**Introduction to Contemporary Chinese Society**

**Instructor**: Zhaojin Lyu, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Semester**: Fall semester

**Course Level**: Junior, Senior and Graduate

**Credit**: 2

**Course Description**

Since the 1980s, China’s rapid growth, modernization and globalization have led to remarkable social changes. This course provides an overarching picture of society and social change in contemporary China. Covering topics such as social stratification and mobility, demographic transformation, social enterprise, cultural heritage, and new media etc., this course offers a variety of perspectives to understand China’s past, present and its future ambition. It encourages students to rethink Western stereotypes about China and its people, and to have an objective evaluation of China’s position in this changing world.

Six knowledgeable professors will lecture on different topics respectively, based on their specialties. Students are required to attend every class, and are encouraged to engage in class discussion.

**Assessment**

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| --- | --- |
| Reading Reports | 40% |
| Research Proposal | 30% |
| Presentation | 20% |
| Attendance | 10% |

**Notes on the assignments:**

1. **Reading reports:** students will choose four out of the six themes (list in the syllabus, Week 4-15) to write a reading report about each. Student shall write based on the assigned readings and other relevant literature. Word limit: 1000-2000.

2. **Research proposal:** eachstudent will choose a possible topic for the research proposal in the beginning of the semester, and decide the research question and research design in the midterm. The final research proposal shall be academic in which a literature review is included. Word Limit: 5000-6000.

3. **Presentation:** in the Week 14-15 class, each student will present his/her research proposal in front of the class. Each presentation is completed in 15 minutes, which is followed by an in-class discussion for 5-10 minutes.

**Course materials:**

This class does not use any textbook. Reference materials are listed in the syllabus.

**Syllabus：**

**Week 1: Introduction**

**Lecturer:** Zhaojin Lyu

*This class introduces key practical aspects of the course including the syllabus, assignments, presentations, and research proposal.*

**Week 2-3: China in the Twentieth Century**

**Lecturer:** Zhaojin Lyu

*This section gives a brief overview of key historical moments for China in the 20th century which led to social, economic and cultural characteristics of contemporary China, for the purpose of providing students with the contextual knowledge needed for the rest of the course.*

**Week 4-5: Social Stratification and Mobility in Transitional China**

**Lecturer**: Yuxiao Wu

*This section reviews literature on social stratification and mobility in China since the marketization reform launched in 1978, for the purpose of revealing the transformation of social structure and its underlying mechanisms in transitional China. Themes of this class are related to social strata, gender, education, and housing wealth.*

**Readings:**

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

**Assignments:** a reading report is due before the Week 5 class if this topic is selected.

**Week 6-7: Demographic Transformation in China**

**Lecturer**: Xiangnan Chai

*This section introduces the transformation of demographic structure in China, according to the results from the seventh population census. From the perspectives of life-course and health inequality, it especially focuses on the aging problem in China and potential policies to achieve active aging.*

**Readings:**

Eric Klinenberg, 2012. *Going Solo*. Penguin Press.

Cliquet，R. 1991. “The Second Demographic Transition: Fact or Fiction?”, *Strasbourg France Council of Europe* 2: 85－88.

Raymo，J.M．，Park，H．，Xie，Y. & Yeung，J.W．2015．“Marriage and Family in East Asia: Continuity and Change”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 1: 471－492.

**Assignments**: a reading report is due before the Week 7 class if this topic is selected.

**Week 8-9: Development and Transformation of Social Enterprise in China**

**Lecturer**: Rong Tian

*This section introduces literature on the success and challenge of social enterprise in China and its future transformation.*

**Readings:**

Stanford Social Innovation Review (ssir.org)

Frumkin, P. 2005. *On Being Nonprofit: A Conceptual and Policy Premier*. Harvard University Press.

Renz, D., & Herman, R. (Eds.). 2016. *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management (4th ed.).* Wiley.

Drucker, P. 1990. *Managing the Non-Profit Organization*. Routledge.

**Assignments**: a reading report is due before the Week 9 class if this topic is selected.

**Week 10-11: Cultural Heritage in Urban and Rural China**

**Lecturer**: Derui Yang

*From sociological and anthropological perspective, this section introduces the preservation of intangible and tangible cultural heritages in contemporary China and how they impact urban and rural space.*

**Readings:**

Bodolec, Caroline. 2013. “The Chinese Paper-Cut: From Local Inventories to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”, in Regina F. Bendix, Aditya Eggert and Arnika Peselmann (Eds.). *Heritage Regimes and the State (Second Edition)*：249-264.

Zhuang, Xiaoping, Yong Yao & Jun Li, 2019. “Sociocultural Impacts of Tourism on Residents of World Cultural Heritage Sites in China”, *Sustainability*, 11(3): 840

**Assignments:** a reading report is due before the Week 11 class if this topic is selected.

**Week 12-13: New Media and Daily Life in China**

**Lecturer**: Wenzheng Sun

*With a chronological illustration of the development of new media in China, this section introduces the characteristics of new media in different times, and shows how daily life of Chinese people is embedded in new media.*

**Readings:**

Silverstone, R. 1999. “What’s new about new media?”, *New Media & Society*, 1(1): 10-82.

Livingstone, S. 2008. “On the mediation of everything: ICA presidential address 2008”, *Journal of communication,* 59(1): 1-18.

**Assignments:** a reading report is due before the Week 13 class if this topic is selected.

**Week 14-15: The “One Belt, One Road” Initiative and the World**

**Lecturer:** Zhaojin Lyu

*This section introduces the grand vision of the Belt and Road Initiative, its implementation in various parts of the world, and what it means for China*.

**Readings:**

Huang, Yiping, 2016, “Understanding China's Belt & Road Initiative: Motivation, framework and assessment”, *China Economic Review,* 40: 314-321.

Summers, Tim, 2016, “China's 'New Silk Roads': sub-national regions and networks of global political economy”, *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9): 1628-1643.

**Assignments:** a reading report is due before the Week 15 class if this topic is selected.

**Week 16-17: Student Presentation**