

SOCIOLOGY/URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY 340 (FALL 2016)
CHINA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
T/R 3:05PM-4:30PM
Fowler Hall 309

Instructor: John Chung-En Liu

Email: chungenliu@oxy.edu

Office: 205 Swan Hall

Phone: 323.259.2824

Office Hours: M/W 1030am-12pm or by email appointment

Course Website: <https://moodle.oxy.edu/course/view.php?id=20165>

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course surveys China's environmental challenges from a sociological perspective. To start our inquiry, we will first familiarize ourselves with China's natural environment, as well as the political and social contexts in contemporary China. Then we go through China's historical and cultural engagement with the environment, its contemporary patterns of environmental governance, and its connections with the global institutions. We will read extensively on the recent social science literature on China's environmental issues. After this semester, students will obtain in-depth understanding of the environmental challenges that China faces, and will be able to analyze the problem from multiple theoretical angles.

The word "sociological" in the course title should not limit us to think in narrow terms. China's environmental challenges are best understood from multiple analytical frameworks, as recognized by the course's crosslisted status in both Sociology and Urban and Environmental Policy. While maintaining a sociological focus, we will read works from political science, anthropology, history, and geography. This arrangement may require you to go beyond your original intellectual comfort zone, but it will be worthwhile.

This course particularly encourages public scholarship – to create and circulate knowledge to benefit the publics and solve practical problems in communities. We will strive for this goal through the "public scholarship" writing assignment, in which students will write about a topic about China's environment for general audiences.

COURSE MATERIALS

China's Environmental Challenges (2nd Edition) by Judith Shapiro, Polity Press

All other readings and course information will be available through Moodle at <https://moodle.oxy.edu/course/view.php?id=20165>

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Grading

Your grade will be based on your class participation, the China Environment Case Study, weekly intellectual journals, and the public scholarship paper. The grading rubric is as the following:

China Environment Case Study	10%
Participation	20%
Weekly Intellectual Journal	30%
Public Scholarship Writing	40%

Letter grades in this class have the following meaning:

- A Outstanding performance. You have demonstrated very thorough knowledge and understanding of all the material, truly superior critical thinking, and expressed insightful and original thoughts clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been among the best in the class.
- B Good performance. You have demonstrated solid knowledge and understanding of the material and good critical thinking. You have also shown the ability to express your ideas clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been of good quality.
- C Satisfactory performance. You have demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of the major concepts taught in the class and some critical thinking. You have completed all or most of the required assignments and they have routinely been free of significant problems.
- D Deficient performance. You have only acquired a limited understanding of the class material. You have failed to complete all the required assignments and they have routinely had serious problems.
- F Failure. You have failed to learn a sufficient proportion of the basic concepts and ideas taught in the class. You have failed to complete many required assignments and they have routinely had serious problems.

China Environment Case Studies (10%)

This course is organized by various actors (state, market, media, civil society, etc.) and concepts (ecological civilization, environmental justice, etc.) related to China's environment. This arrangement, inevitably, leaves us less time to delve deeply into substantive environmental problems which some of you are passionate about. To complement this arrangement, we will inform ourselves about specifics on China's environmental challenges with student presentations. You will use **5 slides** (no more or less) to speak about **10 minutes** to introduce a specific environmental issue in China. In your presentation, make sure to cover the *current status* of the issue, as well as the *societal responses*. We will figure out the presentation topics and schedule in the very beginning of the semester. The first presentation will be on September 15th.

Your topic can be a general environmental theme: e.g. Air, Water, Endangered Species, Climate Change, Nuclear Power, Transportation, etc., or a specific environmental event/policy, such as the Nu River Dams or the South–North Water Transfer Project. I'll let you decide. You are welcome to bring together your case study and Public Scholarship Writing on the same topic.

Participation (20%)

I will run this course mostly as a seminar, supplemented by my short lectures to set up the stage. We will spend much of our class time carefully dissecting and analyzing the readings, and tackling important conceptual questions and real-world policy issues. To accomplish these aims, your consistent presence and careful preparation is essential for your individual success, as well as the success of the course. I expect students to be prepared and engaged in every class meeting.

