CCSS3420 Social Issues and Problems in Contemporary China
Spring 2020

Lectures: Tuesday 2:30pm – 4:15pm
Tutorials: Tuesday 4:30pm – 5:15pm

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Course Description
This course introduces students to the various social issues and problems in contemporary Chinese society, both past and present, through the analysis of the political, social, and economic changes that have affected China since 1949. From the sociological perspectives, we will review the institutional changes in today’s Chinese society, which are culture of the guanxi networks, relationship and tension between rural and urban settlement, class formation and inequalities, the emergence of the new Chinese middle class, family and kinship, roles and statues of women, and the challenge of social stability.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
- Identify China’s major socio-economic and socio-cultural changes that have taken place since 1949
- Apply sociological concepts and theories on analyzing the critical social issues and problems in contemporary China; and
- Critically evaluate the major social issues and problems facing the Chinese society.

Learning Activities
Lectures and tutorials will be held every week, except public holidays as noted on this syllabus. During the tutorials, students will form small groups and engage in group presentation and discussions. Attendance of lectures and tutorials is required.

Assessment (More details will be provided in class)
I. Class participation (10%):
   Students are expected to come to class prepared and to participate actively in the class discussion. Students who are studious but silent will not be rewarded as much as those who are willing to share their thoughts with others in an active and enthusiastic manner.

II. Group presentation (20%)
   Students will be divided into several small groups (depending on the final enrolment). Each group should do a 25 minutes presentation to the class. The assessment of your performance will be based on (1) the quality of your PowerPoint (5%); (2) the individual presentation skill (10%); and finally (3) the performance in the Q & A session (5%). A list of suggested presentation questions is provided at the end of this syllabus. You as a group can decide to use the provided presentation question or choose another question on your own.

III. Mid-Term Test (20%): Short Questions (20%)
   Questions are based on course readings and slides.

IV. Final Individual Essay (50%)
   Students are encouraged to write up a Final Individual Essay based on their interests and/or the work they have done in the group presentation. The Final Individual Essay should follow the basic requirements of an academic essay and contain about 2,500 words (excluding footnotes and reference list). Students are also suggested to consult the instructor if they encounter any problems.
Students should submit a soft copy to the Veriguide system first, attach the signed Veriguide receipt to the term paper and email to the instructor. The assessment will be based on the soft copy, double-spaced with standard margins and in 12-point Times New Roman font. The due date for the term paper is on May 2nd 2020. Submissions without the signed Veriguide receipt will NOT be graded. Late submissions will NOT be accepted. See the website: https://services.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jspx

The Final Individual Essay will be evaluated on the basis of: 1) Content (40%): coherence and precision of the argument; 2) Organization (40%): structure and clarity of writing; and finally, 3) References (20%): relevance of evidence gathered to support this assignment. Please note that lecture notes and Wikipedia are not suitable as sources for academic writing (although they may serve as a starting point for your research). You should resort to original academic references (journal articles, book chapters, and so on), and reliable official statistics.

Major references for this course:


Course Schedule
References marked with * are required readings.

**Week 1: Course Introduction (07/01/2020)**


**Week 2: Institutional Framework: Danwei (Work Unit) (14/01/2020)**


**Week 3: Institutional Framework: Hukou (Household Registration) (21/01/2020)**


**Week 4: Lunar New Year, No Class**

**Week 5: The Changing “Culture” of Guanxi (18/02/2020)**


Week 6: The Rural-Urban Divide (25/02/2020)

Week 7: The Changing Class Structure and Social Stratification (03/03/2020)

Week 8: The Rising Middle Class (10/03/2020)
(Group A presentation)

Week 9: One-Child Policy and its Implications (17/03/2020)
(Group B presentation)

Week 10: Women: Holding Up Half the Sky? (24/03/2020)
(Group C presentation)

Week 11: Reading week (31/03/2020)

Week 12: Mid-Term Test (07/04/2020)

Week 13: The Left-behind Children in the Reform Era (14/04/2020)
(Group D presentation)
Week 14: Maintaining Stability (21/04/2020)
(Group E presentation)

Week 15: Course Summary (28/04/2020)
(Group F presentation)

Topics for Presentation / Final Essay
(Group A) Presentation 1: In what ways might the breakdown of Danwei impact on state-individual relations?
(Group B) Presentation 2: “The hukou system is the door guard of the command economy.” Discuss.
(Group C) Presentation 3: Would the abolition of the hukou system alleviate rural-urban inequality? Why or why not? Discuss.
(Group D) Presentation 4: “Economic development has created material interests that in turn create a preference for stability and, therefore, support for the current regime.” Discuss with reference to the emerging middle class in China.
(Group E) Presentation 5: In what ways are women in post-socialist China liberated or not liberated?
(Group F) Presentation 6: To what extent is weiwen a class issue?

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

Important Reminders
This course uses the CUHK eLearning system, which can be found at https://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk.
Students are expected to check the eLearning system and CUHK email regularly.