The Chinese Society and Culture

Syllabus

Department of Sociology, Fudan University

March 1st – June 7th

2013
The Chinese Society and Culture
Dept of Sociology, Fudan University

Staff of the Course

Course Instructor
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Teaching Assistant (to be selected)
Objective of Course

This course aims to familiarize students with a number of salient themes and issues in contemporary Chinese society. As China’s rapid development is increasingly focusing worldwide attention on the People’s Republic, it is crucial to be able to grasp the social, cultural and political underpinnings of China’s unique trajectory and present-day situation. In turn, such an understanding requires acquaintance with an array of key notions and conceptual tools that will be methodically introduced and explicated throughout the semester.

Course Description

The course is organized sequentially and divided into three sectors:

The first sector is titled Chinese political economy in the time of reform and opening out. Four lectures will address issues of political economy. In the first two lectures, the approach will be historical as the key stages and (re)orientations of Reform and Opening will be introduced and interpreted. Economic policy will thus be examined with an eye to the social and political tendencies and tensions that it encapsulates. The third lecture will take a look at the Chinese socio-economic landscape of today and engage in a critical discussion of notions such as “state capitalism” and “China model”. The final lecture will convey the diversity of Chinese development through a focus on the contrasts between several competing regional “models”.

The second sector with four lectures will address Chinese culture and religion. In the first lecture, students will have an opportunity to learn about the cultural foundations of ancestor worship and its contemporary practice, about the meaning of guanxi (relationship) and its application and transition in Chinese society, and about the Five Relationships, the core of Confucian ethics. The second and third lectures will concentrate on the culture of Shanghai, including themes such as Nostalgia and Consumerism, as well as the value system and lifestyle of Shanghainese. The fourth
lecture will provide an introduction to the Chinese policy of religious freedom, to the historical background and contemporary situation of Chinese folk religion, and to the phenomenon of mass conversion to Christianity in China.

The third sector also including four lectures will focus on Shanghai Studies as a means to offer a distinct localized illustration of the Chinese experience. Today, it is safe to say that Shanghai is one of the most powerful cities in East Asia and even the World. Yet despite its global stature, it remains deeply Chinese, occupying a unique position vis-à-vis the issues and challenges arising from the country’s rapid pace of development. To the researcher, Shanghai displays the interaction of geography, economy, and society. Local culture is itself remarkably varied, as it ranges from Chinese revolutionary culture to the city’s own civic culture to modern pop culture. The lectures will address the history of Shanghai in a national context, its renaissance as a global city as a result of state strategy from the 1990s onward, and issues of urban planning and urban social space.

Course Evaluation

- **Attendance and class participation– 10%**
  Attendance to lectures and fieldtrips is required for all students. Please inform the TA in advance if you want to ask for a leave due to eligible excuses.

- **The first sector: a 2000-word essay-30%**. The instructor would provide a number of essay questions among which the students would have to choose one. The essay would be due two weeks after the last lecture of the first sector.

- **The second sector: a 2000-word essay-30%** with the focus on one of the discussion topics. The essay would be due two weeks after the last lecture of the second sector.
The third sector: (1) a 1500-word essay titled “Shanghai Impression”—20%. Based on your own observation, critical thinking and reflection in the field work in Shanghai. Empirical experiences are highly valued throughout the course. By fieldwork as well as observation, students will see the city through your own eyes. The reflection over first hand empirical experiences will be included in the paper.

(2) Pictures during your stay in Shanghai—10% You may take a lot pictures during your stay in Shanghai, please pick 10 of them and tell us what the most impressive things in Shanghai are. Write at least 50 words of explication below each picture. Please include the pictures in a word file or pdf file.

Instruction: You can choose any scenes, any people or any aspects of the city life. But you have to tell us 1. Why you choose these pictures. 2. (If you are a foreign student) What kind of difference or common point between Shanghai and your city you’ve got from the picture? 3. (If you are a Chinese student) what aspect of the city life does this picture remind you? 4. Any pictures you provide as the assignment must be taken by yourself. The pictures from other resources would be taken as plagiarism ones.

Teaching Schedule

Course Orientation by Yu Hai, Hu Anning, and Nathan Sperber

First Sector: Chinese Political Economy in the Time of Reform and Opening Out

Lecture 1 by Nathan: The early stages of Reform and Opening (the 1980s)

Reading List
Brandt, L. and Brawski, T. B., “China’s great economic transformation”, in Brandt, L. and Brawski, T. B. (eds), China’s great economic transformation, 2008.
Lecture 2 by Nathan: From ephemeral backlash to intensified reform (the 1990s)

**Reading List**


Lecture 3 by Nathan: Interpreting the “China model” today

**Reading List**


Lin Li-wen and Milhaupt, C. J., “We are the (national) champions: Understanding the mechanisms of state capitalism in China”, Columbia University School of Law Working Paper, 2011.


Lecture 4 by Nathan: The diversity of the Chinese experience

**Reading List**

China Analysis, *Special Issue: One or two Chinese models?*, 2011.