The quality of our collective learning experience depends on your participation. Your grade for class participation will not be a measure of how loud you were, or of how often you spoke. Rather, it will be based on my subjective assessment of your engagement in the class. To do well in this class, you should come to class having already read the assigned reading and be ready to contribute to the discussion. As you are preparing for class, you should get into the habit of taking careful notes on the readings and, in advance, you should spend time thinking about the readings or talking about them with a classmate to develop some initial reactions.

I strive to create a learning community in the classroom. In this course, you will be in a “learning group” of 3 or 4 students, who are expected to read each other’s intellectual journal entries before class and to talk about them. On Tuesdays, our class meetings will begin with a conversation of the learning groups, who will afterwards bring issues for discussion forward to the entire class. In some class meetings, students will also discuss each other’s “Public Scholarship Writing” (see below). We will periodically re-organize into new learning groups over the course of the semester.

You have to attend the class to participate. I will exercise attendance checks regularly. You are allowed to be absent without any reason **twice**. If you are late to the class by more than 10 minutes, you will be considered absent for the day.

Weekly Intellectual Journals (30%)

The point of the weekly intellectual journal is to give you a chance to develop your own views on the course readings, to communicate those views to the class, to demonstrate your command of what we’ve read thus far, and to keep you up-to-date with the material in the course. The format is simple: Write a critical appraisal of around **250-350 words** (longer is just fine; shorter is not) of some particular theme in the week’s readings, and email the result to your learning group by **Monday midnight**, with a cc to Professor Liu. Please also upload a copy to the Moodle site.

In some weeks, I will provide you with a prompting question that you should address in your intellectual journal. It is important to develop one theme or argument, rather than a scatter of observations. Also, it is important to *document* your theme or argument and to explain your *reasoning*, rather than offering opinion.

Here's a nice thing: I will drop your lowest grades out of the 11 total weekly entries. (There's no journal entry due for week 1, 7, 13, and 15).

Public Scholarship Writing (40%)

Each student will prepare a work of public scholarship with a topic related to China's environment, broadly construed. The writing piece should thus be scientifically informed but oriented to a public audience. The length should be at least 3,000 words. For sociology folks, you can prepare your work following the [submission guideline](#) to *Contexts* – American Sociological Association's generalist interest magazine.

“Our feature articles are written for a broad audience and are cleanly and clearly written, with no jargon, footnotes, or citations. They have much in common with the best of long-form journalism: They're empirically and theoretically driven storytelling, teach readers new stuff, and they help us think differently about the world. Basically, they make you go, “Huh. That's pretty cool. I never really thought of that.”

With students' diverse background and interests, I welcome students to write with other suitable communication venues in mind. For example, for those interested in investigative journalism, you can check out *China Dialogue* or *China File*; for environmental policy-oriented people, you can consider the journal *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* that accepts similar article format.

In the beginning of the semester, students are required to come to my office to discuss your paper topic and possible publication platforms. Throughout the semester, we will work in groups to make progress on this writing assignment. You will have chances to review and comment on each other's work.

Assignment Policy

Please submit your work on time. Your weekly intellectual journal is due at midnight on Mondays so that your colleagues have time to read them before class. You will lose 20% of your points for late submission.

All weekly intellectual journals and final writing assignment should include your name in the page heading, follow the format of single line spacing and 1-inch margin. Please use spell check to avoid typos.

Office Hour

My office hour is on Monday and Wednesday 1030am-12pm. I enjoy talking to students and I encourage you to stop by. If you need to meet up with me in times other than my regular office hours, you can make an appointment with me. Office hours will not be

devoted to tutorial for materials that students miss when not attending class. Also, please strive to ask routine questions of clarification in class.

Email Policies

The primary mode of communication for this course (outside of class meetings) will be email. I will send emails to your Oxy email address. I will send course-related information to you at least 24 hours in advance of any deadlines. I will likewise respond to your emails within 24 hours.

Academic Honesty

The College takes academic honesty very seriously. All of the work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this appears straightforward, it can sometimes be confusing. Wherever you are unsure about quoting and citing, I am happy to help you figure out the best strategy.

