

HUMA 5660 City and Urban Life in Late-Imperial and Republican China

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1530 to 1730, and Friday 1500-1600, or by appointment

This series of seminar aims at exploring the social and cultural history of the city in late Imperial and modern China. Certain key aspects of city life are examined in order to broaden our knowledge of the Republican society and the complexity of urban realities. Topics to be discussed are the cultural attitudes towards the city under the Ancien Regime, popular perceptions of the city, specific aspects of life in urban centres, the impact of the West in the urban realm, the manifestations of Chinese nationalism and the force of cultural continuity in the urban context, urban development in this period, and so on. It is hoped that throughout the entire course the problems in writing Chinese urban history would be discussed and methods of resolving them explored. By the end of the course, students would hopefully learn to appreciate city as an interesting and rewarding area for serious academic research on modern Chinese social and cultural histories.

A seminar is an occasion for holding discussions and exchanging ideas and information. Your active participation in group discussion is expected and would be graded. Poor participation will affect your final score of this course.

Assessment:

- 1) One research paper of good quality on a designated topic (50%)
- 2) short reviews on the assigned readings of each week, and consistently active participation in classroom discussion (30%)
- 3) to be decided: one written test (10%)

Attendance (10%) is *mandatory*. Absentee is required to write a report on the readings of the week in which s/he is absent, and points may be deducted from his/her overall performance.

ILOs

On completion of this course, students will: 1) understand some of the fundamental principles (political, socio-economical, and cultural) in Han-Chinese capital city plans, city/town plans from antiquity to the Republican times; 2) have learnt about the cultural differences between pre-modern European cities and Chinese cities, and the long-term social and political consequences of such divergence between the two regions, including the controversial debate on the different paths of development of civil society between the East and the West; 3) obtain a better and a deeper understanding of selected historical topics and issues of modern China history covered in this course, such as the true impact of foreign imperialism on Chinese economy and society, characteristics of treaty-port cities, urban architecture in the early modern period, consumerism and nationalism in modern metropolis, urban problems in modern China, conditions of urban workers and labour unrest, expansion of the Party state in urban society, etc; 4) master some of the basic skills of how to conduct historical research, and have the opportunity of learning the communicative skills by writing academic papers on a history subject appropriately, and to discuss their ideas with their peers in classroom.

Classroom etiquettes: Turn off all electrical devices during classes, including mobile phone, laptop, iPad, etc. Be punctual and don't be late to a class for over 15 minutes. Always alert me in writing well in advance if you can't come to a class.

Week 1 Introduction and organizing the course

Weeks 2-3 Symbolical Order of Imperial and Republican Cities

Readings: 徐泓, "The Planning, Plan Layout and Symbolism of the Imperial Palace Compound of Nanjing in the Early Ming Dynasty" (in Chinese); 一丁, 中國古代風水與建築選址, pp. 64-69, 165-204; 謝敏聰, '宇宙中心的象徵', '中國的都市觀景與其設計的意境', '總結'; Charles Musgrove, "Building a Dream: Constructing a National Capital in Nanjing, 1927-1937"

Optional: Arthur F. Wright, "The Cosmology of the Chinese City", pp.34-73; Min-ch'ien, Tau, Two Years in Nationalist China (Shanghai: 1930), chapter 10; A.P. Cheater's "Death Ritual as Political Trickster" in Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs (no.26, 1991); David Buck, "Two Faces of the Modern in Changchun"; 廣州市文物志, pp. 170-173, 208-218; Hung Chang-tai, Politics of control : creating Red culture in the early People's Republic of China; Madeleine Yue Dong, "Defining Beijing: Urban Reconstruction and National Identity, 1928-1936"

STQ: Identify major cosmological orders in traditional Chinese city plans. Explain the symbolic meanings of its layout. How was the imperial power (皇權) manifested in major cities' plans? What kinds of symbols were employed to highlight the imperial power? Were all traditional cities built strictly according to cosmological principles and imperial ideology? What were the purposes of these architectural symbolisms in city plan? How possibly could the forces of cultural change and continuity be reflected from the layout and architectural orders of a Chinese city in this period? Was there a similar well-planned symbolical layout in Republican cities such as the capital-city Nanjing?

