

Barnard College / Columbia University / Fall 2006

Contemporary Chinese Culture and Society
(HSEA W3850)

Guobin Yang, Ph.D.

Class meets T Th 4:10-5:25 in 805 Altschul Hall (Barnard)

Introduction

This course provides a survey of social change in reform-era China (1978-present). Broad in scope, the course will examine the main areas of contemporary Chinese life: economy, politics, society, culture, and the environment. It will show how, under conditions not of their own choice, the Chinese people are both shapers of their own fate and constrained in their struggles for a better life and more just and equitable society. The analysis will help students to understand better the lived experiences of the Chinese people, as well as the causes and consequences of social inequality, social conflicts, and social change.

Our analytic approach is primarily sociological, aimed at the interpretive understanding of the course and consequences of social action. We try to see how social structures and institutions influence personal lives and how individual and collective forms of action may in turn transform institutions and structures.

Our goal is to achieve a preliminary understanding of the contemporary Chinese experience in the context of world-historical change. Such an introduction may

- 1) deepen our understanding of the diversity of human experience;
- 2) increase our knowledge of contemporary world culture;
- 3) expand our sociological vision and personal horizon;
- 4) provide a knowledge base for analyzing current national and world affairs, in which China often plays an important role; and
- 5) offer useful tools for critical social analysis.

Requirements

1. Participation (10%). Class attendance is required. Participation in class discussions is essential.
2. Group project (10%): Each student will participate in ONE group project.
3. Two 6-page analytic essays (25% each; double space, Times New Roman, Font 12). Topic to be announced.
4. Final exam (30%)

Grading

A+ = 98 or above	B+ = 86-89	C+ = 76-79	D = 60-64
A = 94-97	B = 83-85	C = 70-75	F = Below 60
A- = 90-93	B- = 80-82	C- = 65-69	

Readings

Reading assignments consist of journal articles and book chapters and four books. Except for those marked as “optional,” all readings listed below are required. The books are available in Labyrinth Books and are as follows:

Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods Nor Emperors* (University of California Press, 1994).

Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and Robert Benewick. *The State of China Atlas: Mapping the World's Fastest Growing Economy*. California University Press, 2005.

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu eds, *China's Deep Reform: Domestic Politics in Transition* (Rowman and Littlefields, 2006).

Books and book chapters are on reserve in Butler Library. Unless otherwise noted, journal articles are available through the electronic journal databases of the libraries. The easiest way of accessing the databases is to search for the journal title in CLIO.

The Honor Code

Approved by the student body in 1912, the Barnard College Honor Code states:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the college by refraining from every form of dishonesty in our academic life. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. We consider it dishonest to remove without authorization, alter, or deface library and other academic materials. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

Please refer to the Honor Code booklet, distributed to all new students. If you do not have a copy, please pick up in the Dean of Studies office. (Source: <http://www.barnard.edu/dos/honor.html>).

****The Honor Code applies to all work in this course.****

Class schedule

The end of the Cultural Revolution and the launching of economic reform

Sept. 5. Introduction; In-class viewing of documentary film: *China: A Century of Revolution*, Part III, 1976-2002.

Sept. 7 Bei Dao. 1988. *The August Sleepwalker*. Translated by Bonnie S. McDougall. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation. Selected poems. (Hand-out)

Pan Xiao, "Why is life's road getting narrower and narrower," in Helen Siu and Zelda Stern, eds., *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. (Hand-out)

Merle Goldman, *From Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in China*, Harvard University Press, 2005), Chapter 1, "Democracy wall," pp. 25-50. [Hand-out]

The process and significance of China's economic reform

Sept. 12. Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and Robert Benewick. *The State of China Atlas*. California University Press, 2005, Part Three.

Yingyi Qian, "The Process of China's Market Transition, 1978-1998: The Evolutionary, Historical, and Comparative Perspectives," in *China's Deep Reform*, pp. 229-250.

Sept. 14 Anthony Y. C. Koo and K. C. Yeh, "The Impact of Township, Village, and Private Enterprises' Growth on State Enterprises Reform: Three Regional Case Studies." Pp. 321-334 in *The China Reader: The Reform Era*, edited by Orville Schell and David Shambaugh. New York: Vintage Books, 1999. [On reserve]

Michel Oksenberg and Richard Bush, "China's Political Evolution, 1972-1982." Pp. 5-20 in *The China Reader: The Reform Era*, edited by Orville Schell and David Shambaugh. New York: Vintage Books, 1999. [On reserve]

Andrew Walder, "China's Transitional Economy: Interpreting Its Significance," *The China Quarterly*, No. 144 (Dec., 1995): 963-979.

