

# SOSC 3001 L1

## Understanding China / Understanding Inequality, 1700-2000: A Data Analytic Approach

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<b>Course Offered</b>	<b>Spring 2026</b>
<b>Course Schedule</b>	Thursday 09:00-11:50 Academic Building Room 5619 (Mixed Mode)
<b>Instructional Team</b>	Professor James LEE <a href="mailto:jqljzl@ust.hk">jqljzl@ust.hk</a> ZHANG Anning <a href="mailto:annizan@ust.hk">annizan@ust.hk</a> (TA)
<b>Canvas</b>	Please regularly check our CANVAS course site for updates. All assignments must be submitted on the course site.

### Course Description

The creation and analyses of big historical micro-level data in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, much like the advent of the Scientific Revolution in the seventeenth century, has created a veritable Social Scientific Revolution in our understanding of the past. This is especially true in economic history, historical demography, and related social scientific history. Most notably, building largely on the collection and analyses of big Western European and North American historical datasets, is the widespread transformation of our understanding of historic economic inequality, summarized in Piketty (2013/2014, 2019/2020), and its revolutionary implications for capital, and by extension the human condition, worldwide in the twenty-first century.

This course on understanding China and Chinese inequality, 1700-2000 introduces some recent analogous achievements in Chinese history and social science pioneered by the Lee-Campbell Research Group's creation and analysis of similar big historical datasets. We organize this new knowledge in a framework that encourages learning about Chinese inequality and China in general in comparative perspective.<sup>1</sup> Our intention is to demonstrate how a new scholarship of discovery using a data analytic approach based on the collection and analyses of five large datasets of micro, that is individual-level, historical records, is also redefining what is singular about inequality in Chinese perspective and modern Chinese history, in particular. This is important as many current understandings of Chinese inequality, Chinese history, and general social theory regarding the human experience are based largely on Western experience or on Chinese experience seen through a Western lens.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.shss.ust.hk/lee-campbell-group/> which describes ongoing Lee-Campbell Research Group projects, affiliated faculty, students, and research staff, and provides links to publicly released data and documentation as well as to the 80 some scholarly articles and 8 academic books that use these data.

Over the next thirteen weeks, our course introduces alternative perspectives derived from 40 years of empirical analyses of almost 10 million records of historical Chinese microdata, the results of which challenge preexisting understandings of Chinese history and social theory. Our main historical data projects include the prize winning China Multi-Generational Panel Datasets CMGPD, the China University Student Datasets CUSD, the China Professional Occupation Datasets CPOD, the China Rural Revolution Datasets CRRD, and the China Government Employee Datasets CGED, all of which are described in our recent retrospective on historical Chinese microdata collections in *Historical Life Course Studies* (Campbell and Lee 2020).

These five data projects have multiple individual-level records for over 2 million persons, including 1.8 million index individuals who lived between the eighteenth century and the present as well as over 500,000 other individuals, typically spouses, parents, or other relatives related to them. More than 800,000 of these index individuals lived during the Qing dynasty, largely from the middle of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. Another million are from the Republic of China and People's Republic of China, almost entirely from the twentieth century. Nearly 900,000 are from specific North and Northeast China *rural* populations, half of whom are longitudinally linked over their life course and across generations. The remaining 900,000 are almost entirely university educated or the historical equivalent, *urban* populations of government officials, professionals, and university students and faculty and their family members drawn from all over China, whose records we have linked across careers and for some across generations.

For this course on inequality, we have organized these data to focus on four different patterns of inequality: 1) socio-demographic, 2) educational, 3) economic, and 4) political, sometimes for specific Chinese populations, sometimes nationally. We do not, in other words, confine our study of Chinese inequality to measuring the changing distribution of income or wealth, 1700-2000. Instead, we embrace a more multi-faceted and we hope more complete understanding of contemporary as well as historical inequality and living standards by comparing unequal resource distribution, opportunity, and behavior, and the political, economic, and social forces, as well as institutions, policies, and values that underlie them.

