

Sophia University – Summer Session 2025

July 1 – July 22, 2025 *July 1: Orientation *July 4: No-class day

Date: January 2025

Course Title	Contemporary Chinese Society
Course Code	SOZ440
Instructor	Yuxin Pei
Class Period	1st Period (9:00-10:40)
Course Format	In-Person
Language of Instruction	English
Maximum class size	20
Course Description	<p>This course offers an engaging exploration of contemporary Chinese life, focusing on the transformative period since 1976. Delve into the dynamic aspects of Chinese society, including migration, urbanization, media and popular culture, family dynamics, marriage, gender and sexuality, feminism, civil society, and social work. The course emphasizes the global impact of China's development, examining how globalization has shaped China and vice versa. Through a rich mix of movie clips, social media analysis, current events, popular TV shows, and readings, this class provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolving Chinese society. Join us to gain insights into the lived experiences of the Chinese people and the complex interplay of social inequality, conflicts, and change.</p>
Course Objectives	<p>This course aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of contemporary China by adopting dual perspectives: an "inside" view focusing on the lived experiences and local perspectives of the Chinese people, and a sociological lens that explores broader social structures, inequalities, and systemic factors. By examining these aspects, students will gain insights into China's complex societal dynamics, including its social, economic, and political landscape, as well as the challenges and opportunities it presents. This could take 1 - 1.5 hour per class depending on the individual.</p>
Expected work outside of class	<p>Students are expected and encouraged to work collaboratively on the preparation of group presentations, with ongoing effort and dedication outside of class time. This may involve reading, planning, and coordination to ensure the successful delivery of group presentations.</p>
Course Materials	<p>The course materials will include selected video clips and readings, carefully chosen to complement the topics covered in the class and</p>

	provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
	Purchase of textbook: not necessary
	e-book: not applicable
Moodle	-
Contact Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •via Email <p>*The email address will be available at CGED office or informed by the instructor in the first class if needed.</p>
Evaluation (Attendance, Class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, quizzes, etc.)	Students' performance will be evaluated based on attendance, class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, and other relevant activities. The evaluation will consist of a mid-term group presentation (30%) and a final exam (70%). Additionally, students will engage in group discussions and presentations focusing on course topics. Furthermore, students will be required to write short essays that demonstrate their understanding and interpretation of theories and phenomena related to Chinese society. Class discussions will also be encouraged to assess students' progress and comprehension of the readings
Other comments	-
Class schedule	<p>*July 1: Orientation</p> <p>*July 4: No-class</p>
	<p>[DAY 1] July 2 (W)</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>To understand China's great changes over the past 40 years, its perceived status as a potentially threatening country, and the perspectives of its people on their lives and the country's future, one must consider a range of factors. These include China's economic reforms and rapid development, its geopolitical influence, cultural and societal transformations, as well as the government's policies and international relations. Additionally, examining the aspirations, concerns, and experiences of the Chinese populace is essential to gaining a holistic understanding of these complex issues.</p>
	<p>[DAY 2] July 3 (R)</p> <p>Hukou System and migration</p> <p>The Hukou system in China is a household registration system that categorizes individuals as urban or rural residents, and it heavily influences access to social services, such as education and healthcare, as well as employment opportunities. The system has historically restricted rural residents' ability to migrate to urban areas and has contributed to the challenges faced by migrant workers.</p>

Migrant workers often leave their hometowns in search of better employment opportunities and higher wages in urban areas. However, they frequently encounter difficulties such as inadequate housing, limited access to social services, and separation from their families. The Hukou system exacerbates these challenges by restricting their access to essential urban services and benefits, contributing to the marginalized living conditions experienced by many migrant workers in urban areas. Understanding the complexities of the Hukou system and the experiences of migrant workers is essential to comprehending the impact of migration and urbanization in China.

[DAY 3] July 7 (M)

Urbanization and the House Market: The impact of urbanization on the housing market, including trends in housing demand, development of urban infrastructure, and the challenges of providing affordable housing in rapidly growing urban areas.

The Collapse of the Real Estate Market: The factors leading to the collapse of the real estate market, including speculative bubbles, overvalued properties, and the economic and social repercussions of such a collapse on homeowners, investors, and the broader economy.

