

## Urban China: Space, Place, and Urban Transformation (GEOG 5503)



**Instructor:** Max D. Woodworth

**Class Time & Location:** MW 2:20-3:40 Hagerty 046

**Office Hours:** Fridays 1-3pm

**Email:** woodworth.42@osu.edu

China crossed a threshold in 2011: in that year, more than 50 percent of the country's population had come to reside in cities. This historic transition from an agrarian society to a majority urban one testifies to the radical changes that have transformed China starting in the early twentieth century, continuing through the Republican (1911-1949) and state socialist (1949-1978) periods, and gathering strength during the period of "reform and opening up" (1979-present). Given the scale, pace, and intensity of change, China's urban transformations present fundamental challenges for the country's future development and for global society.

This is a course in human geography that examines cities within China's social, economic, political, and cultural transformations since the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911CE). The purpose of the course is to provide a detailed empirical view of China's urbanization and a rigorous conceptual understanding of city development through close readings of key works in the field of Chinese urban studies.

Course requirements:

- 1) Ten reading responses (40%)
- 2) Final project (40%)
- 3) Attendance and participation (20%)

Assignments are graded along the standard Ohio State grade system.

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

“It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).”

## DISABILITY SERVICES

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## Explanation of Course Requirements

### Reading Responses

You are expected to turn in a reading response ten times during the semester. A reading response is a short (1 page single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font) reflection on one or more of the week's readings.

An effective reading response should provide two main things: (1) a concise summary of the reading's/readings' core argument(s) and (2) two or three paragraphs that provide reflections on the argument or the article(s) as a whole. Especially in the beginning of the semester when much of the material will surely be quite new and the context of it somewhat unfamiliar, do not feel obliged to render an extended critique of the article(s) or to stress over the "correctness" of your reflections. It will suffice to summarize the argument(s) or main point(s) and then to provide some immediate reflections that can serve as foundations for future readings. As the semester progresses, you will gain greater familiarity with China's particular context and the material, and you will naturally have more to say in response to articles. Expectations of the reading responses will rise accordingly.

Please review the syllabus and Carmen to check due dates times. All reading responses should be submitted through Carmen.

Précis are graded on the standard grading scale.

### Participation

Starting the second week of class, two students per week will be charged with formulating and circulating discussion questions. Discussion questions should be posted to Carmen in the Discussion forum. Each student will have two occasions during the semester to provide discussion questions. These will count toward the participation grade.

### Final Project

Each student is expected to submit a final project. These can take several forms: a research paper, a review of two or more books (7-8 pages single-spaced), a film analysis (7-8 pages single-spaced), or a creative assignment of the student's choice approved by the instructor. Project topics and formats should be contemplated early in the semester. A tentative topic along with an initial set of readings and sources will be due in early November.

### **Explanation of Grade Standards**

**A** (93 – 100%) = excellent understanding of the topic/question, insightful and thoughtful response to the material covered, goes beyond basic limits of assignment, persuasive and logical argumentation, no typographical or grammatical errors.

**A-** (90 – 92%) = superior understanding of the topic/question, insightful and thoughtful response to the material covered, goes beyond basic limits of assignment, strong argumentation, only minor typographical or grammatical errors.

**B+** (87 – 89%) = strong understanding of the topic/question, clear argumentation and logic, meets requirements of assignment, few typographical or grammatical errors or minor organizational problems.

**B** (83 – 86%) = competent understanding of the topic/question, adequate grasp of information, logical argument, possibly a few minor organizational problems or grammatical errors, but shows overall coherence in discussion, few typographical or grammatical errors or minor organizational problems.

**B-** (80 – 82%) = competent understanding of the topic/question, shaky grasp of information, possibly a few organizational problems or grammatical errors, but shows overall coherence in discussion.

**C+** (77 – 79%) = meets minimum requirements of the assignment but reveals superficial preparation through some problems with factual information (omissions or errors) and/or logical argument, more than a few grammatical and/or typographical errors.

**C** (73 – 76%) = meets minimum requirements of the assignment but reveals superficial preparation through problems with factual information (omissions or errors) and logical argument, more than a few grammatical and/or typographical errors.

**C-** (70 – 72%) = barely meets minimum requirements of the assignment, reveals weak preparation through problems with factual information (omissions or errors) and logical argument, has grammatical and/or typographical errors.

**D+** (67 – 69%) = work reveals inadequate preparation through illogical argumentation and/or numerous factual information errors, does not follow directions, poor use of resources, organizational problems and grammatical errors

**D** (60 – 66%) = inadequate work as revealed through illogical argumentation, numerous factual errors, does not follow directions, poor use of resources, serious writing problems

**E** (59 or lower) = work not turned in or does not match assignment requirements

**Check plus** = 100%

**Check** = 90%

**Check minus** = 80%

## **Additional Notes:**

### ***Is attendance mandatory?***

Yes. Every class meeting is important. Students must make a commitment to attend and be actively involved in this class. If an unavoidable conflict occurs, please be in communication with the instructor.