In all four parts of our class, we emphasize the persistent influence of two distinctive socio-political institutions: the Chinese *family* and the Chinese *state*. These two institutions were and are crucial for our understanding of inequality in China historically as well as today. In contrast to Western European and North American states and societies, which focus during the period 1700-2000 on the control of *property* and concomitant systems of wealth registration, and tax extraction, the focus of both the Chinese state and Chinese society has been on the control of *people*, social organization, and personal obligation.

Part One focuses on the 'the Fittest' as seen through socio-demographic studies of comparative population behavior – mortality, marriage, and reproduction – and their interaction with economic conditions and family and individual norms and values in the CMGPD datasets including populations from Liaoning in the CMGPD-LN, from Shuangcheng in the CMGPD-SC, and from the Imperial Lineage in the CMGPD-IL. Such socio-demographic studies are important because mortality and reproduction are universal

human experiences that are measurable, commensurate and therefore easily comparable. At the same time, historical population behaviors differ just as radically between China and the West as other patterns of inequality and opportunity. These differences summarized in Lessons 2 through 4 demonstrate the mutability of behavior and values, as well as the immutability of the biological and socio-biological forces underlying demographic behavior, and most importantly the ubiquity of the experience of inequality from a Chinese perspective.

Part Two focuses on ‘the Chosen’ as seen through the lens of comparative opportunity for education and to some extent work recorded in the CUSD datasets including graduates from Republican universities in the CUSD-ROC, overseas universities in the CUSD-OS, and contemporary universities in the CUSD-PRC. We do so because China’s thousand-year-old tradition of selective educational opportunity based on objective exam performance is an important precursor to today’s world in which education has become a necessary precondition everywhere for employment. As summarized in Lessons 5 through 8, China’s educated elite are defined more than elsewhere by abilities and skills measured by competitive exams than by their connections to political and property-based elite. And while the state continuously redefines what abilities and skills constitute academic merit, China’s educated elite continue to play a distinctive and prominent role in China’s recent economic growth as well as among contemporary global elites.

Part Three focuses on ‘the Wealthy’ measured by landed and residential property, since such tangible assets are better recorded than other types of wealth. Like our study of the Fittest, our historical data come largely from specific discrete rural populations comprising hundreds of village communities in Northeast and also North China recorded in the CMGPD-SC and the CRRD datasets produced during Land Reform in the CRRD-LR, and during the *Siqing* campaigns associated with the Socialist Education Movement in the CRRD-SQ. We also incorporate secondary research based on contemporary housing survey data. Paralleling our study of the Chosen, we discuss in Lessons 9 through 12 the role of the Chinese state in determining who gets wealth during the late nineteenth century, the middle-third of the twentieth century, and the turn of the twenty-first century. Moreover, we do so with explicit comparisons to wealth and especially landed wealth in the Western world over the last century, 1910-2010.

Finally, we turn in Part Four to ‘the Powerful,’ by which we mean the entirety of formal office holders from the very local, to regional and national civil and military office during the Qing and Republican periods. In Lesson 13, we distinguish between political elites whose eligibility for appointment depended on hereditary status, exam elites who qualified on the basis of exam performance, and property elites who qualified by their ability to purchase an official degree. These results come from our on-going analyses of three CGED datasets: the CGED-Q, with 4.3 million seasonal observations of over 312,128 unique Qing officials, especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, 242,005 who were civil officials, 61,690 who were military officials, and 8,433 who appear as both civil and military officials; the similar though considerably smaller CGED-BY, with 628,077 observations of approximately 36,179 Beiyang officials during the period from 1912 to 1924; and the CGED-ROC, with some 35,000 central government officials from 1927 to 1949.

