

SOCY2023

Contemporary Chinese Society: Inequality and Social Stratification

2022 Semester 2

Course Instructor

Dr. Fangqi Wen

Time and Location

Lecture (Every Tuesday Between 10:00am and 12:00pm; Online Only)

Tutorial Session (Every Friday Between 11:00am and 12:00pm)

Zoom

[Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 836 8627 6135

Password: 952673

Student Consultation Day and Hour

Every Friday 13:00pm to 14:00pm or By Appointment

Course Description

This course examines contemporary Chinese society (1949 to the present). It has three main objectives: (1) to examine the social institutions and structures (e.g., family, household registration system, and education system) shaping everyday life, and the major sources (e.g., gender, urban/rural origin, and class) of inequality in Chinese society; (2) to understand contemporary Chinese society from a historical perspective (e.g., the socialist and post-socialist transitions), and explore the causes and consequences of social change and continuity; and (3) to examine Chinese society from a comparative perspective (e.g., inequality level by international standard), and in relation to key concepts and debates in sociology.

Learning Outcomes

Students will have the knowledge and skills to (1) understand the structures, institutions and processes shaping contemporary Chinese society; (2) draw on key concepts in sociology to evaluate debates about the nature of contemporary Chinese society, the relationship between historical continuity and change, and major social issues facing China; (3) assess empirical evidence reported in academic publications; (4) develop their analytical tools and research, by participating in tutorial discussions, preparing and writing research essays, and preparing for mid-semester and final examinations.

Assessment Details

Assessment Item	Value	Length	Due Date
Tutorial participation	10%	1 hour	Each week
Tutorial presentation	10%	12-15 minutes	Subject to assignment
Short essay (tutorial paper)	15%	800 words	5pm Wednesday of the week after the tutorial presentation
Mid-semester in-class exam	10%	15 minutes	30 August, 2022
Long essay	30%	2,500 words	5pm Tuesday 1 November, 2022
Final exam	25%	2 hours	Exam period

Assessment item 1: Tutorial participation (10%)

All students are expected to participate actively in tutorial discussions, by demonstrating that they have read the readings required for each tutorial, offering interpretations of the readings, and presenting questions to the tutorial group. The tutor will keep a record of each student's attendance. [Reading assignments will be uploaded on Wattle one week before the corresponding tutorial session.](#)

Assessment item 2: Tutorial presentation (10%)

Each student will be assigned a presentation topic based on her/his preference, and each student will present once in the tutorial session during the semester. A tutorial presentation lasts around 12 to 15 minutes. The aim of the presentation (and the criteria according to which a presentation is assessed) is to elucidate, and critically assess the analytical usefulness of the concepts and arguments used in the readings each week and, through raising insightful questions, stimulate discussion among other members of the group. The student presenting in Week 2 (the first tutorial session) will earn bonus points.

Assessment item 3: Short essay 800 words (15%)

Each student is expected to write one short essay (or called tutorial paper) of approximately 800 words. Each student should submit a paper on the same topic as their tutorial presentation, but this must be a different topic from that of the long essay. The short essay (tutorial paper) should address ONE or TWO of the questions raised for tutorial discussion in the relevant week. The aim of writing a short essay (tutorial paper) is to (1) summarize the presentation and (2) critically respond to comments raised from the audience. The short essay (tutorial paper) is due at 5 pm Wednesday of the week after the tutorial presentation. Late submission is not accepted unless permission is granted before the due date.

Assessment item 4: Mid-semester in-class exam (10%)

Students will answer 10 multiple choice questions. All questions are based on materials covered in the first half of the course. The aim of this exam is to comprehensively measure students' mastery of the materials. The mid-semester in-class exam will take place during the last 15 minutes of class in Week 6 (30 August, 2022).