Huang, P. C. C., "Chongqing: Equitable development driven by a third hand?", *Modern China*, 2011.

Huang Yasheng, “What is Wrong with Shanghai?”, Chapter IV of *Capitalism with Chinese characteristics*, 2008.
Second sector: Chinese Culture and Religions

Lecture 5 by Hu Anning: Chinese Culture: Ancestor Worship, Guanxi, and Confucian Ethics

Reading List


Discussion Topics

*Do you have a counterpart of Chinese guanxi in your country?*

*What are the similarities and differences between Chinese guanxi and the Western counterpart?*

*What are the positive and negative social functions of guanxi in your mind?*
What is your general perception of Confucianism?

Confucianism appears to be more and more popular in Western societies, do you think so? If yes, why?

Lecture 6 by Hu Anning: The Culture of Shanghai I: the Identity and Life Style of Shanghainess

Reading List


Yu, Hai. The Production of Space and the Distribution of Right-of-way.

Discussion Topics

Do you think identifying with hometown city or metropolis common in your society?

The stereotype of Shanghainese might not stand for the individual cases, what do you think about the characteristics of Shanghainese based on your personal life?
Lecture 7 by Hu Anning: The Culture of Shanghai II: Nostalgia, Gentrification, and Consumerism

**Reading List**


**Discussion Topics**

> What do you think about the gentrification in Shanghai? Do you think gentrification is a global trend (e.g. the gentrification of the capital cities in your country)?

> Nostalgia can be witnessed in many parts of China. Did you notice similar nostalgia in your country? What are the concrete activities?

Lecture 8 by Hu Anning: Religions in China: Survival and Revival.

**Reading List**


**Discussion Topics**

What are the social functions of religion in your society?

What are the similarities and differences between Chinese folk religion and commonly practiced Tarot, Fortune-telling using a crystal ball, and horoscope?
Third Sector: Shanghai Studies

Lecture 9 by Yu Hai: From Cosmopolitan city to Socialist Shanghai (the 1840s –the 1990s)

Reading List


Yu Hai and Yan Fei: A Story of Shanghai Space: From Mao to Deng

Lecture 10 by Yu Hai: Globalizing Shanghai (since 1990)

Tingwei Zhang: STRIVING TO BE A GLOBAL CITY FROM BELOW :The Restructuring of Shanghai’s urban Districts. from Xiangming Chen, Shanghai Rising, 2009


Lecture 11 by Yu Hai: Aspects of Shanghai Studies (1)

Lecture 12 by Yu Hai: Aspects of Shanghai Studies (2)

Yu Hai: Becoming a Chinese Cosmopolitan Place: Tianzifang Beyond the Global-local Duality

Yu Hai: Narrative of Historic Block Renovation in Power and Concept Dimensions
- Case of Tianzifang in Shanghai

Yu Hai: Urban Renovation in Shanghai’s Inner-City in Social-Spatial Perspective

Yu Hai: The Shanghainese People and the Identity of City of Shanghai

Yunxiang Yan: Of hamburger and social space: Consuming McDonalds in Beijing, *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*, Edited by Deborah S. Davis, University of California

Albert Wing Tai Wai. Place promotion and iconography in Shanghai’s Xintiandi. Habitat International, 2006, 30: 245~260

Wang Xiaoming: Under the sky of Shanghai

Tianshu Pan: Communal memory, Spatializing Strategy, and neighborhood Gentrification in Post-reform Shanghai

Fulong Wu: Rediscovering the ‘Gate’ under Market Transition: From Work-Unit Compounds to Commodity Housing Enclaves.
### Time Table for Chinese Culture and Society

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>Course Orientation</td>
<td>Lecture given by Nathan &amp; Anning Hu</td>
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<td><strong>Course Orientation</strong></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td><strong>The early stages of Reform and Opening (the 1980s)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>From ephemeral backlash to intensified reform (the 1990s)</strong></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Lecture 3</td>
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<td><strong>Interpreting the “China model” today</strong></td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<td><strong>The diversity of the Chinese experience</strong></td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<td><strong>Chinese Culture: Ancestor Worship, Guanxi, and Confucian Ethics</strong></td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<td><strong>The Culture of Shanghai I: the Identity and Life Style of Shanghainess</strong></td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
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<td><strong>The Culture of Shanghai II: Nostalgia, Gentrification, and Consumerism</strong></td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td><strong>Religions in China: Survival and Revival.</strong></td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
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| Week 11 | May 10 | Lecture 9 | Lecture given by Prof. Yu Hai  
**From Cosmopolitan city to Socialist Shanghai (the 1840s – the 1990s)** |
| Week 12 | May 17 | Lecture 10 | Lecture given by Prof. Yu Hai  
**Globalizing Shanghai (since 1990)** |
| Week 13 | May 24 | Lecture 11 | Lecture given by Prof. Yu Hai  
**Aspects of Shanghai Studies (1)** |
| Week 14 | May 31 | Lecture 12 | Lecture given by Prof. Yu Hai  
**Aspects of Shanghai Studies (2)** |
| Week 15 | Jun. 7 | | **Studying and Writing** |