

SOCI2106/UGEC2883
Economic Reform and Social Impacts in China

2025-26, Term2

Time: Tuesdays 10:30am -12:15pm

Venue: Li Koon Chun Hall LT1

Instructor:

Prof. ZHU, Ling (Angel)

Email: lingzhu@cuhk.edu.hk

Office: SB 435B

Office hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistants:

	CHEN, Junru	DU, Feixinyu (June)	DENG, Zixuan
<u>Email:</u>	junruchen@link.cuhk.edu.hk	junedu@link.cuhk.edu.hk	zxdeng@link.cuhk.edu.hk
<u>Office:</u>	Sino Building 422	Sino Building 422	Sino Building 421
<u>Office hours:</u>	Thursday 3:00-5:00 pm	Tuesday 12:30-2:30 pm	Tuesday 2:30-4:30 pm

Course Description

Focusing on economic reforms, students will be taught the impetus of the institutional changes in China and how they affect the cultural, socioeconomic and organizational lives of Chinese people. Key social science concepts and theories like institution, ideology, socialism, marketization, social control, civil society, industrialization, urbanization, stratification, family, socialization, and specialized terms in China studies like *guanxi* (關係), *danwei* (單位), *hukou* (戶口), harmonious society, China dream, floating population, rural-urban divide, one/two child(ren) policy, will be introduced and discussed from an integrated perspective. After taking this course, students should be able to grasp the transformation and development in key areas of China, including economic reform, political system and change, rural and urban development, social inequality, family and marriage, cultural and ideological issues, as well as other institutional developments.

Learning Objectives

1. Students are expected to grasp the basic knowledge about China's major social institutions such as socialist market economy, party-state apparatus, stratification system, and lineage values. They should also be able to understand the evolution of these institutions over the past several decades.
2. Students should be able to understand how social scientists analyze and examine the formation, evolution, and influences of the major social institutions in contemporary China. They are expected to grasp the key concepts and theories developed from social scientists from sociology, economics, political science, *etc.*
3. Besides basic facts and social science perspectives, students are encouraged to critically evaluate some controversial topics from different angles through writing assignments. The topics will include key dilemmas in contemporary China regarding economic growth and social equality, state capacity and democracy, traditional culture and modernization, *etc.*

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation will include three components:

1. In-class exercises. 32%

➤ Four in-class exercises (i.e., 8 points for each exercise) will be conducted randomly over the semester (all of them are short answer questions). For each in-class exercise, you will have **20 minutes** to finish the question during the class time.

2. Tutorial discussions. 28%

➤ Tutorials will be held in the *next* week we have in-class exercises. Students should take different positions (positive, negative, or neutral) to discuss those questions objectively in the tutorials. The performance of those discussions will be evaluated (so four tutorial discussions (i.e., 7 points for each tutorial) will be included in the final assessment).

➤ Please sign up for the tutorial groups using this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe2Mm_7XdnSKJS1mg9SwfSs_qW-nYuFAahGoJKhn_txiYl_fA/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=102729606573498821090.

3. Case study essay. 40%.

➤ Students will be given a specific topic about some current issues in China. They should use concepts or theories introduced in this course to analyze the case from multiple angles and write it cogently. Reward points will be given if students can raise new angles to discuss that topic logically and even offer some empirical and analytical evidence to support their arguments.

➤ The topic will be provided on **April 1st, 2026 (Wednesday)**. The due date of the essay is on **April 27th, 2026 (Monday), before 11:59 pm**.

➤ The final essay should be between **6-10 pages** (including references, 12pt font, double-spaced). You can use either Chinese or English for the final essay.

➤ The final essay must pass the CUHK Veriguide before the deadline. Please state clearly the program name, course code, course name, teacher's name, student's full name in English and Chinese, student ID, and date on the first page of your assignment, and attach the receipt from VeriGuide with your assignment. The assignments and receipts from VeriGuide are required to be submitted to the Course Blackboard. A submission box will be created for students to upload the documents.

➤ Late submission will result in the loss of one sub-grade per day (i.e., from B+ to B).

4. Class attendance.

➤ 1 point will be deducted for one unapproved absence.

➤ Attendance before the add-drop period is not counted.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations for any physical, psychological, or learning disability, or if you want to inform me about a medical situation, please email me or speak to me after class or during office hours. All paper or writing assignments can be finished at home.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Descriptors</u>
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirement.

* Plagiarism is subject to penalties. Please pay attention to the guidelines for academic honesty and citation by the Sociology Department (www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf) and the University (www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/)

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT) is permitted, but students should follow the university's guideline (<https://www.aqs.cuhk.edu.hk/documents/A-guide-for-students-use-of-AI-tools.pdf>). In particular, we adopt Approach 3 in the guideline, i.e., use only with explicit acknowledgement. AI tools should be used properly and acknowledged explicitly in the writing. Improper or unacknowledged use of these tools will be deemed plagiarism.

TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

(Subject to change)

Textbooks and Useful Links

There are no required textbooks but recommended ones for this course. Reading materials will come from multiple resources. The required readings are mainly assigned by Chinese studies committee in department of sociology.

Recommended books

- 陳健民，鐘華（編）“艱難的轉型—現代化與中國社會” 香港中文大學出版社，2016
- Buoye, Thomas, Kirk Denton, Bruce Dickson, Barry Naughton, and Martin K. Whyte, ed. 2002. *China: Adapting the Past, Confronting the Future*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies
- Perry, Elizabeth and Mark Selden ed. 2010. *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, 3rd Edition. London: Routledge.