Throughout human history as in much of the world today, for most people where you end up depends largely on where you begin. In China, however, this was and is very much a two-sided coin since individual subordination to the Chinese family and the Chinese state were based on systems of obligation which similarly required familial and political leaders to create and protect individual entitlements to lead as well as to be lead, and to assume agency over themselves 修身, their families 齐家, the state 治国, and the world in general 平天下, and in doing so through their individual agency and hard work to change destiny itself. Understanding the circumstances and extent of such increased opportunities during the period 1700-2000 therefore provides important insights to understanding inequality from a Chinese perspective, as well as new historical and comparative perspectives on what is distinctive about China in the past and in the present.

## Instructional Team

Besides myself, we are fortunate to have Anning ZHANG as the Teaching Associate for this class. I will also distribute this syllabus to various other co-authors and colleagues who may attend parts of the class related to their research interests and publications.

## Class Schedule

L #	DATE	THEME
L1	<i>05 February</i>	Introduction: Understanding China / Understanding Inequality
L2	<i>12 February</i>	The Fittest: Who Survives
L3	<i>26 February</i>	The Fittest: Who Reproduces
L4	<i>5 March</i>	The Fittest: Who Marries
L5	<i>12 March</i>	The Chosen: Who Gets Education in the Qing
L6	<i>19 March</i>	The Chosen: Who Gets Education in Republican China
L7	<i>26 March</i>	The Chosen: Who Gets Education in the People's Republic of China, China's First Silent Revolution
L8	<i>2 April</i>	The Chosen: Comparing the Best and the Rest, China's Second Silent Revolution
L9	<i>09 April</i>	The Wealthy: Who Gets Property World-wide
L10	<i>16 April</i>	The Wealthy: Who Gets Property During the Qing
L11	<i>23 April</i>	The Wealthy: Who Gets Property During Rural Reconstruction
L12	<i>30 April</i>	The Wealthy: Who Gets Property Today
L13	<i>07 May</i>	The Powerful: Who Gets Political Authority in Qing and Republican China

## **The ‘Flipped Classroom’ and Intended Learning Outcomes**

In addition to the presentation of new facts and ways to think about Chinese history and inequality 1700-2000, our course takes advantage of a flipped classroom approach to train students to work together in groups rather than individually, and to improve oral and written English communication skills as well as critical thinking. We do so because of the increasing importance of working styles - cooperation, creativity, leadership - and working skills - critical thinking and communication – in the global workplace.

We have filmed course lectures in some 55-60 approximately ten-minute ‘chunks’. Students are required to watch these class lectures outside the classroom before class meetings and to use in-class time for active learning through group presentations on weekly assigned questions, group comments on these presentations, as well as individual participation and discussion.

This course also utilizes E-Learning software developed at HKUST to build on connectivity to the 15,000 on-line students who have taken or are taking other versions of this class through Coursera and through such HKUST programs as the Hong Kong-Beijing University Alliance, Hong Kong-Shanghai University Alliance, and the Association of East Asian Research Universities to foster greater engagement with students elsewhere and to create a larger learning community.

Since we already have Research UG and PG Programs of Instruction to develop so-called ‘hard’ research skills, the focus of this class is on developing ‘soft’ skills. We prioritize four sets of soft skills which are necessary for virtually all professional achievement:

- Critical Thinking – use of evidence and distinguishing between facts and values
- Narrative construction – from descriptive, to analytic, to persuasive
- Oral argumentation – timed presentation, constructive peer commenting, and cogent responses
- Group Teamwork – coordination, cooperation, leadership

Our motivation for these pedagogical priorities is because succeeding in most professional post-tertiary employment requires the above four skills. Moreover, much of the global work environment will often be in mixed-mode and/or fully on-line groups rather than individual face to face assignments. As such, students need to use these skills to interact professionally, engage in group discussions, and organize and present group work through both virtual and face-to-face modes of communication.