The penalty for academic misconduct can include disciplinary probation, a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, or expulsion from the college. Every student is responsible for understanding what constitutes academic misconduct. Please read the college's academic honesty primer here: <http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics>. If you have any question about whether your work upholds the standards set forth by Oxy, please speak with me.

Electronic Devices

No use of Laptops, Tablets, Phones, or Other Electronic Devices in this class. Although computers are a valuable tool for research and study, they often hinder participation and collegiality in the classroom. If you are interested in this policy, I recommend *The New Yorker's* article "[The Case for Banning Laptops in the Classroom](#)"

Support Services

- The Writing Center (<http://www.oxy.edu/writing-center>) offers students from all disciplines two types of support to work on their writing: peer-to-peer, drop-in consultations with knowledgeable Writing Advisers and appointments with Faculty Writing Specialists from the Writing and Rhetoric department.
- Students who have disability-related needs, please contact me AND the Coordinator of Disability Services – (323) 259-2969 – as soon as possible and we will make the appropriate accommodations. Please refer to the information on Disability Services' website: <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>
- Finally, the Emmons Health and Counseling Center (<http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-health-center>) is available for assistance with medical and mental health concerns.

Changes to the syllabus

The syllabus is a guide for the course and your learning is my top priority. If the course requires any changes, I will post a revised syllabus on Moodle and inform the class of any changes.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND LIST OF READINGS

- Preparation
- ◆ Due Dates

Week 1 (8/30 and 9/1): Introduction

As Background: China Fact Quizzes

- <http://lizardpoint.com/geography/china-quiz.php>
- <http://lizardpoint.com/geography/china-water-quiz.php>
- <http://tripologist.com/quizzes/china/>
- <http://adventure.howstuffworks.com/china-quiz.htm>

Required

- The syllabus
- CFR Backgrounders: [China's Environmental Crisis](#)
- Thomas Friedman on *the New York Times* "[Our One-Party Democracy](#)"
- *The New York Times* "[Polluted Skies Heighten Challenge for Chinese Government](#)"
- Naughton, Chapter 1 "The Geographical Setting" in *the Chinese Economy: Transition and Growth*

Recommended

- Liu and Diamond. "China's environment in a globalizing world." *Nature* 435.7046 (2005): 1179-1186.
- World Bank: [Cost of Pollution in China](#)

Week 2 (9/6 & 9/8): The Big Picture

- ◆ Case Studies Topics due on September 6th

Required

- Video: [Chai Jing's review: Under the Dome - Investigating China's Smog](#)
- Shapiro, Chapter 1 "Introduction: the Big Picture"
- Laszewski, "The sociologists' take on the environment." *Contexts* 7.2 (2008): 20-24.
- Angelo and Jerolmack. "Nature's Looking-glass." *Contexts* 11.1 (2012): 24-29.
- Pellow and Brulle. "Poisoning the planet: the struggle for environmental justice." *Contexts* 6.1 (2007): 37-41.
- Lee, "Rights activism in China." *Contexts* 7.3 (2008): 14-19.
- Liu, "Made in China: cancer villages." *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 52.2 (2010): 8-21.
- China Dialogue: [Journal: The 2016 China Environmental Press Awards](#)

Week 3 (9/13 & 9/15): China's Environmental Change: History, Drivers, and Trends

Required

- Shapiro, Chapter 2 "Environmental Challenges: Drivers and Trends"
- Shapiro's *Mao's War Against Nature* Chapter 1 and 2
- Elvin, "The Environmental Legacy of Imperial China," *The China Quarterly*, 156: 733-756.
- Kinzley, "Crisis and the Development of China's Southwestern Periphery The Transformation of Panzhuhua, 1936-1969." *Modern China* 38.5 (2012): 559-584.

Recommended

- Edmonds, "The Environment in the People's Republic of China after 50 Years," *The China Quarterly*, No. 159, (1999), pp. 640-649.

