**Millennial Capitalisms**

**Cultural Anthropology 264S-01**

**Course Theme:**

**New Urban Forms: East Asia and Global Perspectives**

**Fall 2011 – to be updated for Spring 2015**

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**Office Hours: Thursday, 1:30- 3:00 pm, or by appointment**

# ***Course Overview***

This course is an introduction and overview of the cultural politics of urban transformation in the People’s Republic of China. China is today one of the economic powers in the world, an expanding presence in the East Asian context, and a major player in the investment and development scene in much of the former “Third World,” from Latin America, to Southeast Asia and Africa. China’s obsessive fascination with urban forms of modernity was on display at global events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, both of which required billions of dollars and the eradication of entire neighborhoods. Often overlooked is the media coverage of these events and China’s spectacular “rise” is how urban transformations have been predicated on the largest internal migration in human history, as rural residents have fled the countryside (the once sacred space of Mao’s imagined utopia) to work in China’s expanding cityscapes. China’s cities are now larger, taller and more sprawling than in the socialist period. The urban- rural divide that structured so much of social life and labor in the socialist period is rapidly blurring, if not altogether disappearing. While urban spaces today offer higher standards of living, new and more “modern” housing arrangements, and new opportunities for migrants, they are marked by sharp distinctions in class, social position, privilege and uneven development. They are also today haunted by complex histories of demolition (拆 chai), as real estate speculation and new and seemingly endless construction pushing residents to expanding urban-rural fringe zones. As these developments have unfolded over the last decade, academics, civil society activists, artists, filmmakers, and bloggers have all turned the “urban” into an object of critique. While the ongoing urban transformation of China is a story of many things, it is indisputable a story about the fading of socialist ideals, the reorganization of social space, the restless movement of capital and people – in short, it is a story about the relationships between capitalism, urban form, and global modernity in the new millennium.

To explore these issues, we will engage and critically assess a wide range of materials, from cultural anthropology to economics, geography, journalism, urban planning, film, video and photography. Students will be encouraged to tackle this material with an eye toward their own research interests, and ample opportunities will be provided to draw in perspectives from other urban and regional spaces, from East Asia and beyond.

***Course Requirements***

This course will be conducted as a seminar. All students are required to attend class. On occasion you will be asked to presents the week’s material, to open up discussion and debate. Finally, all students must complete a final research project and/or write a critical overview essay of the course material (20- pages double-spaced).

If you have to miss class due to illness or other commitments, please inform me by email. All students will be expected to make up missed reading, or assigned work.

***Grading***

Class participation 25%\*

Class Presentation(s) 25%

Final Research Project/ Course Essay 50%

**\*3 unexcused missed classes = 1 full grade deduction.**

***Required Books:***

The following books are required. Please purchase these on your own through an online bookseller, or through the Duke textbook store.

***Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Reshaping the World,*** Doug Saunders, New York: Pantheon Books, 2010.

***Beijing Time,*** Michael Dutton, Hsiu-ju Stacy Lo and Dong Dong Wu, Harvard University Press, 2008.

***Cities Surround the Countryside: Urban Aesthetics in Postsocialist China,*** Robin Visser, Duke University Press, 2010.

***Cosmologies of Credit: Transnational Mobility and the Politics of Destination in China,*** Julie Y. Chu, Duke University Press, 2010.

***Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions***, Hong Kong, Gordon Mathews, The University of Chicago Press, 2011.

***The Kunshan Way****,* Einar Tangen, Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2010.

***Schedule***

**Week 1: Course Introduction**

Sept. 1 Review of Syllabus/ Course Outline/ Student Expectations

Background Readings on the Chinese Economy:

All chapters from *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth,* Barry Naughton, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007).

“Legacies and Setting,” pp. 16-32 (This is an overview of China’s geography, landforms, climate and water, etc)

“The Socialist Era, 1949-1978: Big Push Industrialization and Policy Instability,” pp. 55-84

“Market Transition: Strategy and Process,” pp. 85-111

“The Rural-Urban Divide,” pp. 113-136

“Rural Organization,” pp. 231-249

“Foreign Investment,” pp. 401-409

**Week 2: Consumption, Fantasy, and the Urban Form**

Sept. 8 Film Screening: Luo Ye, dir., *Suzhou River*, 83 minutes.