## **Class Meetings**

Each week students are responsible to watch several pre-recorded assigned video lectures and to read a variety of assigned reading in advance of our class meeting. Class meetings will generally be organized into three 50-minute segments:

1. Team 1 presentation and discussion. An assigned Presentation team will give a 15-minute presentation including no more than 15 PPT slides on one of the

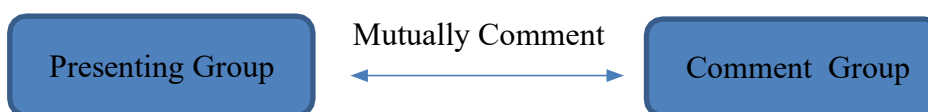
weekly assigned questions, followed by a 5-minute discussion of the presentation by an assigned Discussion team, including just one PPT slide of comments, and a 30-minute class discussion of the assigned question and reading organized around 2-3 discussion questions posed by the Discussion team.

2. Team 2 presentation and discussion. Same format as above.
3. Conclusions and implications. I will give a 20–30-minute wrap-up of what we have learned about the weekly topic from the lecture videos, readings, and in-class presentations and discussions, concluding with a Q&A session.

## Group Assignments

Class assignments from Lessons 2 through 13 are by group. Depending on class size, we will divide the class into 12 teams of 1-2 students. Each week we will assign two teams to make oral presentations in response to specific assigned questions and also assign a counterpart team to comment on each presentation. Comment teams should give constructive feedback on their assigned presentation, assessing in particular the presentation team's use of *evidence*, *critical thinking*, and degree of *persuasiveness*. Comment teams may also comment, as they deem needed, on issues and / or suggestions for improvement of the presentation group's textual and graphic narrative - language, images, and organization – as well as oral delivery. Presentation teams should submit their draft presentation two full days prior to class – i.e. on Tuesday by 13:30 – so that comment teams have adequate time to prepare their comments, including possibly their own independent reading and thinking about the assignment. Comment teams should conclude their comments by posing 2-3 discussion questions related to the assigned topic and presentation for general class discussion and response from the Presentation team.

Since we have 12 weeks after the Introduction, every team should give 2 presentations and 2 comments this term and every student should present and discuss or participate in at least one group presentation and one group comment/discussion during the term.



We strongly recommend that all students read the draft presentations as well as all the required reading prior to class for better individual class participation.

## Individual Assignment – Reflective Essay

Finally, at the end of the term all students must submit a 1,000-word individual reflective (not research) essay in response to the discussion question posed at the end of this syllabus about inequality, today and in the past, from a Chinese perspective. Your essay should showcase your ability to think critically about the topics and materials we have covered in our class including the lectures, readings, group presentations, group comments, and class discussion.

Final papers are due **May 17 at 11:59pm**. While you are welcome to discuss your essay with your teammates, classmates, and others, the final submission has to be written individually. Essays will be assessed according to the writing rubric in Appendix A.

## Academic Integrity

All assignments students submit must be their own work. We will consider any unattributed use of the work of others, **including generative AI such as ChatGPT**, as plagiarism and will not accept it. We require students to quote correctly and if using narrative text or analytic results from another source to include a proper citation. We will check all student essays using Turnitin, which includes a ChatGPT detector, and any cheating or plagiarism will be penalized.

The university offers resources to help you avoid plagiarism and copying. Please read all of the materials here: <https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-integrity>

## Grading

1. **Group Oral presentations:** 35 percent of course grade. Group presentations of weekly topics will be graded in terms of Textual and Graphic narrative, Oral delivery, Evidence and Persuasiveness.
2. **Group Oral Comments:** 15 percent of course grade, according to the same above rubrics. Please note that the commentary part should normally be more important than the discussion questions. However, a wonderfully posed question that seizes the attention and discussion of both your instructors and your classmates could boost the grading of the overall comment significantly higher than the commentary would otherwise warrant. Conversely, mundane questions could have a symmetrical negative effect.
3. **Individual Reflective Essay:** 25 percent of course grade. Each student will submit a 1,000-word individual reflections in response to the assignment at the end of this syllabus. The essay will be graded in terms of English Language 5 percent, Evidence 5 percent, Critical Thinking 5 percent, and Narrative Construction and Persuasiveness 10 percent.
4. **Individual Class Participation and Discussion:** 15 percent of course grade, based on individual weekly class attendance and more importantly individual participation in class discussion, including replies to group and class comments, and postings in the class ZOOM chat room. See the detailed assessment rubrics for Class Discussion.
5. **Teamwork:** 10 percent of course grade, based on the peer assessments of one's teammates.