### ***When are the précis due?***

Précis must be submitted through Carmen on the dates listed in the syllabus, usually before noon.

### ***Do I have to talk in class?***

Yes. This is an upper-division, reading-intensive seminar. Active participation is required. Articulating your ideas with comments and questions will help you better understand the course material. Please be mindful to maintain a respectful and engaged format of questioning and debate such that everyone feels comfortable sharing his or her ideas with the class. Many students have little or no contact with China, so familiarity with the topic can vary widely among students. That said, everyone's input is valuable and questions – even of the most basic nature – are welcome.

### ***Will late assignments be accepted?***

Absolutely no late assignments will be accepted without a valid excuse (documented medical or family reason). No exceptions. Please do not request an exception.

### ***What should I do if I am struggling with the material?***

The course material is challenging and there is no expectation that you will grasp every detail upon first read. That is okay. Part of the educational enterprise is to tackle challenges piece by piece and derive from the material what you can. Some of the readings will reveal themselves over a longer span of time than this semester. Which is to say, your contact with this material now will enrich your understanding of it when you return to it in the years to come and in your life outside the classroom. If you struggle with the material, always feel free to raise questions in class.

### ***What if I receive special accommodations?***

This class is accessible to all students. If you require accommodations, let me know as soon as possible. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to make such a request.

### ***What about my electronic gadgets?***

Use of social media, web browsing, online shopping, or any other non-class-related use devices in class may lead to a blanket ban on all devices for the whole class. Cellphone gazing is definitely not permitted!

### ***What about formatting for written assignments?***

All assignments should be single-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font. Please label all your submitted materials in the following format: Familyname\_PrecisX.

**COURSE OUTLINE (please note that readings are subject to change)**

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment*
<b>Week 1</b>	Aug. 23	Course introduction	
<b>Week 2</b>	Aug. 26	The geographic setting	Wu & Gaubatz
	Aug. 28	Historical urban system	Wu & Gaubatz; Ren
<b>Week 3</b>	Sept. 2	<b>LABOR DAY – NO CLASS</b>	
	Sept. 4	Historical urban form	Steinhardt RR
<b>Week 4</b>	Sept. 9	Colonial legacies	Buck; Wasserstrom;
	Sept. 11		Musgrove
<b>Week 5</b>	Sept. 16	The Socialist <i>danwei</i>	Bray RR
	Sept. 18		
<b>Week 6</b>	Sept. 23	Urbanization under reform, part 1: spatial administration and governance	Ren; Ma; Lin & Ho
	Sept. 25		Lin & Yi; Walker & Buck RR
<b>Week 7</b>	Sept. 30	Politics of urban development; watch <i>The Mayor</i>	Hsing
	Oct. 2		
<b>Week 8</b>	Oct. 7	Urbanization under reform, part II: Urban entrepreneurialism; eco-urbanism	Ong; He & Wu; Theurillat; Caprotti RR (film review)
	Oct. 9		
<b>Week 9</b>	Oct. 14	Informal finance and urbanism	Woodworth & Ulfstjerne RR
	Oct. 16	<b>NO CLASS – Watch 24 City</b>	
<b>Week 10</b>	Oct. 21	Informal settlements	Al; Crawford RR (film review)
	Oct. 23		
<b>Week 11</b>	Oct. 28	Urban planning: processes & challenges	Wu F. RR
	Oct. 30		
<b>Week 12</b>	Nov. 4	Rural-urban migration and <i>hukou</i>	Ren; Chan Project topic
	Nov. 6		
<b>Week 13</b>	Nov. 11	<b>VETERANS DAY – NO CLASS</b>	
	Nov. 13	Sci-Fi Beijing	<i>Folding Beijing</i> RR
<b>Week 14</b>	Nov. 18	Culture and the city	Ren
	Nov. 20	“Displaced” China, Taipei	Allen
<b>Week 15</b>	Nov. 25	“Displaced” China, Hong Kong	Cheung RR
	Nov. 27	<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING</b>	
<b>Week 16</b>	Dec. 2	In-class presentations	
	Dec. 4		Final Project

## Detailed Course Reading List

### **Week 1**

Students unfamiliar with modern Chinese history and the crucial changes since 1978 are strongly advised to watch “Becoming a Superpower,” the second episode of the BBC documentary titled *China’s Capitalist Revolution*. You can watch the film by visiting Films on Demand, which can be accessed through the university library site’s Research Database list (link is on the right side of the library’s homepage). Each episode is about 45 minutes in length.

