, Guobin. 2003. "The co-evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China." *Asian Survey* Vol. 43, No. 3, May/June, pp.405-422.

Yang, Guobin. 2003. "The Internet and the Rise of a Transnational Chinese Cultural Sphere." *Media, Culture & Society* 25(4): 469-490.

Week 9 (11/2) Public Sphere (III): How can music, as a form of public expression, shape conceptions of gender, ethnicity and politics? In what sense does a consumer revolution open up some political spaces?

Paper proposal due today.

*Baranovitch, Nimrod. 2003. *China's New Voices*. Skim Chapter 1. Read Chapter 2 OR 3.

*Davis, Deborah. 2000. "The Consumer Revolution in Urban China." *Current History* (September), pp. 248-254. [Download](#)

Chen, Nancy. "Urban Spaces and Experiences of qigong," in Davis et al (eds), *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China*, pp. 347-361.

Dai Jinhua. "Rewriting Chinese Women: Gender Production and Cultural Space in the Eighties and Nineties." Pp. 191-206 in *Spaces of Their Own*, edited by Mayfair Yang.

Kraus, Richard. 2000. "Public Monuments and Private Pleasures in the Parks of Nanjing: A Tango in the Ruins of the Ming Emperor's Palace," in Deborah Davis (ed.), *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 287-311.

Rofel, Lisa. 1999. "Museum as Women's Space: Displays of Gender in Post-Mao China." Pp. 116-131 in *Spaces of Their Own*, edited by Mayfair Yang.

Yan, Yunxiang. 2000. "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing," in Deborah Davis (ed.), *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*, pp. 201-225.

Week 10 (11/9) What was the student movement in 1989 about? How did it happen?

In-class viewing of *Gate of Heavenly Peace* (Carma Hinton documentary). No required reading for today.

Calhoun, Craig. 1994. *Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Echerick, Joseph W. and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. 1990. "Acting out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China." *Journal of Asian Studies* 49(4): 835-865.

Walder, Andrew and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: the Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 29(January 1993), pp. 1-30.

Yang, Guobin, "Achieving Emotions in Collective Action: Emotional Processes and Movement Mobilization in the 1989 Chinese Student Movement," *The Sociological Quarterly* Vol .41, No. 4, pp. 593-614.

Week 11 (11/16) What are some of the major forms of protest and resistance in contemporary China? What are their continuities and discontinuities with protest in the past? Why have protest activities increased as the Chinese economy gets better?

*Baranovitch, Nimrod, *China's New Voices*, Chap. 4.

*Perry, Elizabeth J. and Mark Selden. "Introduction." In *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance*, edited by Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge).

*Hurst, William and Kevin J. O'Brien. 2002. "China's Contentious Pensioners." *The China Quarterly*, 170 (June 2002): pp. 345-360. Go to [No. 170 of The China Quarterly](#) and download from there.

*Lee, Ching Kwan. 2003. "Pathways of Labor Insurgency," in Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

Pei, Minxin. 2003 "Rights and Resistance: the Changing Contexts of the Dissident Movement." In Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

Davis, Deborah S. Forthcoming. "China's Homeowners as Citizen-Consumers." In *Consumer Culture and its Discontents*, edited by Sheldon Garon and Patricia Maclachlan.

Hooper, Beverley. 2000. "Consumer Voices: Asserting Rights in Maoist China" *China Information* Vol 14, No. 2, pp. 92-128.

Lee, Ching Kwan. 2000. "The Revenge of History: Collective Memories and Labor Protests in Northeastern China". *Ethnography* 1(2). pp. 217-237

Madsen, Richard, "Understanding Falun Gong," *Current History* 99(2000): pp. 243-247.

O'Brien, Kevin. 1996. "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics* Vol. 49, No. 1: 31-55.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 2000. "The Potential for Urban Unrest: Will the Fencers Stay on the Piste?" in David Shambaugh, ed., *Is China Unstable?* M.E.Sharpe.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 1999. *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wang Zheng. 2003. "Gender, Employment and Women's Resistance," in Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

Yang, Guobin. "China's Zhiqing Generation: Nostalgia, Identity and Cultural Resistance in the 1990s." *Modern China* Vol.29, No.3 (July 2003), pp. 267-296.

Week 12 (11/23) What are some of the major forms of protest in rural China? Why are Chinese peasants so discontented? How do they express their contention?

*Bernstein, Thomas. 1999. "Farmer Discontent and Regime Responses," in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar (eds.), *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 197-219. On reserve.

*Bernstein, Thomas P. and Xiaobo Lu. 2000. "Taxation without Representation: The Central and Local States in Reform China." *The China Quarterly* No. 163: 742-763. On reserve.

*Feuchtwang, Stephan, "Religion as Resistance," in Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

*Jing, Jun, "Environmental Protests in Rural China," in Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

Flower, John and Pamela Leonard, "Community Values and State Cooptation: Civil Society in the Sichuan Countryside." in *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, eds. Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 199-221.

Ho, Peter. "Contesting Rural Spaces: Land Disputes, Customary Tenure and the State." In Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

O'Brien, Kevin. 1996. "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics* Vol. 49, No. 1: 31-55.

O'Brien, Kevin and Lianjiang Li. 1995. "The Politics of Lodging Complaints in Rural China," *China Quarterly*, no. 143: pp. 756-83.

Lianjiang Li and Kevin J. O'Brien. 1996. "Villagers and Popular Resistance in Contemporary China," *Modern China* Vol 22, No. 1(1996), pp. 28-61.

Zweig, David, "The 'Externalities of Development': Can New Political Institutions Manage Rural Conflict?" in Perry and Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

Week 13 (11/30) Student paper presentation.

Week 14 (12/7) Student paper presentation.

Final paper due on December 15.