Assessment item 5: Long essay 2,500 words (30%)

Students should choose one essay topic based on materials learnt in this course. They should ensure that the chosen essay topic is NOT the same as the topic of their tutorial presentation and short essay (tutorial paper). This more lengthy essay provides students an opportunity to investigate and discuss a China related topic in more details. It will be assessed by (1) if a clear research question is proposed, (2) if the research question is answered by critical analysis, and (3) if the paper is well-structured and well-written. The long essay is due at 5pm on Tuesday 1 November. Late submission is not accepted unless permission is granted before the due date.

Assessment item 6: 2 hour final exam (25%)

Students will answer 20 multiple choice questions and 2 essay questions. All questions are based on materials covered in the entire course. The aim of this exam is to comprehensively measure students' mastery of the materials. The final exam will take place during the exam period (3-19 November, 2022).

Course Structure and Content

July 26, 2022

Week 1 – Introduction to the course; China's modern history in a nutshell

MacFarquhar, Roderick. et al. 1987. "The People's Republic. Part 1, The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1949-1965." In Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of China* (Vol. 14). ([Frontmatter and Chapter 1](#))

MacFarquhar, Roderick. et al. 1991. "The People's Republic. Part 2, Revolutions Within the Chinese Revolution, 1966-1982." In Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of China* (Vol. 15). ([Frontmatter](#))

Aug 2, 2022

Week 2 – Family, Marriage, and Kinship

Jacka, Tamara, Andrew B. Kipnis, and Sally Sargeson. 2013. *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change*. Cambridge University Press. ([Chapter 1](#))

Davis, Deborah, and Stevan Harrell. (Ed.). 1993. *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*. University of California Press. ([Introduction](#))

Peng, Yusheng. 2004. "Kinship Networks and Entrepreneurs in China's Transitional Economy." *American Journal of Sociology* 109(5): 1045-1074.

Aug 9, 2022

Week 3 – Household Registration System, Internal Migration, and Rural-Urban Inequality

Wu, Xiaogang, and Donald J. Treiman. 2004. "The Household Registration System and Social Stratification in China: 1955–1996." *Demography* 41(2): 363-384.

Wu, Xiaogang, and Donald J. Treiman. 2007. "Inequality and Equality under Chinese Socialism: The Hukou System and Intergenerational Occupational Mobility." *American Journal of Sociology* 113(2): 415-445.

Chan, Kam Wing. 2018. *Urbanization with Chinese Characteristics: The Hukou System and Migration*. Routledge. ([Chapter 6](#))

Guest Lectures

Work and Life of Rural Migrants in Chinese Cities
by Chunyuan Gao (PhD Candidate at PSC)

Rural-Urban Inequality in Medical Care and Health Outcomes
by Mengxue Chen (PhD Candidate at the School of Demography)

Aug 16, 2022

Week 4 – Education System and Educational Inequality

Hannum, Emily, and Albert Park. (Ed.). 2007. *Education and Reform in China*. Routledge. ([Chapter 1](#) and [Chapter 14](#))

Rozelle, Scott, and Natalie Hell. 2020. *Invisible China: How the Urban-Rural Divide Threatens China's Rise*. The University of Chicago Press. ([Chapter 7](#))

Aug 23, 2022

Week 5 – Socialist and Post-Socialist Economic Transitions

Walder, Andrew. G. 2015. *China under Mao: A Revolution Derailed*. Harvard University Press. ([Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 5](#))

Nee, Victor. 1989. "A Theory of Market Transition: From Redistribution to Markets in State Socialism." *American Sociological Review* 54(5): 663-681.

Aug 30, 2022

Week 6 – Class and Social Stratification

Fei, Hsiao-Tung. 1946. "Peasantry and Gentry: An Interpretation of Chinese Social Structure and Its Changes." *American Journal of Sociology* 52(1): 1-17. (Optional)

Treiman, Donald J., and Andrew G. Walder. 2019. "The Impact of Class Labels on Life Chances in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 124(4): 1125-1163.

Nee, Victor. 1996. "The Emergence of a Market Society: Changing Mechanisms of Stratification in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 101(4): 908-949.

Bian, Yanjie, and John R. Logan. 1996. "Market Transition and the Persistence of Power: The Changing Stratification System in Urban China." *American Sociological Review* 61(5): 739-758.