Useful internet resources

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/socionexus/resources/chisoc/f-chisoc.htm>

Media

The China Daily <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>
The Global Times <http://www.globaltimes.cn/>
The Economic Observer <http://www.eeo.com.cn/>
China Digital Times <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/>
The South China Morning Post <https://www.scmp.com/frontpage/hk>

Scholarly Journals

The China Quarterly
The China Journal
The Chinese Economy

Weekly Readings

* are required readings. Others are optional readings.

Lecture 1: Introduction: Basic Information of the Chinese Society (Jan 6)

- * Stockman, Norman. 2000. "The Study of Chinese Society." Pp.1-22 in *Understanding Chinese Society* edited by S. Norman. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- * Storesletten, Kjetil and Fabrizio Zilibotti. 2014. "China's Great Convergence and Beyond." *Annual Review of Economics* 6(1): 333-362.
- Whyte, Martin King. 2009. "Paradoxes of China's economic boom." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 371-392.

Lecture 2 & 3: China before Reform Era (Jan 13 & Jan 20)

- * Saich, Tony. 2004. "China's Changing Road to Development: Political History, 1949-78" Pp. 25-56 in *Governance and Politics in China* by Tony Saich. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- * Walder, Andrew G. 2019. *Agents of Disorder: Inside China's Cultural Revolution*. Harvard University Press. Chapter 7, 8, and 9.
- Walder, Andrew G. 1989. "Social Change in Post-Revolution China" *American Sociological Review* 15:405-424.
- Kung, James Kai-sing and Yifu Lin. 2003. "The Causes of China's Great Leap Famine, 1959-1961." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 52(1): 51-73.

Lecture 4 & 5: Economic Reform (Jan 27 & Feb 3)

- * Lin, Yifu, Fang Cai, and Zhou Li. 1998. "China's Economic Reforms: Some Unfinished Business Competition, Policy Burdens, and State-Owned Enterprise Reform." *The American Economic Review* 88(2): 422-427.
- * Nee, Victor. 1989. "A theory of Market Transition: From Redistribution to Markets in State Socialism." *American Sociological Review* 54(5):663-81.
- Peng, Yusheng. 2004. "Kinship Networks and Entrepreneurs in China's Transitional Economy." *American Journal of Sociology* 109(5): 1045-1074.
- Bai, Chong-En, Jiangyong Lu, and Zhigang Tao. 2006. "The Multitask Theory of State Enterprise Reform: Empirical Evidence from China." *The American Economic Review* 96(2): 353-357.

Lecture 6 & 7 & 8: Impacts on the Political System and the Preservation of the Party-state (Feb 10 & 24 & March 10)

- * Walder, Andrew G. 2009. "Unruly stability: why China's regime has staying power." *Current History* 108(719): 257.
- * Walder, Andrew G. 1995. "The Quiet Revolution from Within: Economic Reform as a Source of Political Decline" Pp. 1-24 in *The Waning of the Communist State: Economic Origins of Political Decline in China and Hungary* edited by Andrew G. Walder. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Qian, Yingyi and Cheng-Gang Xu. 1993. "Why China's Economic Reforms Differ: The M-Form Hierarchy and Entry/Expansion of the Non-State Sector." *Economics of Transition* 1:135-70.
- Jones, Benjamin F., and Benjamin A. Olken. 2005. "Do leaders matter? National leadership and growth since World War II." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120(3): 835-864.

Li, Hongbin, and Li-An Zhou. 2005. "Political turnover and economic performance: the incentive role of personnel control in China." *Journal of Public Economics* 89(9): 1743-1762.

Edin, Maria. 2003. "State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China: CCP Cadre Management from a Township Perspective." *The China Quarterly* 173: 35-52.

Lecture 9 & 10: Rural-urban Development, Migration, and Social Stratification (March 17 & March 24)

* Zai Liang. 2016. "China's Great Migration and the Prospects of a More Integrated Society." *Annual Review of Sociology* 42:451-471

* Chan, Kam Wing, and Li Zhang. 1999. "The Hukou System and Rural Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes." *The China Quarterly* 160:818-855.

* Xie, Yu, and Xiang Zhou. 2014. "Income Inequality in Today's China." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111 (19): 6928-33.

* Bian, Yanjie. 2002. "Chinese Social Stratification and Social Mobility." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 91-116

Wang, F. and Zuo, X., 1999. Inside China's cities: Institutional barriers and opportunities for urban migrants. *American Economic Review*, 89(2), pp.276-280.

Biao, X., 2007. How far are the left-behind left behind? A preliminary study in rural China. *Population, Space and Place*, 13(3), pp.179-191.

Walder, Andrew G., Bobai Li, and Donald J. Treiman. 2000. "Politics and Life Chances in a State Socialist Regime: Dual Career Paths into the Urban Chinese Elite:1949-1996." *American Sociological Review* 65(2):191-209.

Lecture 11 & 12: Impacts on Social Conflicts, Civil Society, and Social Control (March 31 & April 14)

* Lee, C.K. and Zhang, Y., 2013. The power of instability: unraveling the microfoundations of bargained authoritarianism in China. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(6), pp.1475-1508.

* King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *The American Political Science Review* 107(2): 326-343.

Li, Lianjiang and Kevin J. O'Brien. 1996. "Villagers and Popular Resistance in Contemporary China." *Modern China* 22(1): 28-61.

Cai, Yongshun. 2002. "The Resistance of Chinese Laid-off Workers in the Reform Period." *The China Quarterly* 170: 327-344.

Zhao, D., 1998. Ecologies of social movements: Student mobilization during the 1989 prodemocracy movement in Beijing. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(6), pp.1493-1529.

Saich, Tony. 2000. "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China." *The China Quarterly* 161: 124-141.

Yang, Dali L. 2006. "Economic Transformation and Its Political Discontents in China: Authoritarianism, Unequal Growth, and the Dilemmas of Political Development." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9(1): 143-164.