Week 4 Cultural Meanings of the City in Late-Imperial China

Readings: Max Weber "The Nature of the City", pp.23-46; Etienne Balazs, Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy, pp.66-78; Rhoads Murphey, "City as a Mirror of Society: China, Tradition and Transformation"; William Rowe, Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, chapters 6, 9, 10

Optional: Edward Rhoads "Merchant Associations in Canton, 1895-1911";

STQ: Was Chinese city in traditional Chinese civilization culturally insignificant as Balazs and Murphey claim? Could we say that traditional Chinese cities were culturally and socially unique in comparison with her villages? Was there a "civil society" or "public sphere" in Chinese city in this period? How did that fact (of presence or absence) affect the course of historical development of modern China? Was there a distinct "urban culture" in late-imperial Chinese cities and what does that tell us about the characteristics of Chinese civilization? In the Republican times, did the image (and the socio-cultural importance) of Chinese city improve (and increase) or deteriorate?

Weeks 5-6 Cultural Continuity and Change

(A) Socio-Cultural Meanings of Urban Houses

Readings: James Cook, "Reimagining China: Xiamen, Overseas Chinese, and a Transnational Modernity"; 林琳, "港澳與珠江三角洲地域建築---廣東騎樓";

STQ: How was housing conditions like in late-Qing and early Republican cities? Do you agree with the views of the two articles on *qilou* about the cultural and social importance/significances of this particular type of modern urban architecture? Go to the library, or surf the web, and look for any historical examples which could help us to reveal how urbanites lived in their houses/flats in this period. How were these different from that of the villagers? How did houses/buildings tell us about urban life and the city? What are the limitations of historical studies of city's dwellings?

(B) Social Customs and Entertainment

Readings: 風俗改革叢刊 (Canton: 1930), pp.49-84; Prasantjit Duara "Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity: The Campaigns against Popular Religion in Early Twentieth-Century China" (Journal of Asian Studies 50, no.1 Feb. 1991, pp.67-83); A.P. Cheater's "Death Ritual as Political Trickster" in Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs (no.26, 1991); C.K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society, chapter 13; 廣州市文物志, pp. 147-161; 劉靖之 et al eds. 粵劇研討會論文集, pp.99-133, 367-390, 537-546; 歐陽予善, '談文明戲'; Colin Mackerras, The Chinese Theatre in Modern Times, chapter 6.

STQ: Assess the forces of cultural continuity in shaping urban culture? Was it a reflection of the so-called rural-urban continuum? How did that affect the city as a powerful producer of modern culture? Was modernity, or tradition, shelved? What do we learn about Cantonese urban society and popular culture from the various articles on Cantonese opera?

Week 7

City as seen through Commercial Advertisement and Guidebooks

Readings: 黃克武, '從申報醫藥廣告看民初上海社會'; All About Shanghai: A Standard Guidebook (1934); Henry Gray, Walks in the City of Canton (1875);

Barbara Mittler, "Imagined Communities Divided"; Roland Barthes' "Myth Today"; advertisements in contemporary magazines and newspapers such as 申報, 華字日報, 越華報, or any contemporary city guide which you can allocate.

STQ: How did consumerism contribute to the formation of a distinct urban culture in Republican metropolis? Was advertisement a credible way to reveal popular mentality and various cultural and social forces in the big cities? What kinds of ideology may be embedded in the structure of contemporary city guides? What do these guides tell us about the urban scenes, both social and cultural?

Weeks 8-9 Foreign Imperialism and Chinese Cities

Readings:

(A) Political: 蔣介石, '中国之命運', pp. 122-8, 130-6; '前言'; '近代中國的商埠'; Rhoads Murphey, "The Treaty Ports and China's Modernization"; ; Pamela Atwell, British Mandarins and Chinese Reformers, chapters 1 to 3.

(B) Social and cultural: 吳圳義. '清末上海租界社會' chapters 2 & 4; 周谷城, '都市社會里的人', pp.345-366; Jonathan Spence, To Change China, chapters 2 & 6.