Please note that while 50 percent of your grade depends on your group presentations and comments, and 25 percent depend on your individual essay, the remaining 25 percent depends on your individual class attendance and participation as well as your teammates peer assessment of your teamwork and team leadership. It is therefore possible for students who earn all 75

possible points for their presentations and writings to end up with a C if they do not participate in class discussion and do not fulfill their team responsibilities.

In grading your teammates' contributions, please consider the following criteria:

1. Quality of their work
2. Diligence
3. Leadership
4. Responsibility
5. Initiative (active/passive)
6. Etiquette
7. Preparedness
8. Time management
9. Knowledge
10. English and Computer Literacy

Please also consult the Teamwork peer assessment rubric in Appendix A.

## **Course Videos and Reading Assignments**

We welcome students of diverse origins and linguistic ability and have designed this class to be accessible to all HKUST students. Course videos are exclusively in English, while course readings are a mix of required English language publications and the occasional Chinese language text with summary English language articles and/or PPT presentations for students who are not fluent in written Chinese. Please note that since course videos are generally only available through HKMOOC the video chunk numbering does not necessarily align with the Lesson Numbers, which for this course change from year to year.

### ***Introduction***

#### ***Lesson 1: Understanding China / Understanding Inequality, 05 February***

- Videos:

Video 1.1.1 Who Are We? An Introduction

Video 1.1.2 Big Data and the Scholarship of Discovery

Video 1.2.1 Big Data, New Facts and Classic Social Theory

Video 1.2.2 New Data and Eurasian Comparisons

- Readings:

#### ***Required:***

Lee, James, with the help of Matthew Noellert, Cameron Campbell, and Shengbin Wei. 2022. "Persistent Divergence: Big Historical Data and Inequality in Chinese Perspective." PPT presentation to 12 April 2022 University of Chicago Webinar

Campbell, Cameron D. and Lee, James Z. 2020. “Historical Chinese Microdata. 40 Years of Dataset Construction by the Lee-Campbell Research Group.” *Historical Life Course Studies*, 9, 130–157. <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/23526343-2020-0004?locatt=view:master> . See 康文林 (Cameron Campbell) · 李中清 (James Lee). 2023. [中国历史量化微观大数据：李中清-康文林团队40年学术回顾](#) in 付海晏 ed. *大数据与中国历史研究*. 第4辑. Beijing: 社会科学文献出版社 Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 74-114 for a Chinese translation.

The Lee-Campbell Research Group Webpages <https://www.shss.ust.hk/lee-campbell-group/>

*Optional:*

Ding Guan, Zhou Zhong, Hamish Coates, Liu Liu, and James Z. Lee. 2019. “Education Innovation Through Online and Mobile Learning” In Zhou Zhong, Hamish Coates, Jinghuan Shi. Eds. *Innovations in Asian Higher Education*. Routledge, 38-50

Lazar, David, et al. 2009. “Computational Social Science,” *Science*, Vol 323, Issue 5915 (February): 721-723 <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1167742>

梁晨、董浩, 李中清. 2015. “量化数据库与历史研究” 《历史研究》第 2 期, 113-128 页

梁晨, 董浩, 李中清 . 2018. “从看一幅画到做一幕戏：互联网时代历史教研新动向探微” 《文史哲》第六期 (December): 121-134

## ***Part One: The Fittest***

### ***Lesson 2: Who Survives, 12 February***

- Videos:

