



Global China Program

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

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 52 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 6 decades, including its processes, forces and problems. 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 and transformed from a rural to a predominantly urban society, which poses enormous opportunities as well as challenges for China.

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 preceding 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. Nien Cheng, 1987. *Life and death in Shanghai*, Penguin Books
2. Peter Hessler, 2010. *Country driving: journey through China from farm to factory*. New York: Harper.
3. Michael Meyer.2015.*In Manchuria: a village called wasteland and the transformation of rural China*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
4. Rob Schmitz, 2016. *Street of eternal happiness: big city dreams along a Shanghai road*, Crown.
5. Wade Shapard,2015.*Ghost cities of China: the story of cities without people in the world's most populated country*, London: Zed Books.
6. Elizabeth C. Economy and Michael Levi,2014. *By all means necessary: how China's resource quest is changing the world*, Oxford.

There are additional pieces of required readings, as listed by topics in the section of class schedule. I will send the course materials to you via email.

Alternatively, you can access the materials from the online course system at ECNU.

<https://elearning.ecnu.edu.cn/webapps/login/login.jsp>

You need to use your student number to log in. Both account and password are your student number at ECNU.

Assessment and Grading

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

Class attendance & participation:	15%
Book discussions & reviews:	15%
Mid-term exam:	25%
Final research paper:	45%
Proposal:	7%
Presentation:	8%
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

Throughout the semester, you are required to finish each reading assignment on schedule, send me your discussion question one day before the class, attend class on time and actively take part in class discussion, participate the field trips, lead one book discussion and write one book review, and write a final research paper and present it in class.

Class Attendance & 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 and prepare one discussion question before attending class. Starting from **the second week** (except for mid-term exam and final presentation), **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 Tuesday.**

I will start the lecture by discussing some of your questions from the second week. Your contributions to class discussions are an important aspect of your overall performance in the course, which will be recorded and credited. In order to get a full mark for class attendance, you need to attend the class and send me at least 8 out of total 10 discussion questions. In other words, you have two quotas for missing class (except for the mid-term, final presentation and your book discussion session) without affecting your grade. Please use it wisely. Missing three classes or above will negatively affect your grade. **Missing 5 or more discussion questions out of 10 would lead to a grade of zero for participation.** For those who manage to attend all classes and field trips and send me 10 questions, they will get extra 1 point in the final grade.

If you cannot attend a specific class (including when you want to use your free quota), please notify me in advance.

Book Discussion & Review: 15%

Five books are selected to help students better understand the historical, social, economic, and political changes in urban China. Students will be divided into 6 groups (5-6 students in a group). Every group will be responsible for reading one of the assigned books and leading the book discussion in class. For that specific book, every member of the group should assume the role of leading discussants.



The leading discussants should read the book and prepare an introductory note (a PPT or PDF file) 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 and engage your audience. 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 leading discussants also need to write their own book review (1-2 pages, 12-point Times New Roman or similar font, double-spaced). The written book summary should include at least one paragraph of your comments. **It is due one week after the book discussion.**

It is hoped that the book discussions can facilitate students to interact and learn from each other. There will be five book discussion sessions dealing with the assigned books, each of which will last about 50 minutes.

In-class Mid-Term Exam: 25%

The mid-term exam is a closed-book test, no textbook, no notes, etc. The mid-term exam will contain several multiple-choice questions and short-essay questions. All materials covered in lectures, readings and documentaries in the first half semester may be tested. The test will ask students to demonstrate a clear grasp of course materials and offer critical discussions of issues raised in readings. **No make-up.**

Final Research Paper: 45%

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. Each student need to prepare an 8-minute presentation to introduce your research question and main findings. To save time and avoid all technological troubles, **students must create PPT/PPTX or pdf file and send them to me**, and I will have them ready for presentation in computer. I am looking forward to learning from you.

Please note:

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

You are expected to check email and online course system frequently so as to keep informed 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

Date	Topics	Readings
1	1. Understanding Chinese cities: The global context	Campanella, The concrete dragon, Introduction & Epilogue
2	2. Understanding Chinese cities: The geographical setting and historical legacies Documentary: China From Above (episode 1)	Wu and Gaubatz, The Chinese city, Introduction, chapter 1-2
3	3. Urbanization in socialist China: industrialization without urbanization Book discussion 1: urban life in Mao’s era	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. Cheng, N. Life and death in Shanghai
4	4. Globalization, economic reform and urbanization in China Book discussion 2: China’s urban	Wu and Gaubtz, The Chinese city, Chapter 6 Hessler,P. 2010.Country driving: journey through China from farm to factory



	transformation	
5	5. Rural-urban migration and urbanization Book discussion 3: China's villages under urbanization	Wu and Gaubtz, The Chinese city, Chapter 5 Michael Meyer, 2015. In Manchuria
6	6. Globalizing Shanghai Book discussion 4: Everyday life in a Shanghai street	Campanella,2008. The concrete dragon, chapter 2. Rob Schmitz, 2016. Street of Eternal Happiness
7	In-class closed-book Mid-term exam, 1.5 hours <i>Documentary: The Last Train Home</i>	
8	7. Urban space restructuring: growth on the edge Field trip: Thames Town	Campanella, The concrete dragon, Chapter 7
9	8. Urban space restructuring: property-led urban redevelopment Field trips: Xuhui Riverside, west bank	Campanella, The concrete dragon, Chapter 5
10	9.Citizenship stratification in metropolitan China Book discussion 5: China's urbanization: built for growth	Li, L.M., Li, S.M. and Chen,Y.F. 2010. Better City, Better Life, But for Whom? The hukou and resident card system and the consequential citizenship stratification in Shanghai, City, Culture, and Society, 1, 145-154. Wade Shapard,2015.Ghost cities of China
11	10. Transition to a nation of homeowners Book discussion 6: Environmental consequences of Chinese urbanization	Wu and Gaubtz, The Chinese city, Chapter 10 Elizabeth C. Economy and Michael Levi By all means necessary
12	11. Environmental consequences of Chinese urbanization	Wu and Gaubtz, The Chinese city, Chapter 11
13	Final research paper due and class presentation I	What do you learn about Chinese cities?
14	Final research paper due and class presentation II	What do you learn about Chinese cities?



Field trips

To complement our class learning, we will organize two field trips for this course, generally on Wednesday as our schedule allows.

Sites	Objectives	Readings
Thames Town, Songjiang	Urban expansion and suburbanization	Shen,J. and Wu, F.L. 2012. The development of master-planned communities in Chinese suburbs: a case study of Shanghai’s Thames Town
<i>Shikumen</i> Open House Museum and Museum of the First National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party at Xintiandi	Historical neighborhood preservation, urban redevelopment and gentrification	Ren, X.F. 2008. Forward to the Past: Historical Preservation in Globalizing Shanghai
Shanghai Sculpture Space or Red Town (a former steel plant)	Culture rehabilitation of industrial plant and creative industry development	

Useful websites to learn about urban China

- <http://www.urbanchinainitiative.org/en/>
- <http://www.chinaurbandevlopment.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/>
- <http://shanghaiist.com/>

Public accounts on WeChat

- CityReads
- Theworldofchinese
- SixthTone



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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.