(C) Economic: Chao Kang, "The growth of a modern textile industry and the competition with handicrafts"; 廣州港史 (近代), chapters 2 & 4; '廣州沙面租界概況'; 近代廣州口岸經濟社會概況 nos. 1 to 3 (choose any one).

STQ: Critically examine the impact of foreign imperialism in shaping Chinese city and its urban culture, with special reference to cities in the coastal area. What was life like in a Chinese city, to both the Chinese and the foreigners? To what extent was foreign imperialism as a major force of social change, and re-shape urban life in China? How accurate were Chiang Kai-shek's opinions on the impact of imperialism in China?

Week 10

(A) Years of Chaos: Warlords and Chinese Cities

Readings: Michael Tsin, "Canton Remapped"; Robert Kapp, "Chungking as a Centre of Warlord Power, 1926-1937"; 廣州港史 (近代), chapter 5; Kristin Stapleton,

“Yang Sen in Chengdu”; 張靜如, 北洋軍閥統治時期中國社會之變遷, pp. 76-90, 287-304.

STQ: Critically assess the role played by different warlords in the destruction and construction of Chinese cities in this period? Identify major characteristics in the various warlords' cities and account for its meanings. Try to explore into the different narratives of warlordism in this week's readings and explain the meanings of these variations.

(B) Interim reports on your mini-research project

Your short report should include the following information based on which your course-mates would comment: topic and what you could learn from it; identified possible sources (where to get what) and how useful they are to your project; initial organization of your paper, etc.

Week 11 “Social Evil”: Prostitution

Readings: Sidney Gamble, Peking: A Social Survey (New York: 1921), chapter X; Gail Hershatter, Dangerous Pleasures, chapters 3-9; 康素珍, 青樓恨, chapters 1,2,3,5; 平襟亞, '舊上海的娼妓'; Sidney Gamble, Peking, chapter X; 廣州民國日報 (II), '廢娼問題'等, pp.468-70, 527-36; 蘇童, 紅粉; 羅禮銘, 塘西花月痕, chapter 1 and any other chapters; Christian Henriot, Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai, chapters????; Yen Ching-yueh (1930), Crime and Social Change in China, “Prostitution”.

STQ: Critically study Hershatter's approach to history of prostitution in Shanghai, particularly her post-structuralistic methods in narrating history. What sorts of problems could be identified in Ping's, and Kang's historical narrative on issue? How did prostitute live and work? What can we learn about women position and the issue of “exploitation” from studying their working lives and workplaces?

Week 12 Urban “Disease”: Opium

Readings: “Report of the Committee Appointed by the Philippines Commission to Investigate the Use of Opium ...”; Jonathan Spence, "Opium Smoking in Ch'ing China"; “Opium” in The China Year Book, 1919-20; Yen Ching-yueh (1930), Crime and Social Change in China, “Opium”; 平襟亞, '舊上海的煙'; pp.3-

41, 69-100; '賭' 等, pp. 373-389; Virginia and Edward Berridges, Opium and the People (1987);

STQ: Why opium was once so widespread in China? What did the imperialists actually do to China in this respect? What possible political considerations may lay behind these Chinese narratives of the opium question? Can we read the anti-opium campaigns as a part of the nation-building programmes? Why was opium addiction considered as a crime and a disease?

Week 13 Workers and Urban Protest

Readings: Emily Honig, Sisters and Strangers , chapters 3,5,6,7,8; 吳靄儀 (Canton: 1920); David Strand, Rickshaw Beijing , chapters 2, 3, 10-12; Gail Hershatter, Workers of Tianjin, chapters 5, 6, 8; 英商公共汽車業'; '廣州鞋業工人生活狀況陳達, 中國工運史, pp.22-82, 170-249; 鄧中夏, '中國工人階級的力量'.

STQ: Critically assess how badly were Chinese urban workers exploited? Critically assess the notion of "spontaneity" in the narratives of labour movement studied for this week. Identify the underlying forces that unite, and split, factory workers in their collective action against the establishment. In your own knowledge, was this pattern of protest unique to big industrial Chinese cities? What do we learn about urban worker cultures in general from these readings?