Video 1.3.1 Who Survives: Life Under Pressure

Video 1.3.2 Mortality: Geographic and Socioeconomic Comparisons

Video 1.3.3 Mortality and Who We Are - Mortality and Morality

- Readings:

*Required:*

Bengtsson, Tommy, Cameron Campbell, and James Z. Lee et al. 2004. *Life under Pressure: Mortality and Living Standards in Europe and Asia, 1700-1900*. MIT Press: 3-24, 431-440

Lee, James Z. and Wang, Feng. 1999. *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000*. Harvard University Press: 1-62

### ***Lesson 3: Who Reproduces, 26 February***

- Videos:

Video 1.4.1 Who Reproduces: Prudence and Pressure

Video 1.4.2 Reproduction and Conscious Choice

Video 1.4.3 Reproduction and Adoption

Video 1.4.4 Reproduction: Geographic and Socioeconomic Comparisons

- Readings:

*Required:*

Lee and Wang. 1999. *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000*. Harvard University Press: 83-99, 103-122

Tsuya, Wang, Alter, and Lee et al. 2010. *Prudence and Pressure: Reproduction and Human Agency in Europe and Asia, 1700-1900*. MIT Press: 319-328

#### **Lesson 4: Who Marries, 05 March**

- Videos:

Video 1.5.1 Who Marries: Similarity in Difference

Video 1.5.2 Universal Female and Restricted Male Marriage

Video 1.5.3 Alternative Marriage Forms

Video 1.5.4 Marriage and Socioeconomic Comparisons

Video 1.6.1 Who Cares: Family and Kinship

Video 1.6.2 Family Organization in Comparative Perspective

Video 1.6.3 East Asian Family Systems

Video 1.6.4 Comparing Family Influence in East Asia

Video 1.6.5 State and Kinship in China

- Readings:

*Required:*

Lee and Wang. 1999. *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000*. Harvard University Press: 63-82, 123-148

Lundh, Christer and Kurosu, Satomi et al. 2014. *Similarity in Difference: Marriage in Europe and Asia, 1700-1900*. MIT Press: 439-460

Wang, Feng and James Z. Lee. 2022. "From One Quarter to One Eighth: China's Demographic Future and The Limits of Convergence." Paper presented at the 2022 World Economic History Congress.

*Optional:*

"SPECIAL ISSUE on Complexity of Chinese Family Life: Individualism, Familism, and Gender" in *China Review* 20.2: May, 2020, 1-18

## ***Part Two: The Chosen***

### ***Lesson 5: Who Gets Education and Social Mobility in the Qing, 12 March***

- Videos:

Video 2.1.1 Introduction to Part Two: Comparative Inequality and Opportunity

Video 2.1.2 Big Data and New Scholarship of Who Gets Education

Video 2.1.3 Social Stratification and Social Mobility

Video 2.1.4 Social Mobility and the Examination System in Late Imperial China

Video 2.1.5 Conceptualizing *Keju*: Data Collection of *Juren*

Video 2.1.6 Cultural Reproduction and Education in Late Imperial and Contemporary China

Video 2.1.7 Salient Aspects of Examination System in China and West

- Readings:

*Required:*

Ho, Ping-ti. 1964. *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China; Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911*. Columbia University Press: 1-52, 92-167

*Optional:*

Rubenstein, William D. 2009. "The social origins and career patterns of Oxford and Cambridge matriculants, 1840–1900." *Historical Research*, vol. 82, no. 218 (November 2009): 715-730

Smith, Robert J. 1982. *The École normale supérieure and the Third Republic*. SUNY Press: Table 4, p. 34

Weber, Max. 1946. 'The Chinese Literati.' In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford University Press: 416-444, 462-467

### ***Lesson 6: Who Gets Education and Social Mobility in Republican China, 19 March***

- Videos:

Video 2.2.1 Republican Examination Elites, 1905-1952

Video 2.2.2 Tertiary Education in Republican China

Video 2.2.3 Republican Universities and the China University Student Dataset (CUSD-ROC)

Video 2.2.4 Female Tertiary Education and Women's Entry in the Public Sphere 1905-1952

- Readings:

*Required:*

Haozhe HAN and James Z. Lee. 2024. "Human Capital Development in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou: Comparing Elite University Students, 1912-1952." To be submitted to *Twentieth Century China*.

