

**Changing China: Social Development and Conflicts**  
**EAAS V3320**  
**Xiaodan Zhang**

Offered as an ExEAS course at Barnard College in Spring 2004 and Spring 2005

**Course Description**

It is not an exaggeration to say that Chinese people have been forced time and again to change the course of their lives by the reforms that began in the late 1970s. Along with economic prosperity the reforms have brought about dramatic structural reorganization and rapid social changes. This course will examine contemporary Chinese society and its unique development path from a sociological perspective, with particular attention to the social and cultural changes that have come about as a result of economic reforms. We will analyze how relations between the state and society and between organizations and individuals have changed, how these changes affect people's lives, social relations and value systems, and how people's different responses to structural reorganization have altered the trajectory of reforms. We will examine interactions among politics, institutions, ideology, and collective actions. By examining the case of China, students are expected to gain a solid grasp not only of contemporary China, but also of social development in general.

**Required Texts**

Fei, Xiaotong. 1992 [1947]. *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*. University of California Press.

Zhang, Li. 2001. *Strangers in the City*. Stanford University Press.

Wank, David. 1999. *Commodifying Communism*. Cambridge University Press.

Zhao, Dingxin. 2001. *The Power of Tiananmen*. University of Chicago Press.

Farrer, James. 2002. *Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai*. University of Chicago Press.

A course reading pack.

The books are available in Labyrinth Books. Please purchase the coursepack at Broadway Copy Center: 3062 Broadway (at 121 St.) Tel: 212-864-6501 (call beforehand). All reading materials are on reserve in Barnard and East Asian Libraries.

## **Course Requirements**

- 1) Attendance and class participation (10%)
- 2) Weekly web memo addressing assigned readings (15%)
- 3) Take-home mid-term exam. Essay topics for the exam will be distributed in class two weeks prior to the due date. In the essays, you will be asked to address the assigned topics based on required readings and class discussions. Essays should be no longer than 8 pages. (20%)
- 4) Research paper (12-14 pages). A one-page proposal with bibliography must be submitted first. (30%)
- 5) In-class cumulative final exam (25%)

## **Class Schedule**

Readings marked with an asterisk \* are in the coursepack.

### **Section I: Introduction: Defining Contemporary China**

#### Week 1

Jan. 18            Introduction

Jan. 20            Sociological Study of China

Hamilton, Gary and Wang, Zheng. 1992. "Introduction: Fei Xiaotong and the Beginnings of a Chinese Sociology," pp. 1-34 in *From the Soil*.

Fei, Xiaotong. Chapter 1 pp. 37-44

#### Week 2

Jan. 25            Social Life under Socialism

Documentary Film: *Mao Years* (2 hours) (Screening will be scheduled on Jan. 24. Time: TBA)

Recommended:

Fairbank, John King. 1992. *China: A New History*, pp. 343-405.

Jan. 27            Sociological Approaches to Social Change and Development

\*Peet, Richard. 1999. Chapter 3 & 4, pp. 65-122 in *Theories of Development*.

## **Section II: Structural Changes and Reorganization**

### Week 3

Feb. 1            On the Eve of Reform: Economy, State and Society

\*Nolan, Peter and Robert F. Ash. 1996. "China's Economy on the Eve of Reform," pp. 18-36 in Andrew Walder (ed.) *China's Transitional Economy*.

\*Shue, Vivienne. 1994. "State Power and Social Organization in China," pp. 65-88 in Migdal, Kohli, and Shue (ed.) *State Power and Social Force*.

Feb. 3            The Initial Stage of the Reforms: Changing Social Contracts

\*Naughton, Barry. 1996. Chapter 3 & 4, pp.97-169 in *Growing Out of the Plan*.

### Week 4

Feb. 8            From "Iron Rice Bowl" to "China Rice Bowl"

\*Lee, Ching Kwan. 1999. "From Organized Dependence to Disorganized Despotism: Changing Labor Relations in Chinese Factories," pp. 44-71 in *The China Quarterly* 157.

See Documentary Film: *China in the Red* (2 hours) (Screening will be scheduled on Feb. 7; time: TBA)

Feb. 10          From Public to Private Ownership

\*Gold, Thomas. 1990. "Urban Private Business and Social Change," pp. 157-178 in Davis and Vogel (ed.) *Chinese Society on the Eve of Tiananmen*.

\*Parris, Kristen. 1999. "The Rise of Private Business Interests," pp. 262-282 in Goldman and MacFarquhar (ed.) *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*.

### Week 5

Feb. 15          From Countryside to Cities (I)

Zhang, Li. 2001. Chapter 1-3 in *Strangers in the City*.

