



Globalization and Urbanization: China's Urban Transformation and What It Means for the World

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Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 48 course hours. One course hour is 45 minutes.

Recommended Credit: 3

Course Description

Today, the world is an urban place—more than half of the world's population lives in towns and cities. It is especially important to understand urban development in developing countries, where the great bulk of urban growth is now taking place. This course examines China's urbanization in the past six decades, including its processes, forces and issues. Since the second half of 20th century, China has undergone unprecedented urban transformation that in turn is changing the landscape of this most populous country. The urbanization rate in China grew from roughly 10% in 1949, to 17.9% in 1978, to 26.2% in 1990, to 36.1% in 2000, and to 49.7% in 2010. China just crossed the 50% mark in 2011. By the end of 2017, about 813 million people, or 58.5% of total population were living in urban areas. China, once the biggest agrarian nation, is becoming the biggest urban society in the world, which not only poses enormous opportunities as well as challenges for China, but also carries far-reaching implications for the rest of the world.

This course introduces students to the recent literature on the immense urban transformation and offers a critical understanding of China's urbanization, social-spatial restructuring and urban issues. The course focuses on the post-1978 period, which fundamentally differs from the previous 30 years of state socialism. The topics are mainly divided into four parts. Part I sets the context, describing the global context of urban development, China's geographical setting, and historical urban system. Part II focuses on the processes and the uniqueness of urbanization in China. Issues such as the socialist ideology, the household registration (*hukou*) system, rural-urban migration and globalization will be discussed. We will also pay special attention to the urban development in Shanghai. Part III outlines the social-spatial restructuring of Chinese cities in post-reform era. We will study the urban expansion on the edge as well as the urban renewal in the old city core. Part IV examines various urban issues emerging with the rapid urbanization, such as the massive migration, citizenship and assimilation, urban land and housing problems, urban inequality and social discontent, and environmental issues.

This course will combine lectures, class discussions, documentary and book discussions, and fieldtrips to help students better grasp the course materials. Students will be engaged in active learning activities, such as synthesizing reading materials, identifying questions for discussion, leading discussion, writing book reviews and research paper.



Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will:

- Be familiar with literature on urban development in China
- Understand the processes and uniqueness of China's urbanization
- Understand the impact of socialist ideology and institutions on urbanization
- Be able to assess the impact of globalization on Chinese urbanization
- Understand the pattern and dynamics of rural-urban migration and its implications
- Be able to analyze the social-spatial restructuring of Chinese cities
- Be able to discuss major urban issues in China
- Be able to discuss the implications of China's urban transformation to the world

Textbooks

Weiping Wu and Piper Gaubatz, 2013. *The Chinese city*, New York: Routledge.

Thomas J. Campanella, 2008. *The concrete dragon: China's urban revolution and what it means for the world*. Princeton Architectural Press.

Required Readings

1. Peter Hessler, 2010. *Country driving: journey through China from farm to factory*. New York: Harper.
2. Bianca Bosker. 2013. *Original copies: architectural mimicry in contemporary China*, University of Hawaii Press.
3. Wade Shepard, 2015. *Ghost cities of China: the story of cities without people in the world's most populated country*, London: Zed Books.

There are additional pieces of required readings, as listed by topics in the section of class schedule. All materials can be accessed online at the university blackboard system.

Assessment and Grading

Your final grade in this course will be assessed as follows:

Class attendance & participation:	15%
Book discussion & review:	20%
Documentary review:	15%
Final research paper:	50%
Proposal:	5%
Presentation:	15%
Paper:	30%

Final grade will be based on the following scale:

- A 94-100
- A- 90-93
- B+ 87-89
- B 84-86



- B- 80-83
- C+ 77-79
- C 70-76
- D 60-69
- F 0-59

Class discussion & participation: 15%

Attendance in class, including field trips, is expected. I also expect you to be prepared to actively participate in class discussions and share your ideas that are relevant to the class. You should read the assigned reading before attending class. Starting from **the second class, students are required to submit one discussion question based on the readings for the next day's lecture to my email lmli@soci.ecnu.edu.cn by 8pm every Sunday & Tuesday.**

Starting from the second class, every lecture will begin with the discussion questions you send to me. Your contributions to class discussions are an important aspect of your overall performance in the course, which will be recorded and credited. Missing 3 or more discussion questions out of total 10 would lead to a grade of zero for participation. If you cannot attend a specific class, please notify the instructor in advance.

Book discussions & reviews: 20%

Two books are selected to help students better understand the urban transformation and its major issues in China. Students will form two groups to introduce and discuss each of them. There will be two tutorial sections dealing with the assigned books, each of which will last about 50 minutes. It is hoped that the book discussions can facilitate students to interact and learn from each other.

Students should read the book and write a 1-2 pages summary and review (12-point Times New Roman or similar font, double-spaced) before the class. Then they are expected to do a presentation to introduce the book and prepare several discussion questions to lead the class discussion. Imagine you are the teacher and you are trying to describe the reading materials to your classmates. There is no better way to learn something than to teach it to someone else. Other students are expected to identify at least one question from the book for class discussion. You are also encouraged to compare the Chinese experiences variously to that of your home country. The written book summary should include at least one paragraph of your comments. The book review is due one week after the book discussion.

Documentary review: 15%

We will watch a documentary *The Last Train Home* on July 10. You need to write a review essay based on this film. Students must demonstrate a clear grasp of issues raised in the film and offer critical discussions by engaging the course materials. The essay will be 800-1,000.

Your essay can focus on one of the questions list below.