[DAY 4] July 8 (T)

China's Media Censorship: The extensive control and regulation of media content by the Chinese government, including censorship of news, online platforms, and social media to align with state narratives and maintain political stability.

Booming of Social Media, Live Streaming and TikTok: The rapid growth and popularity of social media live streaming platforms and apps like TikTok (known as Douyin in China), their impact on Chinese internet culture, entertainment, and the challenges they pose to government censorship and control.

[DAY 5] July 9 (W)

Digital Economy and Live-Streaming E-commerce: The integration of live-streaming technology with e-commerce in China's digital economy, its impact on consumer behavior, marketing strategies, and the evolution of online retail and entertainment.

Women Entrepreneurs: The rising presence and influence of women entrepreneurs in China's digital economy, including their contributions to innovation, leadership, and the challenges and opportunities they encounter in the tech and e-commerce sectors.

[DAY 6] July 10 (R)

Filial Piety and Intergenerational Relationships: The traditional value of filial piety in Chinese culture and its influence on intergenerational relationships, caregiving dynamics, and the evolving role of elderly family members within modern family structures.

[DAY 7] July 11 (F)

Family Planning Policy: The historical and contemporary impact of China's family planning policies, including the One-Child Policy and its subsequent modifications, on population growth, demographic shifts, and social attitudes towards family size and planning.

[DAY 8] July 14 (M)

Group Presentation

[DAY 9] July 15 (T)

Love and Marriage in China:

Dating Apps and 相親 (Matchmaking): The impact of dating apps and traditional matchmaking practices on modern courtship and marriage in China, including changes in social interaction, relationship dynamics, and the evolving role of technology in shaping romantic connections.

New Rituals of Proposal and Wedding: The emergence of contemporary rituals and customs in marriage proposals and wedding ceremonies in China, reflecting shifts in cultural norms, individual expression, and the fusion of traditional and modern elements in matrimonial practices.

[DAY 10] July 16 (W)

Domestic Violence: The prevalence, causes, and consequences of domestic violence within Chinese families, including efforts to address and prevent such abuse, changes in public awareness, and the impact on family dynamics and societal attitudes towards gender-based violence.

Divorce in China: The dynamics and trends of divorce in China, including the factors contributing to rising divorce rates, the legal and social implications of divorce, the impact on family structures, and the evolving attitudes towards marriage and relationships in Chinese society.

[DAY 11] July 17 (R)

Virginity Discourses and Gendered Sexual Rights: The societal attitudes and cultural norms surrounding virginity, gendered expectations, and sexual rights in China, including the impact on individuals' autonomy, gender equality, and the broader discourse on

	<p>sexual behavior and identity.</p> <p>Commercial Sex Work: The complexities and social issues related to commercial sex work in China, including the legal framework, public health concerns, social stigma, and the intersection of gender, labor rights, and human rights within the context of commercial sex work.</p>
	<p>[DAY 12] July 18 (F)</p> <p>State, Market, and Feminism: The interplay between the state, market forces, and feminist movements in China, including the government's stance on feminist activism, the influence of market dynamics on gender equality, and the evolving landscape of feminist discourse within the context of state and market interactions.</p> <p>LGBTQ issues</p>
	<p>[DAY 13] July 21 (M)</p> <p>Popularity of Japanese and Korean Soap Operas in China: The widespread appeal and influence of Japanese and Korean television dramas in China, including their impact on Chinese popular culture, entertainment preferences, and the cultural exchange between East Asian countries.</p> <p>Fan Culture: The dedicated and passionate fan communities that have emerged around Japanese and Korean soap operas in China, their influence on consumer behavior, social media trends, and the broader implications for cross-cultural interactions and media consumption.</p>
	<p>[DAY 14] July 22 (T)</p> <p>Screening one iconic and influential movie that represents China screening and concluding the class</p>

*Course format, evaluation methods and class schedule may be subject to change.

[Important Note Regarding Class Capacity]

Course enrollment in each course is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be aware that once the maximum capacity is reached, you will no longer be able to select that course.

If you plan to transfer the credits to your home university, please consider alternative courses as well when making your study plan, in case the courses you want to take are full.

In case you are unable to take your desired courses and the number of courses you are enrolled in changes, a refund will be issued based on the number of courses reduced.