

# China's Sustainable Development

SOSC4290 @ Spring 2024

KT Wong<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Division of Social Science, HKUST

Last Updated on 2024 Winter

## 1 Class information

Teaching team

Instructor: Kwan To Wong (KT)

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Office: 2356

Office Hours: Thurs 1500-1600

(by appointment)

TA: Roy Ho

Email: psrho@ust.hk

Office: 2359

Office Hours: Tue, Thurs 1500-1600

Class Time: 1500-1620 on Wednesday and Friday

Class Venue: LG426

## 2 Course Description

This course begins with the discussion of the concepts, principles, and research methodology of sustainable development. The main objective of the course is designed to understand and analyze sustainable development issues in China.

China's sustainable development issues to be covered include economic structure, political economy, rural areas, financial system, energy, environment, transportation and urbanization, climate change, and many others. Governance and policy, technology, organizational and individual behavior are important elements affecting sustainable development.

After the general introduction of sustainable development, we will cover various aspects of the development of China's economy over last 40 years to provide a concrete context to think

about making development sustainable. Recent research work related China's sustainable development will be examined. At last, students are offered the opportunity to show their work on the topic of their interests on China's sustainable development.

Sustainable development is an area of study and practice with few clear answers. Moreover, the study of sustainable development has to meet specific "environmental" challenges in within a social/political/economic setting by adopting various concepts, models, and statistical tools during analysis

### **3 Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain and understand the concepts, principles and significance of sustainable development
2. Understand and critique the existing assessment methodologies for evaluating sustainable development
3. Explore solutions for achieving a more sustainable development path for China from a multi-disciplinary perspective
4. Understand and explain the drivers, origins and challenges behind development issues in China
5. Apply the principles of sustainable development to evaluate and analyse environmental issues and sustainable development in China

### **4 Learning Activities**

1. Lectures
2. In-class discussions
3. Quiz
4. Student individual presentations and student-led discussions
5. Group Projects and presentations

### **5 Assessment Strategies (Full Mark: 100)**

1. Class Participation (10%)
2. Quiz (30%)
3. Individual Presentation and discussion (15%)
4. One Group Project Report (30%) + One Group Presentation (15%)

## 5.1 Class Participation

- Your active participation will be essential for the learning experience in this course

## 5.2 Individual Presentation and discussion

- Individual presentation of an academic paper listed in Canvas. The details (papers, presentation arrangement, etc) will be announced later in Canvas.
- The presentation should contain a summary of key components of the paper, including (but not limited to)
  - research question(s)
  - significance/relevance to the literature
  - choices of data source(s)
  - measurement of key variables
  - methodology
  - main findings
  - interpretation of the results
- The tentative plan is to have the (30-min max) individual presentation of the paper from 9th week onward (depending on the number of enrollments) <sup>1</sup>
- Next-time presenter will play a role as a discussant to make comments and/or lead a ~10-min discussion among classmates right after the presentation
- Depending on number of enrollment, it could happen that there will be more one-student presenting a particular paper and in that case, each student's presentation time and discussant arrangement will be adjusted accordingly

## 5.3 Group Project

- This will be a case study on China's sustainable development issues proposed by students
- The choice of topic should be "social science-oriented"
- A group of three students will be formed yourselves (any number other than this needs prior approval)
- The report has upper word limit of 3000, excluding tables, photos/images, graphs, reference lists
- The style and format of the report should be similar to those of the research papers presented in class or in the reference list on Canvas
- The last week of the semester will be reserved for the presentation <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Video recording for the presentations might be applied

<sup>2</sup>Video recording for the presentations might be applied

- Each group member needs to present and there could be some individual bonus/penalty from the overall group performance

## 5.4 One Quiz

- One-hour quiz will be made on May 3 unless later adjustment needs to be made
- The content will be mainly about the presentation papers as well as the background materials covered in class
- No show means Fail on this part, which accounts for 30% of the total marks
- No Makeup will be made unless for emergence events, like giving birth (Job interviews, Study trips, etc. will not count)

## 6 Course Schedule (tentative)

Date	Week	Topic
Jan 31, Feb 2	1	Course Overview; Sustainable Development
Feb 7, Feb 9	2	Sustainable Development
Feb 14, Feb 16	3	Chinese Political economy
Feb 21, Feb 23	4	Rural Economy
Feb 28, Mar 1	5	Industrial Policy
Mar 6, Mar 8	6	Urbanization
Mar 13, Mar 15	7	Enterprise and SOE
Mar 20, Mar 22	8	Financial System
Mar 27, Apr 10	9	Environment
Apr 12, Apr 17	10	Individual Presentations
Apr 19, Apr 24	11	Individual Presentations
Apr 26, May 3	12	Individual Presentation; Quiz
May 8, May 10	13	Group Project Presentations

## 7 References

1. Arthur R. Kroeber. China's economy : what everyone needs to know. What everyone needs to know. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, second edition. edition, 2020.
2. Zhang Li, Richard T. LeGates, and Zhao Min. Understanding China's urbanization: the great demographic, spatial, economic, and social transformation. Edward Elgar Pub., Northampton, Mass, 2016.

3. Barry Naughton. *The Chinese economy : adaptation and growth*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, second edition. edition, 2018.
4. Carlos Alberto Ruggiero. *Sustainability and sustainable development: A review of principles and definitions*. *Science of The Total Environment*, 786:147481, 2021.
5. Tao Wang. *Making sense of China's economy*. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, England ;, 2023.
6. Paul G. Harris. *Environmental policy and sustainable development in China: Hong Kong in global context*. Policy, Bristol, 2012.
7. Eva Sternfeld and Eva Sternfeld. *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Policy in China*. *Routledge International Handbooks*. Taylor and Francis, London, first edition. edition, 2017.
8. Yasheng. Huang. *The rise and fall of the EAST : how exams, autocracy, stability, and technology brought China success, and why they might lead to its decline*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1st ed. edition, 2023.