

Geog383: Physical and cultural geography of China

Course outline (F all 2015)

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Course description and objectives

This course is an introduction to the physical and human geography of China. Topics include physical environment, culture, demographics, agriculture, urbanization, industrialization and environmental challenges. The goal is to examine the geographical aspects of modernization and development in China. The specific objectives are to develop a critical understanding of the processes of change in China and to expand skills and techniques in regional analysis.

Textbooks and course materials

Veeck, G., Clifton P., Smith C. J. and Huang, Y. 2011. *China's Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic, and Social Change*, 2nd Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

This is a comprehensive textbook on China's geography. It covers most of the themes explored in the lectures, including environment, culture, demographics, agriculture, industrialization and urbanization.

Wu, Weiping and Gaubatz, Piper. 2013. *The Chinese City*. London and New York: Routledge.

This insightful book addresses the urbanization process in contemporary China. It investigates the challenges faced by China's cities.

Other readings

Readings from books and journals will be assigned during lectures. These will be available through the UVIC library and websites in the public domain.

Videos

A number of videos will be shown in class to illustrate the course material and stimulate discussions in class. Most of these videos are available on-line.

Course requirements

Tests in class

The lecture material will be the subject of FOUR written tests during the term (dates are indicated in the timetable).

Term paper

You will research an issue related to the content of the course and write a term paper based on this research. The paper should be a critical essay on the topic chosen.

Short presentation

This exercise consists in presenting the essence of your research to the class at the end of the term. You will have 5 minutes to present the issues investigated and your research objectives (4 PPT slides allowed). The presentations are scheduled for the last three days of classes (see timetable).

The research paper and presentation assignments are described on the webpage for the course (Moodle). Consult the write-ups for details.

Note: You must hand in a valid paper to pass the course.

Evaluation scheme

4 tests in class (midterms)	Total: 60% (15% each)
Term paper	35%
Short presentation (of term paper)	5%
Total	100%

Course syllabus

The course syllabus is available on the web site for the course. You will find all information related to the course: schedule of activities, summaries of each topic, reading lists, and assignment descriptions (tests, term paper, presentations).

List of topics covered in class

Topic 1. China's physical environment

Topic 2. History, culture and politics

Topic 3. Population

Topic 4. Agriculture

Topic 5. Industry, resources and trade

Topic 6. Urbanization

Topic 7. Regions, spatial inequality and ethnic minorities

Topic 8. Environmental problems

Topic 9. Conclusion: China's prospects and challenges

Timetable

Week	Date (Tue)		Date (Wed)		Date (Fri)	
1			Sep 9	Topic 1	Sep 11	Topic 1
2	Sep 15	Topic 1	Sep 16	Topic 2	Sep 18	Topic 2
3	Sep 22	Topic 2	Sep 23	Topic 3	Sep 25	Test 1: Topic 1 & Topic 2 (15%)

