

Field Research in Contemporary China

A SURVEY OF SOME OF THE LATEST WORK

112-2 (Spring 2024)

Wednesdays 09:10 to 12:10

Instructor	Jeffrey Weng 翁哲瑞
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Office hours	Email instructor for an appointment
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Course description	<p>China has changed dramatically in the past decade. Since 2012, the gradual opening of its politics, economy, and society that many researchers had taken for granted since the late 1970s has seen a significant curtailment. Nevertheless, social scientific research continues, and so in this course we will catch up on the latest monographs, covering politics, the economy, technology, the environment, social movements, gender, and migration.</p>
Objectives	<p>By the end of the course, students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be familiar with some of the latest trends in social scientific research on China▪ Improve their ability to discern and evaluate a book's arguments, methods, contributions to theory, and place in the larger literature▪ Apply these reading skills to their own research projects
Course materials	All readings will be available on NTU COOL.
Expectations	<p>This will be a collaborative reading course in which we will take advantage of our time together to read recently published social science books on China. With one exception, we will spend two weeks reading each book. All students are expected to read the introduction and the conclusion of each book. For the rest of each book, each student will be responsible for reading one chapter and presenting it to the class. We will pay particular attention to how the authors frame their work, what theory they engage, what literature they speak to, what methods they use, and what conclusions they draw. This is meant to help you become a better reader of social scientific work and to reflect on the challenges of designing your own research.</p> <p><i>English.</i> This is a course conducted <i>in</i> English, but it is not an English course. You will not be judged by the quality of your English. However, make an effort. If you find a Chinese translation of a reading, by all means make use of it. However, class discussions will be in English. Assignments must be written in English.</p> <p><i>Assignments.</i> Students are expected to turn in assignments on time. No late assignments will be accepted. Contact the instructor in case of extenuating circumstances.</p> <p><i>Electronics policy.</i> I will permit the use of electronic devices in class for now. Students are expected to be considerate of their peers and use their best judgment. If I discover that these devices are causing more harm than good, I reserve the right to prohibit use during class.</p> <p><i>Harassment and bullying.</i> To be able to learn, students need to be and feel safe. No harassment or bullying behavior of any kind is acceptable among any members of</p>

the university community. Instructors are required by university policy to report suspected cases of sexual harassment or assault to the university's Gender Equity Committee (台大性平教育委員會, tel: 3366-9607, 3366-9608, email: gender@ntu.edu.tw).

Academic honesty. Students are expected to produce work that is honest and original. Violating the university's policies against cheating and plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the course and referral for further penalties. Students with questions about how best to follow this policy are encouraged to consult with the instructor.

Updating and revising the syllabus. As the semester progresses, we will encounter aspects of the class that may need modification and improvement. The syllabus may change. Please be patient with the class as I work to improve it.

**Requirements
and grading**

TASK	%	DESCRIPTION
Attendance and participation	30%	With the exception of one book, we will spend two weeks on each book. For the first week of each book, each student is responsible for reading the introduction and conclusion . For the second week, each student will choose one chapter and be responsible for presenting the main points of that chapter to the rest of the class.
(Mostly) fortnightly memos	20%	For the first week of each book, students will write a reflection memo of about 100 to 200 words (to be submitted on NTU COOL) on the main points presented in the introduction and conclusion chapters. Discuss and evaluate the framing of the book: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is the author positioning themselves in relation to the related literature? ▪ What theory is the author engaging? ▪ What methods does the author propose to use? ▪ Do you find the argument convincing? Memos must be submitted on NTU COOL by 5pm on the day before class. You can skip one memo for the course without penalty. <p>For the second week of each book, you are responsible for presenting one chapter of the book to the rest of the class for no more than 10 minutes. You do not need to write a memo for this week. You have the option of creating a handout (of no more than one side of one A4 page) or a PowerPoint to help you organize your ideas. (This is not required.)</p>
Final paper proposal	10%	You will have a lot of flexibility on what you can do for your final paper for the course. You can choose to write all or part of a thesis or research proposal. You can also restrict your paper to a review paper on the readings in the class. If you wish to write a review paper, you must discuss at least four of the books on this syllabus. Whatever you choose, in week 7 you must submit a proposal of about 300 words (on NTU COOL) for what you intend to do for

Requirements and grading

TASK	%	DESCRIPTION
		your final project. The proposal must outline an argument—you cannot just summarize the books; you must have a point of view.
Final paper	40%	The final paper (no matter what you choose) should be about 2,500 to 3,000 words long and have a clear argument.

Schedule

	WEEK	DATE	TASK
	1	Feb 21	Introduction
	2	28	228 Memorial Day (no class)
<i>Political economy</i>	3	Mar 6	Andreas, Joel. 2019. <i>Disenfranchised: The Rise and Fall of Industrial Citizenship in China</i> . New York: Oxford University Press.
	4	13	Andreas, <i>Disenfranchised</i>
<i>Social movements</i>	5	20	Su, Yang. 2023. <i>Deadly Decision in Beijing</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.
	6	27	Su, <i>Deadly Decision</i>
	7	Apr 3	Spring break (Final paper proposal due ; no class)
<i>The environment</i>	8	10	van der Kamp, Denise Sienli. 2023. <i>Clean Air at What Cost? The Rise of Blunt Force Regulation in China</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.
	9	17	van der Kamp, <i>Clean Air at What Cost?</i>
<i>Gender</i>	10	24	Fincher, Leta Hong. 2021. <i>Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening in China</i> . New York: Verso Books.
<i>Technology and economics</i>	11	May 1	Lei, Ya-Wen. 2023. <i>The Gilded Cage: Technology, Development, and State Capitalism in China</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press.
	12	8	Lei, <i>The Gilded Cage</i>
<i>Migration and labor</i>	13	15	Chuang, Julia. 2020. <i>Beneath the China Boom: Labor, Citizenship, and the Making of a Rural Land Market</i> . Oakland: University of California Press.
	14	22	Chuang, <i>Beneath the China Boom</i>
	15	29	Reading week (prepare final paper, no class)
	16	Jun 7	(Fri) Final paper due at 11:59pm