### **Week 2**

#### **Historical urban system and form**

Wu, W and P. Gaubatz (2013). *The Chinese City*. London: Routledge. Chapter 1, 2 & 3.

Ren, X. (2013). *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press). Chapter 1.

### **Week 3**

Steinhardt, N. (1999). *Chinese Imperial City Planning*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. Introduction.

### **Week 4**

#### **Colonial Legacies**

Buck, D. (1999). Railway City and National Capital: Two Faces of the Modern in Changchun. In J. Esherick (Ed.), *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press), pp. 65-89.

Wasserstrom, J. (1999). Locating Old Shanghai: Having Fits about Where It Fits. In J. Esherick (Ed.), *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press), pp. 192-210.

Musgrove, C. (1999). Building a Dream: Constructing a National Capital in Nanjing, 1927-1937. In J. Esherick (Ed.), *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press), pp. 139-157.

### **Week 5**

#### **The Socialist *danwei***

Bray, D. (2005). *Social Space and Governance in Urban China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press). Chapter 6.

### **Week 6**

#### **Urbanization under reform, part I: Spatial administration, urban governance**

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press). Chapter 2.

Ma, L. J. C. (2005). Urban administrative restructuring, changing scale relations and local economic development in China. *Political Geography* 24(4), pp. 477-497.

Lin, G. C. S. & Ho, S. P.S. (2005). The state, land system, and land development processes in contemporary China. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95(2), pp. 411-436.

Lin, G. C. S. & Yi, F. (2011). Urbanization of capital or capitalization on urban land? Land development and local public finance in urbanizing China. *Urban Geography* 32(1), pp. 50-79.

Walker, R. & Buck, D. (2007). The Chinese Road: Cities in the Transition to Capitalism. *New Left Review* 46, pp. 39-66.

### **Week 7**

#### **Politics of urban development**

Watch *The Mayor* in class.

Hsing, Y. (2006). Land and territorial politics in urban China. *The China Quarterly* 187, pp. 575-591.

### **Week 8**

#### **Urbanization under reform, part II: Urban entrepreneurialism, eco-urbanism**

Ong, L. H. (2014). State-led urbanization in China: skyscrapers, land revenue and “concentrated villages.” *The China Quarterly* 217, pp. 162-179.

He, S. & Wu, F. (2009). China's emerging neoliberal urbanism: perspectives from urban redevelopment. *Antipode* 41(2), pp. 282-304.

Theurillat, T. (2017). The role of money in China’s urban production: the local property industry in Qujing, a fourth-tier city. *Urban Geography* 38(6): 834-860.

Caprotti, F. (2014). Critical research on eco-cities? A walk through the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, China. *Cities* 36, pp. 10-17.

### **Week 9**

#### **Informal Finance and Urbanism**

Woodworth, Max and Michael Ulfstjerne. Taking Part: The social experience of informal finance in Ordos, Inner Mongolia. *Journal of Asian Studies* 75(3): 649-672.

### **Week 10**

#### **Informal settlements**

Al, S. (2014). Introduction: Villages in the City: A Guide to China’s Informal Settlements. In S. Al (Ed.), *Villages in the City: A Guide to South China’s Informal Settlements* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), pp. 1-8.



Crawford, M. & Wu, J. (2014). The Beginning of the End: Planning the Destruction of Guangzhou's Urban Villages. In S. Al (Ed.), *Villages in the City: A Guide to South China's Informal Settlements* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), pp. 19-28.

### **Week 11**

#### **Urban planning and its revival**

Wu, F. (2015) *Planning for Growth: Urban and Regional Planning in China*. London: Routledge. Chapters 2-4.

### **Week 12**

#### **Rural-urban migration and *hukou***

Chan, K.W. China's hukou system at 60: Continuity and reform.

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 4.

### **Week 13**

#### **Reading sci-fi Beijing**

Hao, Jing (2017). *Folding Beijing* (<https://uncannymagazine.com/article/folding-beijing-2/>)

### **Week 14**

#### **Culture and the city; Displaced China, Taipei**

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 6.

Allen, J. (2012) *Taipei: City of Displacements* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), Prologue & Chapter 5.

### **Week 15**

#### **Displaced China, Hong Kong/Macau**

Canny Leung Chi-Shan (2010). *My Intent Remains Unchanged, Solidarity with the Protesters!* See: [http://chinaheritage.net/journal/like-water-boiling-water/?fbclid=IwAR3zwyttqNL0h2G0ypVWV6Dqcktnmip6O19EkaJtWX7pRf0PatsTID\\_cdt8](http://chinaheritage.net/journal/like-water-boiling-water/?fbclid=IwAR3zwyttqNL0h2G0ypVWV6Dqcktnmip6O19EkaJtWX7pRf0PatsTID_cdt8)

### **Week 16**

#### **In-class presentations**

**Final paper is due Dec. 4 by the end of the day.**