The student movement in 1989

Sept. 19 Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods Nor Emperors* (University of California Press, 1994), Part II.

Optional: *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. Documentary film on Chinese student movement in 1989 directed by Carma Hinton. View the film before class.

The State

Sept. 21 Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance* (2006), Chapters 2-3.

Shi, Fayong and Yongshun Cai. 2006. "Disaggregating the State: Networks and Collective Resistance in Shanghai." *The China Quarterly*, 314-332.

Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience." *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 14, No.1 (2003): 6-17.

Inequality

Sept. 26. Shaoguang Wang, "Openness and Inequality: The Case of China," in *China's Deep Reform*, pp. 251-282.

Yanjie Bian, "Chinese Social Stratification and Social Mobility," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28 (2002): 91-116.

Peasants

Sept. 28 Thomas Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, *Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China* (Cambridge University Press 2003), Chapter 5 "Burdens and Resistance: Peasant Collective Action." [Available as e-book in CLIO]

Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance* (2006), Chapter 1.

Oct 3 Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance* (2006), Chapters 4-5.

Workers

Oct 5 Anita Chan and Zhu Xiaoyang, "Disciplinary Labor Regimes in Chinese Factories," *Critical Asian Studies*, 35(4), 2003, pp. 559-584.

Dorothy J. Solinger, "The Chinese Work Unit and Transient Labor in the Transition from Socialism," *Modern China*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 155-183.

Yongshun Cai, "The resistance of Chinese laid-off workers in the reform period." *The China Quarterly* 170:327-44.

Oct. 10 Feng Chen, "Privitization and Its Discontents in Chinese Factories." *The China Quarterly* 185 (2006): 42-60.

Ching Kwan Lee, "From the Specter of Mao to the Spirit of the Law: Labor Insurgency in China." *Theory and Society* 31 (2002). pp.189-228.

Marc J. Blecher, "Hegemony and Worker's Politics in China," in *China's Deep Reform*, 404-427.

Essay 1 due in class today.

Women

Oct 12 William Parish and Sarah Busse, "Gender and Work." Pp. 209-231 in Wenfang Tang and William Parish, *Chinese Urban Life Under Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [On reserve]

Kathleen Erwin, "Heart-to-Heart, Phone-to-Phone: Family Values, Sexuality, and the Politics of Shanghai's Advice Hotlines." Deborah Davis (ed.), *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China* (University of California Press, 2000): 145-170. [On reserve]

Pun Ngai, "Engendering Chinese Modernity: the Sexual Politics of *Dagongmei* in a Dormitory Labour Regime," *Asian Studies Review* Vol. 28 (2004): 151-165. [Optional]

Veronica Pearson, "A Broken Compact: Women's Health in the Reform Era." Pp. 431-449 in *China's Deep Reform*, edited by Dittmer and Liu.

The emerging middle class

Oct 17 Luigi Tomba, "Creating an Urban Middle Class: Social Engineering in Beijing", in *The China Journal*, No. 51, January 2004.

Deborah Davis, "Chinese Homeowners as Citizen-Consumers," in S. Garon and P. Maclachlan (eds.), *The Ambivalent Consumer*. Cornell University Press, forthcoming. [Hand-out]

Jing Wang, "Bourgeois Bohemians in China? Neo-Tribes and the Urban Imaginary," *The China Quarterly*, Volume 183, September 2005, pp. 532-548.

Oct 19 Yongshun Cai, "China's Moderate Middle Class," *Asian Survey*, Sept/Oct 2005, Vol. 45, No. 5, 777-799.

Dickson, Bruce. "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, 2002). [On reserve]

Alastair Iain Johnston, "Chinese Middle Class Attitudes Towards International Affairs: Nascent Liberalization?" *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 179 (September 2004), pp 603-628.

Religion and ethnicity

Oct 24 Richard Madsen, "Catholic Revival during the Reform Era," *The China Quarterly* 174 (June, 2003).

Beatrice Leung, "China's Religious Freedom Policy: The Art of Managing Religious Activity," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 184 (December 2005), pp. 894-913.

