

SOCIOLOGY/URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY 340 (SPRING 2018)
CHINA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
T/R 1:30PM-2:55PM
Weingart Center 116

Instructor: John Chung-En Liu
Email: chungenziu@oxy.edu
Office: 205 Swan Hall
Phone: 323.259.2824
Office Hours: M/W 930am-11pm or by email appointment
Course Website: <https://moodle.oxy.edu/course/view.php?id=24770>

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 other parts of the world. 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 final 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=24770>

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Grading

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

China Environment News Time	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 News Time (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, students will take turns to present current news of China's environment. You will use **5 slides** (no more or less) to speak about **10 minutes** to introduce a specific environmental issue in China. You can choose a specific environmental event/policy, such as the Nu River Dams or the South–North Water Transfer Project, or broader subjects such as air quality or nuclear power. We will figure out the presentation topics and schedule in the very beginning of the semester. The first presentation will be on February 1st.

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 writing project. 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 **300–500 words** (longer is just fine; shorter is not) of some particular theme in the week’s readings, and email the result the class (cc Professor Liu) by **Monday midnight**. Please also upload a copy of your journal to Moodle.

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.

There will be 10 weekly entries in total (no journal entry due for week 1, 5, 8, 14, and 15).

Final Writing Project (40%)

Each student will write a final paper on a topic related to China’s environment, broadly construed. The length should be at least 3,000 words. While I want to give you much flexibility to decide what and how you should write, I strongly suggest your write in one of the following formats.

Public Scholarship: a writing piece scientifically informed but oriented to a public audience. You can model your work after the articles on China Dialogue. 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.”

Environmental Case Study: Choose to illustrate a case of environmental issues, usually involves the focus on an actual environmental situation, commonly involving a decision, an issue, a challenge, or an opportunity faced by a group of individuals, an organization, or a society. Please refer to the [submission guideline](#) of the journal *Case Studies in the Environment*.

Literature Review: review academic literature on a given area of your interests.

I would like to work with each of you to figure out a topic that is interesting and useful for your own pursuit. 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 present your paper during week 14.

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 930am-11pm. 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.

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

Week 1 (1/23 and 1/25): Introduction and Environmental Sociology

- The syllabus
- CFR Backgrounders: [China's Environmental Crisis](#)
- Liu “Saving the Environment”
- Laszewski, “The sociologists' take on the environment.” *Contexts* 7.2 (2008): 20-24.
- In-class movie “*Plastic China*”

Week 2 (1/30 & 2/1): China’s Environmental Change: The Big Picture

- Shapiro, Chapter 1 “Introduction: the Big Picture” Chapter 2 “Environmental Challenges: Drivers and Trends”
- Video: [Chai Jing's review: Under the Dome – Investigating China’s Smog](#)
- *The New York Times* “[Why China’s Good Environmental Policies Have Gone Wrong](#)”
- Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature* Introduction and Chapter 2
- Elvin, “The Environmental Legacy of Imperial China,” *The China Quarterly*, 156: 733-756.

Week 3 (2/6 & 2/8): Culture, Ideology, and National Identity

- 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, R., Bol, P. K., (1998). “From heaven and earth to nature: Chinese concepts of the environment and their influence on policy implementation.”
- Harris, (2004) “Getting Rich is Glorious’: Environmental Values in the People’s Republic of China,” *Environmental Values*, Vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 145-165.
- Liu, “Low carbon plot: climate change skepticism with Chinese characteristics.” *Environmental Sociology* 1.4 (2015): 280-292.
- In-class movie “*What’s For Dinner*”

Week 4 (2/13 & 2/15): Ecological Modernization and Ecological Civilization

- China Dialogue: [Pan Yue's vision of green China](#)
- China Dialogue: Interpreting ecological civilization ([part 1](#), [part 2](#), and [part 3](#))

- 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.

2/15 Fieldtrip to L.A. Chinatown

Week 5 (2/20 & 2/22): State-led Environmentalism: Solar PV as an example

2/20 Guest Lecture

Adrian Deveny (Director of Energy and Environmental Policy to Senator Jeff Merkley)

Topic: Politics of US-China Solar PV Trade

- Selections from Gallagher, K. S. (2014). *The globalization of clean energy technology: Lessons from China*.
- Zhang, F., & Gallagher, K. S. (2016). Innovation and technology transfer through global value chains: Evidence from China's PV industry. *Energy Policy*, 94, 191-203.

Week 6 (2/27 & 3/1): State-led Environmentalism

2/27 In-class movie: *Datong*

- 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.

Background

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

Week 7 (3/6 & 3/8): Environmental Justice and Social Inequality

- Shapiro, Chapter 6 “Environmental Justice and the Displacement of Environmental Harm”
- Mohai et al., “Environmental justice.” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* (2009)
- 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.
- Lora-Wainwright, “An Anthropology of ‘Cancer Villages’: villagers' perspectives and the politics of responsibility” *China Journal* 68 (2012): 106-124.

Week 8 (3/13 & 3/15): Spring Break

Week 9 (3/20 & 3/22): Civil Society and Public Participation

- 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).
- Tan, “Transparency without democracy: the unexpected effects of China's environmental disclosure policy.” *Governance* 27.1 (2014): 37-62.

3/20 In-class movie: [The Warriors of Qiugang](#)

Week 10 (3/27 & 3/29): Media, Internet, and Public Opinion

- 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.” *American Journal of Sociology* 122.1 (2016): 1-48.
- Yale Climate Change Communication “public climate change awareness and climate change communication in china”
- 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” *Climatic Change* 140 (3), 413-422

Week 11 (4/3 & 4/5): China in the Global Environment

4/3 Guest Lecture

Dr. Tyler Harlan (Cornell University)

Topic: China's 'Green' Belt and Road in Southeast Asia

4/5 Guest Lecture

Professor Angel Hsu (Yale-NUS College)

Topic: China and climate change diplomacy, policy, and future

Week 12 (4/10 & 4/12): China in the Global Environment II

- China Dialogue: [China-led development bank careful to co-operate with critics](#)
- 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.
- Selection from Lee, C. K. (2018). *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa*. University of Chicago Press.

4/12 In-class movie: *Manufactured Landscape*

Week 13 (4/17 & 4/19): Topics of students’ interests

Week 14 (4/24 & 4/26): Student Presentations

- Final Paper Draft due

Week 15 (5/1): Conclusion

- Shapiro, Chapter 7 “Prospect for the Future”
- Zinda, Li, and Liu “China’s Summons for Environmental Sociology”
- Final paper due on 1159pm, May 6th