Feb. 17          From Countryside to Cities (II)

Zhang, Li. Chapter 4, 7-8 in *Strangers in the City*.

Week 6

Feb. 22      From Backdoor to Front Door?

Wank, David. 1999. Chapter 3-6 in *Commodifying Communism*

Feb. 24      From Comradeship to Personal Network

Fei, Xiaotong. Chapter 4 & 5 in *From the Soil*.

\*Kipnis, Andrew. 2002. "Practices of *Guanxi* Production and Practices of *Ganqing* Avoidance," pp.21-34 in Gold, Guthrie and Wank (ed.) *Social Connections in China*.

**One-page paper proposal due**

**Take-home mid-term essay questions distributed**

**Section III: Social Conflicts and Unrest**

Week 7

Mar. 1      1989: Tiananmen (I): Background

Zhao, Dingxin. 2001. Chapter 1-3, 5 in *The Power of Tiananmen*.

Mar. 3      1989: Tiananmen (II): Development

Zhao, Dingxin. Chapter 6-7.

Week 8

Mar. 8      1989: Tiananmen (III): State and Society

Zhao, Dingxin. Chapter 9-10.

Mar. 10      Screening: *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*

**Mid-term essay due**

**Spring Break**

Week 9

Mar. 22      Workers' Unrest: the Marginalized

\*Lee, Ching Kwan. 2002. "From the Spector of Mao to the Spirit of the Law: Labor Insurgency in China," pp. 189-228 in *Theory and Society* 31.

Mar. 24      Women's Unemployment and Reemployment

\*Wang, Zheng. 2000. "Gender, Employment and Women's Resistance," pp. 62-82 in Perry and Selden (ed.) *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*.

\*Li, Xiaojiang. 1994. "Economic Reform and Awakening of Chinese Women's Collective Consciousness," pp. 360-384 in Christina Gilmartin et al (ed.) *Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State*.

Week 10

Mar. 29      Falun Gong: An Ideological Void?

\*Chan, Cherris. 2004. "The Falun Gong in China: A Sociological Perspective," pp. 665-683. *The China Quarterly* 179.

\*Tong, James. 2002. "An Organizational Analysis of Falun Gong: Structure, Communications, Financing," pp. 636-660 in *The China Quarterly* 171.

Mar. 31      Public Space: Interaction, Negotiation and Reconstruction

\*Li, Lianjiang and Kevin J. O'Brien. 1999. "The Struggle over Village Elections," pp. 129-144 in *The Paradox of China's Post Mao Reforms*.

\*Efird, Robert. 2001. "Rock in a Hard Place: Music and the Market in Nineties Beijing," pp. 67-86 in Chan et al (ed.) *Urban China*.

Week 11

April 5      Who Is Richer and Who Is Poorer: Changing Patterns of Inequality

\*Luigi Tomba. 2004. "Creating an Urban Middle Class: Social Engineering in Beijing," pp. 1-26 in *The China Journal* 51,

\*Dickson, Bruce J. 2004. "The Politics of Co-optation," pp.89-115 in *Red Capitalists in China*.

April 7      Screening: *Blind Shaft* (90 minutes)

## **Section IV: Ideological Shift and Dilemmas**

### Week 12

April 12      Changing Values and Norms (I)

Farrer, James. Chapter 1-3 in *Opening Up*.

April 14      Changing Values and Norms (II)

Farrer, James. Chapter 4-6, 9.

### Week 13

April 19      Shopping Frenzy: the Formation of Consumer Culture

\*Fraser, David. 2000. "Inventing Oasis: Luxury Housing Advertisements and Reconfiguring Domestic Space in Shanghai," pp. 25-53 in Deborah Davis (ed.) *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*.

\*Yan, Yunxiang. 2000. "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing," pp. 201-225 in *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*.

April 21      Ideological Shift: Nationalism

\*Zheng, Yongnian. 1999. "Identity Crisis, the 'New Left' and Anti-Westernization," pp. 46-66 in *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China*.

\*Xiao, Zhiwei. 2002. "Nationalism in Chinese Popular Culture: A Case Study," pp. 41-54 in Wei and Liu (ed.) *Exploring Nationalisms of China: Themes and Conflicts*.

### Week 14

April 26      Modernity Discourse

\*Yan, Hairong. 2003. "Spectralization of the Rural: Reinterpreting the Labor Mobility of Rural Women in Post-Mao China," pp. 1-19 in *American Ethnologist* 30 (4).

\*Ong, Aihwa. 1997. "Chinese Modernities: Narratives of Nation and of Capitalism," pp. 171-202 in Aihwa Ong et al (ed.) *Ungrounded Empire: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*.

April 28      Summary

**Research paper due**