Colin Mackerra, "What is China: Who is Chinese? Han-minority Relations, Legitimacy, and the State." Pp. 216-234 in *State and Society in 21st-century China*, edited by Peter Gries and Stanley Rosen. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. [On reserve]

Xin Yuan, "A Place in the Pantheon: Mao and Folk Religion," in Geremie R. Barmé, *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader* (Armonk, N.Y., 1996), 195–200. [Hand-out]

Oct 26 Thomas Heberer, "Ethnic Entrepreneurship and Ethnic Identity: A Case Study among the Liangshan Yi (Nuosu) in China," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 182 (June 2005), pp. 407-427.

Nancy N. Chen, "Healing Sects and Anti-Cult Campaigns," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 174 (June 2003), pp 505-520.

Dru Gladney, "Islam in China: Accommodation or Separatism?" *The China Quarterly* 174 (June 2003), pp. 451-67.

Media

Oct 31 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.

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

Yuezhi Zhao. 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.

The State of China Atlas, pp. 30-31.

Nov. 2 Find and read a recent news article on the Chinese internet.

Michel Hockx, "Virtual Chinese Literature: A Comparative Study of Online Poetry Communities." *The China Quarterly*, Volume 183, Sept. 2005, pp. 670-691.

Guobin Yang, "The Internet and Civil Society in China: Coevolutionary Dynamics and Digital Formations," in *China's Deep Reform*, pp. 303-318.

Yongming Zhou, "Living on the Cyber Border," *Current Anthropology*, 46 (2005), pp. 779–803.

Nov. 7 Election day. No class.

Popular culture

Nov. 9 Deborah Davis, "Urban Consumer Culture," *The China Quarterly*, Volume 183, September 2005, pp 692-709.

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

Stanley Rosen, "The State of Youth/youth and the state in early 21st-century China." Pp. 159-179 in *State and Society in 21st-century China*, edited by Peter Gries and Stanley Rosen. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. [On reserve]

Yomi Braester, "Chinese Cinema in the Age of Advertisement: The Filmmaker as a Cultural Broker," *The China Quarterly* 183 (2005), pp 549-564. [Optional]

Environmental issues

Nov. 14 In-class viewing of clips of documentary film, *Before the Flood*.

Nov. 16 Peter Ho, "Trajectories of Greening in China: Theory and Practice." *Development and Change* Vol. 37, No. 1 (2006): 3-28.

Arthur Mol and Neil Carter. "China's environmental governance in transition." *Environmental Politics*, Volume 15, Number 2 (April 2006), pp. 149-170.

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

The State of China Atlas, Part Six

Globalization, transnationalism, and Greater China

Nov. 21 David Zweig, *Internationalizing China: Domestic Interests and Global Linkages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), Chapter 1, "Explaining Internationalization: Channels, Resources, and Fevers." [On reserve]

David Zweig, Chen Changgui and Stanley Rosen, "Globalization and Transnational Human Capital: Overseas and Returnee Scholars to China," *The China Quarterly*, Volume 179, September 2004, pp. 735-757.

Tse-Kang Leng, "State and business in the era of globalization: the case of cross-strait linkages in the computer industry," *The China Journal* Jan 2005, Issue 53, pp. 63-80.

Essay 2 due in class today.

Nov. 23 Thanksgiving holiday. No class.

Nov. 28 Yunxiang Yan, "McDonald's in Beijing: The Localization of Americana." pp. 39-76 in *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia*, edited by James L. Watson (Stanford University Press, 1997).

Meaghan Morris, "Transnational imagination in action cinema: Hong Kong and the making of a global popular culture." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* Vol. 5 Issue 2 (Aug. 2004), pp. 181-199.

Fulong Wu, 2000. "The Global and Local Dimensions of Place-making: Remaking Shanghai as a World City," *Urban Studies*, 37(8): 1359-1377.

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

Civil society and and political reform

Nov. 30 Lowell Dittmer, "Conclusion: China's Reform Deepening," in *China's Deep Reform*, pp. 493-506.

Andrew Nathan, "China's Constitutionalist Option," in *China's Deep Reform*, pp. 177-190.

Suisheng Zhao, "Political Liberalization without Democratization: Pan Wei's Proposal for Political Reform." *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 12, No. 34 (2003): 222-255.

Dec. 5 Jude Howell, "New Directions in Civil Society: Organizing Around Marginalized Interests." Pp. 143-171 in *Governance in China*, edited by Jude Howell (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

Tony Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China," in *China's Deep Reform*, pp. 285-301.

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

Dec. 7 Course summary (last class meeting)

Final exam