1. What forces and structures are at work underlying the couple's migration decision of leaving their children behind and working in the city?
2. As migrant workers of different cohorts, how did the daughter differ from her parents? Why did the daughter quit the school to work in the factory? For the generational conflict arising between the parents and the daughter, please present a SOCIOLOGICAL explanation to it. (Note: rather than focusing some individual traits such as personal character or particular experience, you should look at how personal trouble is shaped by the larger social forces.)
3. Based on the film, please discuss the impacts of migrant workers on their original rural community. Make sure to provide evidences from the film

Final research paper: 50%

You will develop and present a final paper of your choice, with approval of the instructor. Your paper should answer a significant research question about China's urban development and/or future prospect.

Choose a topic and write a proposal: The topic must be relevant to urban development in China. Your final paper may either be a literature review on a specific topic related to the content of the class, or a research project involving collection and analysis of qualitative or quantitative data. You can also focus on a specific place (a province or a city or an urban district) in China and discuss its urban development and related issues. Another possible topic may be a comparative analysis between China and your home country concerning urban development or issues. Write a short outline of your proposal about your topic, research question you are going to address, and the possible ways to collect information and data for your paper.

Collect information, data and references: You should collect and analyze information on the nature of the issue, its history, underlying processes, or its implications. You may consider interviewing people in town and participating and observing an event. You are strongly encouraged to include field visit in your paper. You should also include a review of academic studies on your topic. You are welcome to talk to me about data collection and possible references.

Write and present it: The final paper should consist of an introduction, a brief review of other people's work, your major analysis and argument, and a summary or conclusion. You need to form a clear statement regarding your research question.

At the end of your paper, please list all sources of information used alphabetically. Paper should be about 8-12 double-spaced pages, with 12-point font in length. **Please submit an electronic version to me. The presentation of your final paper is scheduled in the last class.** To save time and avoid all technological troubles, students must create PPT or pdf file and send them to me in advance, and I will have them ready for presentation in computer. I am looking forward to learning from you.

Please note:



Schedules, topics, readings and films may be revised at times, in which case announcements will be made in class as appropriate.

You are expected to check email frequently so as to keep posted about course announcement and access the course materials.

Written assignments must be turned in on the dates specified. Late work will be penalized with a 0.5 point deduction for each day of delay.

Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and will not be tolerated.

Class Schedule

	Topics	Readings
Week 1	1. Understanding Chinese cities: the global context	Campanella, The concrete dragon, Introduction & Epilogue
	2. Understanding Chinese cities: the geographical setting and historical legacies	Wu and Gaubatz, The Chinese city, Introduction, chapter 1-2
	3. Urbanization in socialist China: industrialization without urbanization <i>Documentary: From Mao to Mozart</i>	Chan, K.W. 1992. Economic growth strategy and urbanization policy in China, 1949-82, <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i> , 16: 275-305.
Week 2	4. Globalization, economic reform and urbanization in China Book discussion 1: China's urban transformation	Wu and Gaubtz, The Chinese city, Chapter 6 Hessler,P.2010.Country driving: journey through China from farm to factory
	5. Rural-urban migration and urbanization <i>Documentary: Last Train Home</i>	Wu and Gaubtz, The Chinese city, Chapter 5
	6. Globalizing Shanghai	Campanella, 2008. The concrete dragon, chapter 2.
Week 3	7. Urban space restructuring: growth on the edge <i>Field trip: Thames Town</i>	Campanella, The concrete dragon, Chapter 7
	8. Urban space restructuring: property-led urban redevelopment <i>Field trip: Shanghai Sculpture Space or Red Town</i>	Campanella, The concrete dragon, Chapter 5
	9.Citizenship stratification in metropolitan China	Li, L.M., Li, S.M. and Chen,Y.F. 2010. Better City, Better Life, But for Whom? The



	Book discussion 2: Issues of China's urbanization	hukou and resident card system and the consequential citizenship stratification in Shanghai, <i>City, Culture, and Society</i> , 1, 145-154. Wade Shapard, 2015. <i>Ghost cities of China</i>
Week 4	10. Transition to a nation of homeowners <i>Documentary: China on four wheels, episode 1</i>	Wu and Gaubtz, <i>The Chinese city</i> , Chapter 10
	11. Environmental consequences of Chinese urbanization <i>Documentary: The warriors of Qiugang</i>	Wu and Gaubtz, <i>The Chinese city</i> , Chapter 11
	12. Final Research Paper Presentation and Due	What do you learn about Chinese city?

Field trips

To help you better understand what we learn from the class, we will organize two field trips for this course. Your participation is expected.

Sites	Objectives
1. Thames Town, Songjiang	Urban sprawl and suburbanization in China
2. Remain of the city wall and Confucius Temple in Shanghai	Historical urban development in Shanghai

Useful websites to learn about urban China

- <http://www.urbanchinainitiative.org/en/>
- <http://www.chinaurbandevelopment.com/>
- <http://urbachina.hypotheses.org/>
- <http://urbanizationproject.org/>

Useful websites to learn about Shanghai

- <http://www.virtualshanghai.net/>
- <http://virtualshanghai.hypotheses.org/>
- <http://www.historic-shanghai.com/>
- <http://www.talesofoldchina.com/shanghai/intro.php>
- <http://shanghaistreetstories.com/>
- <http://movingcities.org/>
- <http://www.shanghai-flaneur.com/>



Public accounts on WeChat

CityReads

SixthTone

Theworldofchinese

Course Instructor

Dr. Li Limei got a Ph.D. in Human Geography, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong. Currently she is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology, East China Normal University, Shanghai. She teaches courses on urban sociology, social geography, urban development in China, and social issues in Chinese society. Her research interests include urban housing, migrants and citizenship in Chinese cities. She has created a public subscription account on WeChat, “CityReads”, posting notes on city reads in both Chinese and English weekly.