Week 4 (9/20 & 9/22): Culture, Ideology, and National Identity

Required

- Shapiro, Chapter 4 "Sustainable Development and National Identity"
- White, "The historical roots of our ecological crisis." *This sacred earth: religion, nature, environment* (1967): 184-193.
- Weller's *Discovering Nature* chapter 2
- Harris, "'Getting Rich is Glorious': Environmental Values in the People's Republic of China," *Environmental Values*, Vol. 13, no. 2 (May 2004), pp. 145-165.
- Liu, "Low carbon plot: climate change skepticism with Chinese characteristics." *Environmental Sociology* 1.4 (2015): 280-292.
- China Dialogue: [Pan Yue's vision of green China](#)

Week 5 (9/27 & 9/29): Ecological Modernization and Ecological Civilization

- ◆ First musing (a one-page outline) of public scholarship due on September 29th

Required

- China Dialogue: Interpreting ecological civilization ([part 1](#), [part 2](#), and [part 3](#))
- United Nations Environmental Programme: "[Green is Gold: the Strategy and Actions of China's Ecological Civilization](#)"
- Mol et al., "Ecological modernization theory: taking stock, moving forward." *Handbook of social and environmental change* (2014): 15-30.
- Foster, "The planetary rift and the new human exemptionalism a political-economic critique of ecological modernization theory." *Organization & Environment* (2012)
- Zhang et al., "The interpretation of ecological modernisation in China." *Environmental politics* 16.4 (2007): 659-668.
- Yeh, "Greening western China: A critical view." *Geoforum* 40.5 (2009): 884-894.

Recommended

- Monthly Review: [The Ecological Civilization Debate in China](#)

Week 6 (10/4 & 10/6): State-led Environmentalism

As Background

- Congressional Research Service: [Understanding China's Political System](#)
- Congressional Research Service: [China's Political Institutions and Leaders in Charts](#)

Required

- Shapiro, Chapter 3 "State-led Environmentalism: The View from Above"
- China Dialogue: [China's cadres ready "greener" Five Year Plan](#)
- Chile File: [How China's 13th Five-Year Plan Addresses Energy and the Environment](#)
- Beeson, "The coming of environmental authoritarianism." *Environmental politics* 19.2 (2010): 276-294.
- Liu et al., "Reforming China's multi-level environmental governance: Lessons from the 11th Five-Year Plan." *Environmental science & policy* 21 (2012): 106-111.
- Ran, "Perverse incentive structure and policy implementation gap in China's local environmental politics." *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 15.1 (2013): 17-39.

Recommended

- Gilley, "Authoritarian Environmentalism and China's Response to Climate Change," *Environmental Politics* 21/2 (March 2012).
- Eaton and Kostka., "Authoritarian environmentalism undermined? Local leaders' time horizons and environmental policy implementation in China." *The China Quarterly* 218 (2014): 359-380.

Week 7 (10/13): China Environment Case Studies

Week 8 (10/18 & 10/20): Market forces and the Environment

Required

- Tao and Mah, "Between market and state: dilemmas of environmental governance in China's sulphur dioxide emission trading system." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 27.1 (2009): 175-188.
- Liu, "Assembling China's Carbon Markets: The Carbons, the Business, and the Marginalized" Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center Policy Brief
- Wang, "Promise and reality of market-based environmental policy in China: Empirical analyses of the ecological restoration program on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau." *Global Environmental Change* 39 (2016): 35-44.
- Martens, "Public participation with Chinese characteristics: citizen consumers in China's environmental management." *Environmental politics* 15.02 (2006): 211-230.
- Zinda, "Tourism Dynamos: Selective Commodification and Developmental Conservation in China's Protected Areas" *Geoforum* (forthcoming)

Recommended

- Lo, "Challenges to the development of carbon markets in China." *Climate Policy* 16.1 (2016): 109-124.

Week 9 (10/25 & 10/27): Civil Society and Public Participation

Required

- Video: [The Warriors of Qiugang](#)
- Shapiro, Chapter 5 "Public Participation and Civil Society: the View from Below"
- Lee and Zhang, "The Power of Instability: Unraveling the Microfoundations of Bargained Authoritarianism in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 118.6 (2013): 1475-1508.
- Spires, "Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China's Grassroots NGOs." *American Journal of Sociology* 117.1 (2011): 1-45.
- Michelson "Climbing the dispute pagoda: grievances and appeals to the official justice system in rural China." *American Sociological Review* 72.3 (2007): 459-485.
- Chen, "Transnational Environmental Movement: Impacts on the Green Civil Society in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 19/65 (2010).