Reading and be ready to discuss:

Robin Visser, “Consuming the Postsocialist City: Shanghai Identity in Art, Film, and Fiction,” in *Cities Surround the Countryside*, Chapter 4, pp. 175-221.

Zheng Zhen, “Urban Dreamscape: Phantom Sisters, and the Identity of an Emergent Art Cinema.”

Check out journalist Howard French’s Disappearing Shanghai photo blog:

<http://www.howardwfrench.com/2011/02/disappearing-shanghai-2/>

**Week 3: Edges and Margins – New forms of Global Urbanization**

Sept. 15 Read in full and be prepared to discuss: Doug Saunders, *Arrival City*.

**Week 4: Urban Transformation: The Cultural Logic of Demolitions**

Sept. 22 Film Screening: *24 City*, Jia Zhangke, dir. 103 minutes.

Film synopsis: A documentary film on the state-owned Factory 420, also called as the Chengdu Engine Group, which was founded in 1958 to produce aviation engines. Now abandoned, the factory is sold for millions to real estate developers to be transformed into a complex of luxury apartment blocks called 24 City. The film revolves around eight dramatic interviews that present three generations with ties to the factory: the first factory workers, more recent employees, and the children of former laborers. Woven into this oral history are three fictional monologues delivered by actors.

Read and be ready to discuss:

Jiwei Xiao, “The Quest for Memory: Documentary and Fiction in Jia Zhangke’s Films, *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 59, 2011:

[http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/the-quest- for-memory-documentary-and-fiction-in-jia-zhangke’s-films/](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/the-quest-%09%09%09%09for-memory-documentary-and-fiction-in-jia-zhangke's-films/)

Sheldon H. Lu, “Tearing Down the City: Reconstructing Urban Space in Contemporary Chinese Popular Cinema and Avant-garde Art.”

“City of Chai” in *The Concrete Dragon: China’s Urban Revolution*, Thomas J. Campanella, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

**Week 5: Beijing Transformed**

Sept 29 Read in full and be prepared to discuss: Michael Dutton, et. al. *Beijing Time*.

Recommended reading:

Ian Johnson, *“Dream of a Vanished Capital,”* in *Wild Grass, Three Stories of Change in Modern China,* pp. 87-182*.*

Chapters from *The Concrete Dragon: China’s Urban Revolution*, Thomas J. Campanella, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008, “The Politics of the Past,” “Capital Improvements,” and “The Country and the City.”

Wang Jun, *Beijing Record: A Physical and Political History of Planning Modern Beijing* (selected chapters to be posted on Blackboard).

**Week 6: Urban Transformations, continued.**

Oct. 6 Read in full and be ready to discuss: Robin Visser, *Cities Surround the Countryside* (note: you have already read Chapter 4).

**Week 7: Midterm Roundup (following Fall Break)**

Oct. 13 Overview Discussion – what have we learned? And initial thoughts on Final Research Projects

**Week 8: Out of China: New Logics of Global Migration**

Oct. 20 Read in full and be ready to discuss:

Julie Chu, *Cosmologies of Credit*.

**Week 9: Life Inside Hong Kong – Low-end Globalization**

Oct. 27 Read in full and be ready to discuss:

Gordon Mathews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World*

**Week 10:** **Going Global: The Duke Project in Kunshan**

Nov. 3 Read and be prepared to discuss: *The Kunshan Way*

**Week 11: Migrant Imaginaries/ Urban Spaces**

Nov 10 Selected chapters from ***Strangers in the City:******Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks Within China's Floating Population,*** Li Zhang, Stanford University Press, 2002.

**From Somewhere to Nowhere**: View this film on Andreas Seibert’s migrant photographic book project on the Duke Library Films on Demand Digital films resource (search for From Somewhere to Nowhere): <http://digital.films.com/PortalViewVideo.aspx?xtid=41367>

**Week 12:**

Nov. 17 Litzinger away at Anthropology Meetings – Arrange Guest Lecture, or work on Final Research Projects

**Week 13:**

Nov. 24 Thanksgiving Break

**Week 14:**

Dec. 1 Last Day of Class; Presentation of Draft Research Papers.

**Final Research Papers Due Date: To be Determined.**