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

Instructor: Max D. Woodworth
Class Time & Location: MW 12:45-2:05 McPherson Lab 2015
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4:30pm
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 précis (10 x 5% = 50%)
2) Final paper (40%)
3) Attendance and participation (10%)

Assignments are graded along the standard Ohio State grade system.
REGARDING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY AND DISABILITY SERVICES

“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).”

“Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.”
Précis
You are expected to turn in a précis ten times during the semester. A précis 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 précis should provide two main things: (1) a concise summary of the reading’s/readings’ core argument(s) in the opening paragraph and (2) two or three short 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 précis will rise accordingly.

Précis are due Sunday evening before 8pm and should be submitted through Carmen.

Précis are graded on the usual 0-100 scale.

Discussion Questions
Starting the second week of class, two or three students will be responsible for drafting discussion questions. Questions should be written in the appropriate Discussion box in Carmen. Provision of discussion questions will count toward your participation grade.

Final Paper
The final paper is expected to be 10-12 double-spaced pages in length. Papers can analytically examine a set of literature on a given topic, or can be an original research paper. Paper topics should be contemplated early in the semester. A tentative abstract and outline of the paper along with an initial set of readings and sources will be due near the mid-way point of the semester. Procrastinators generally do very poorly.
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 before 8pm on Sundays.

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 to you upon several readings and 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?
If you use an electronic device to read course texts, I would say that is a very bad choice. But if you must, you are permitted to have a device in class. However, if I discover you are distracted by social media, web browsing, online shopping, or any other non-class-related use of the device, I will ask you to leave class. It may surprise you know that students distracted by online devices are VERY noticeable. And it’s not a good look.

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 Schedule Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>The Geographic Setting</td>
<td>Ren; <em>China’s Capitalist Revolution</em></td>
<td>Bio</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Historical urban system and form</td>
<td>Wei and Gaubatz; Chang; Musgrove</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Urbanization, part I: Spatial administration, urban governance</td>
<td>Ren; Ma; Lin &amp; Ho; Cartier</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Urbanization, part II: Land governance &amp; land finance</td>
<td>Ren; Hsing; Lin &amp; Yi; Theurillat</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Urbanization, part III: Urban entrepreneurialism</td>
<td>Wei; Chien &amp; Wu</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Urbanization, part IV: Urbanization in China’s frontiers</td>
<td>Cliff; Woodworth</td>
<td>Final paper topic abstract</td>
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<td>and outline</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Urban planning</td>
<td>Wu F; Fang &amp; Zhang; Olds</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Housing: From <em>danwei</em> to <em>xiaogu</em></td>
<td>Bray; Tomba</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>No class – Spring Break</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Migration, migrants, informal settlements</td>
<td>Ren; Chan; Al; Crawford &amp; Wu; Wang, Wang, &amp; Wu</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Urban protest and social movements</td>
<td>Hsing; <em>Petition</em></td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>New urban landscapes</td>
<td>Ren; Gaubatz; Ren; He &amp; Wu; Ong; Woodworth</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Sci-fi Beijing</td>
<td><em>Folding Beijing</em></td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>New challenges: Inequality, ‘ghost cities’, in-class</td>
<td>Ren; Shin; Woodworth &amp; Wallace</td>
<td>Précis</td>
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<td>presentations</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>In-class presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
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<td>Final paper (May 1)</td>
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Detailed Course Reading List

Week 1
The Geographic Setting

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 (No class Jan. 15)
Historical urban system and form

Week 3
Historical urban system and form


Week 4
Urbanization, part I: Spatial administration, urban governance


Week 5
Urbanization, part II: Land governance & land finance


**Week 6**
**Urbanization, part III: Urban entrepreneurialism**


**Week 7**
**Urbanization, part IV: Urbanization in China’s frontiers**


**Week 8**
**Urban planning and its revival**


**Week 9**
**Housing: From danwei to xiaoqu**

Week 10
No class, spring break

Week 11
**Migration and migrants**


Week 12
**Urban protest and social movements**
Watch *Petition* (dir. Liang Zhao).


Week 13
**New urban landscapes**


**Week 14**
**Sci-fi Beijing**

**Week 15**
**New challenges: Inequality, ‘ghost cities’; in-class presentations**

**Week 16**
**In-class presentations**

**Final paper due May 1, noon.**