Recommended

- Deng and Yang. "Pollution and protest in China: environmental mobilization in context." *The China Quarterly* 214 (2013): 321-336.
- Zhang et al, "Transparency and information disclosure in China's environmental governance." *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 18 (2016): 17-24.
- Tan, "Transparency without democracy: the unexpected effects of China's environmental disclosure policy." *Governance* 27.1 (2014): 37-62.
- Hsu and Hasmath, "The local corporatist state and NGO relations in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* 23.87 (2014): 516-534.
- Van Rooij, "The People vs. Pollution: understanding citizen action against pollution in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* 19.63 (2010): 55-77.

Week 10 (11/1 & 11/3): Media, Internet, and Public Opinion

Required

- Foreign Policy: [How China's Government Controls the News: A Primer](#)
- King et al., "How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression." *American Political Science Review* 107.02 (2013): 326-343.
- Lei, Ya-Wen. "Freeing the Press: How Field Environment Explains Critical News Reporting in China 1." *American Journal of Sociology* 122.1 (2016): 1-48.
- Yale Climate Change Communication "public climate change awareness and climate change communication in china"
- Liu and Mu., "Public environmental concern in China: Determinants and variations." *Global Environmental Change* 37 (2016): 116-127.

- Yang and Calhoun., "Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China." *China Information* 21.2 (2007): 211-236.
- Liu and Zhao., "Who Leads Chinese Voices on Climate Change – Evidence from Weibo"

Week 11 (11/8 & 11/10): Social Inequality and Environmental Justice

Required

- Shapiro, Chapter 6 "Environmental Justice and the Displacement of Environmental Harm"
- Mohai et al., "Environmental justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34 (2009): 405-430.
- Xie and Zhou., "Income inequality in today's China." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111.19 (2014): 6928-6933.
- Feng et al., "Outsourcing CO₂ within China." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110.28 (2013): 11654-11659.
- Wu, "Environmental activism in provincial China." *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 15.1 (2013): 89-108.
- Selection from Bryan Tilt's "The struggle for sustainability in rural China: Environmental values and civil society" Columbia University Press, 2013.

Week 12 (11/15 & 11/17): China in the Global Environment

Required

- China Dialogue: [China-led development bank careful to co-operate with critics](#)
- Yu et al., "China's unequal ecological exchange." *Ecological Indicators* 47 (2014)
- Mol, "China's ascent and Africa's environment" *Global Environmental Change* 21.3 (2011): 785-794.
- Lee, "Raw encounters: Chinese managers, African workers and the politics of casualization in Africa's Chinese enclaves." *The China Quarterly* 199 (2009): 647-666.
- Hofman and Ho., "China's 'Developmental Outsourcing': A critical examination of Chinese global 'land grabs' discourse." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39.1 (2012): 1-48.
- Grumbine et al., "Mekong hydropower: drivers of change and governance challenges." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 10.2 (2012): 91-98.

Recommended

- Kuenzer et al. "Understanding the impact of hydropower developments in the context of upstream–downstream relations in the Mekong river basin." *Sustainability Science* 8.4 (2013): 565-584.
- Zhao, "China's global search for energy security: cooperation and competition in Asia–Pacific." *Journal of Contemporary China* 17.55 (2008): 207-227.

Week 13 (11/22): Public Writing Workshop

- ◆ Draft paper due on November 22nd

Week 14 (11/29 & 12/1): China Environment Case Studies (Part II) & Exciting themes

Readings TBA

Week 15 (12/6): Conclusion

- Shapiro, Chapter 7 “Prospect for the Future”
 - Spangenberg, “China in the Anthropocene: Culprit, Victim, Last Best Hope for a Global Ecological Civilization?” *BioRisk* 9:1-37 (2014).
- ◆ Public Scholarship paper due on 1159pm, December 11th