

## 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](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

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

## Detailed Course Reading List

### **Week 1**

#### **The Geographic Setting**

Ren, X. (2013). *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 1 “China Urbanized,” pp. 1-31.

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**

Wu, W and P. Gaubatz (2013). *The Chinese City*. London: Routledge. Chapters 1-2.

### **Week 3**

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

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

Chang, S. (1977). The Morphology of Walled Capitals. In G. W. Skinner (Ed.), *The City in Late-Imperial China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press), pp. 75-100.

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. 137-157.

### **Week 4**

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

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 2 “Governance,” pp. 32-56, 76-85.

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.

Cartier, C. (2015). Territorial Urbanization and the Party-State in China. *Territory, Politics, Governance*. Preview.

### **Week 5**

#### **Urbanization, part II: Land governance & land finance**

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 2 “Governance,” pp. 57-75.

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

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.

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

### **Week 6**

#### **Urbanization, part III: Urban entrepreneurialism**

Chien, S.S. and F. Wu (2011) The Transformation of China’s Urban Entrepreneurialism: The Case Study of the City of Kunshan. *Cross-Currents* 1(1).

Wei, Y.D. (2015) Zone Fever, Project Fever: Development Policy, Economic Transition, and Urban Expansion in China. *Geographical Review* 105(2): 156-177.

### **Week 7**

#### **Urbanization, part IV: Urbanization in China’s frontiers**

Cliff, T. (2013) Peripheral Urbanism: Making history on China’s northwest frontier. *China Perspectives* 3: 13-23.

Woodworth, M.D. (2011) Frontier Boomtown Urbanism. *Cross-Currents* 1(1).

### **Week 8**

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

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

Fang, K. & Zhang, Y. (2003). Plan and market mismatch: Urban redevelopment in Beijing during a period of transition. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 44(2), pp. 149-162.

Olds, K. Globalizing Shanghai: the ‘global intelligence corps’ and the building of Pudong. *Cities* 14(2), pp. 109-123.

### **Week 9**

#### **Housing: From *danwei* to *xiaoqu***

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

Tomba, L. (2014) *The Government Next Door: Neighborhood Politics in Urban China*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapter 3.

## Week 10

No class, spring break

## Week 11

### Migration and migrants

Ren, X. (2013). *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 4 “Migration,” pp. 116-144.

Chan, K. W. (2009). The Chinese *hukou* system at 50. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50(2), pp. 197-221.

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.

Wang, Y., Wang, Y. & Wu, J. (2009). Urbanization and informal development in China: urban villages in Shenzhen. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(4), pp. 957-973.

## Week 12

### Urban protest and social movements

Watch *Petition* (dir. Liang Zhao).

Hsing, Y. T. (2010). *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), Chapter 3: “Grassroots Resistance: Property Rights and Residents’ Rights.”

## Week 13

### New urban landscapes

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 3 “Landscape,” pp. 86-115.

Gaubatz, P. (1995). Urban transformation in post-Mao China: impacts of the reform era on China’s urban form. In D. Davis, R. Kraus, B. Naughton, & E. J. Perry (Eds.), *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 28-60.

Ong, A. (2011). Hyperbuilding: Spectacle, Speculation, and the Hyperspace of Sovereignty. In A. Roy & A. Ong (Eds.), *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell), pp. 98-126.

He, S. & Wu, F. (2005). Property-led redevelopment in post-reform China: a case study of Xintiandi redevelopment project in Shanghai. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 27(1), pp. 1-23.



Woodworth, Max D. From the shadows of the spectacular city: Zhang Dali's Dialogue and counter-spectacle in globalizing Beijing, 1995–2005. *Geoforum* 65 (2015): 413-420.

#### **Week 14**

##### **Sci-fi Beijing**

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

#### **Week 15**

##### **New challenges: Inequality, 'ghost cities'; in-class presentations**

Ren, X. (2013) *Urban China* (Malden, MA: Polity Press), Chapter 5 "Inequality," pp. 145-169 and Conclusion, pp. 191-196.

Shin, H. (2013). The right to the city and critical reflections on China's property rights activism. *Antipode* 45(5), pp. 1167-1189.

Woodworth, M. D. & Wallace, J. (Forthcoming). Parsing China's 'Ghost City' Controversy. *Urban Geography*.

#### **Week 16**

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

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