Sep 6, 2022

Week 7 – Mid-Semester Break

Sep 13, 2022

Week 8 – Mid-Semester Break

Sep 20, 2022

Week 9 – Income and Wealth Inequality

Xie, Yu, and Xiang Zhou. 2014. "Income Inequality in Today's China." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(19): 6928-6933.

Piketty, Thomas, Li Yang, and Gabriel Zucman. 2019. "Capital Accumulation, Private Property, and Rising Inequality in China, 1978–2015." *American Economic Review* 109(7): 2469-96.

Lu, Peng, Xiaoguang Fan, and Fan Fu. 2021. "Profile of the Super Rich in China: A Social Space Analysis." *The British Journal of Sociology* 72(3): 543-565.

Sep 27, 2022

Week 10 – Gender Inequality

Andors, Phyllis. 1983. *The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949-1980*. Indiana University Press. ([Chapter 4](#))

Zeng, Junxia, Xiaopeng Pang, Linxiu Zhang, Alexis Medina, and Scott Rozelle. 2014.

"Gender Inequality in Education in China: A Meta-Regression Analysis." *Contemporary Economic Policy* 32(2): 474-491. (Optional)

He, Guangye, and Xiaogang Wu. 2017. "Marketization, Occupational Segregation, and Gender Earnings Inequality in Urban China." *Social Science Research* 65: 96-111.

Ji, Yingchun, Xiaogang Wu, Shengwei Sun, and Guangye He. 2017. "Unequal Care, Unequal Work: Toward a more Comprehensive Understanding of Gender Inequality in Post-Reform Urban China." *Sex Roles* 77:765-778.

Oct 4, 2022

Week 11 – Population Issues I: Family Planning Policies and Sex Ratio Imbalance

Cai, Yong, and Wang Feng. 2021. "The Social and Sociological Consequences of China's One-Child Policy." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47:14.1-14.20.

Ebenstein, Avraham. 2010. "The 'Missing Girls' of China and the Unintended Consequences of the One Child Policy." *Journal of Human Resources* 45(1): 87-115.

Almond, Douglas, Hongbin Li, and Shuang Zhang. 2019. "Land Reform and Sex Selection in China." *Journal of Political Economy* 127(2): 560-585.

Oct 11, 2022

Week 12 – Population Issues II: Fertility Decline, Population Aging, and Beyond

Cai, Yong. 2010. "China's below-Replacement Fertility: Government Policy or Socioeconomic Development?" *Population and Development Review* 36(3): 419-440.

Feng, Wang, Yong Cai, and Baochang Gu. 2013. "Population, Policy, and Politics: How Will History Judge China's One-Child Policy?" *Population and Development Review* 38: 115-129.

Zhao, Zhongwei, and Fei Guo. (Ed.). 2007. *Transition and Challenge: China's Population at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Oxford University Press. ([Chapter 11](#))

Oct 18, 2022

Week 13 – Social Norms and Public Opinion

Peng, Yusheng. 2010. "When Formal Laws and Informal Norms Collide: Lineage Networks versus Birth Control Policy in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 116(3): 770-805.

Chen, Ting, James Kai-sing Kung, and Chicheng Ma. 2020. "Long Live Keju! The

Persistent Effects of China's Civil Examination System." *The Economic Journal* 130(631): 2030-2064.

Pan, Jennifer, and Yiqing Xu. 2018. "China's Ideological Spectrum." *Journal of Politics* 80(1): 254-273.

Whyte, Martin. 2010. *Myth of the Social Volcano: Perceptions of Inequality and Distributive Injustice in Contemporary China*. Stanford University Press. (Selected Excerpts to be Determined)

Oct 25, 2022

Week 14 – Understanding Contemporary Chinese Society from Historical and International Comparative Perspectives

Wu, Xiaogang. 2019. "Inequality and Social Stratification in Postsocialist China." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45: 363-382.

Market Transition Symposium. 1996. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Piketty, Thomas. 2014. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press. (Selected Excerpts to be Determined) (Optional)