梁晨, 任韵竹, 李中清. 2025/2026. 《启山林者：中国现代知识阶层的形成，1912-1952》中国社会科学出版社.

Lee, James Z., Bamboo Y. Ren, Chen Liang. 2022. “Meritocracy and the Making of the Chinese Academe Redux, 1912-1952.” In Michael Szonyi and Tarun Khanna, Eds. *Making Meritocracy: Lessons from China and India, from antiquity to the present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 137-169. This article summarizes much of the above Chinese book.

Table B5.2 Distribution of tertiary graduates by field of study and gender (2019) in OECD 2021 report on Education at a Glance found in [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/b35a14e5-en/1/3/3/5/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/b35a14e5-en&\\_csp\\_=9689b83a12cab1f95b32a46f4225d1a5&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/b35a14e5-en/1/3/3/5/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/b35a14e5-en&_csp_=9689b83a12cab1f95b32a46f4225d1a5&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book)

*Optional:*

Bamboo Y. Ren, 2025. Professions and Professionals in Modern China, A Study of Contrasts, 1905-1952. HKUST PhD thesis.

Xu, Xiaoqun, 2000. *Chinese Professionals and the Republican State: The Rise of Professional Associations in Shanghai, 1912–1937*. Cambridge University Press: 1-19

Yeh, Wen-hsin. 2000. *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937*. Harvard University Asia Center: 7-48

***Lesson 7: Who Gets Education and Social Mobility in the People’s Republic of China: China’s First Silent Revolution, 26 March***

• Videos:

Video 2.3.1 Comparing Inequality in Education and Income between China and the West  
Video 2.3.2 Student Diversity at Peking University 1950-1999 and Suzhou University 1950-2003  
Video 2.3.3 Categorical Analytics of Student Diversity: PKU and SZU  
Video 2.3.4 China’s Silent Revolution’s Ladder of Success

• Readings:

*Required:*

Lee, James. 2016. “25 Facts About HKUST Undergraduate Students.” PPT File.

梁晨, 张浩, 李兰, 阮丹青, 康文林, 李中清. 2013. 《无声的革命：北京大学, 苏州大学学生社会来源研究, 1949-2002》. 北京三联出版社. (Note: PPT summaries of the key chapters of Silent Revolution are provided in English on Canvas)

梁晨、董浩、任韵竹、李中清. 2017. “江山代有才人出，各领风骚数十年：中国精英教育四段论，1865-2014” 《社会学研究》第三期 (May): 48-70. (Note: For an English language summary, please consult the PPT Slides on ‘Changes in the Social and Regional Origins of China’s Educated Elite, 1865-2014’ available on Canvas)

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1989/1996. *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Stanford University Press: 9-29, 263-339.

***Lesson 8: Comparing the Best (Elite Academic Researchers) and the Rest (Elite University Undergraduate Students), 1920-2020: China’s Second Silent Revolution, 2 April***

- Videos

Video 2.4.1 Changes in the Social and Regional Origins of China’s Educated Elite 1865-2014

Video 2.4.2 China’s Silent Revolution, 1949-2002

Video 2.4.3 Educational Expansion and Educational Inequality in China, 1865-2014

Video 2.4.4 Changing Regional Origins of Educated Elites: Before 1949

Video 2.4.5 Changing Regional Origins of Educated Elites: After 1949

- Readings:

*Required:*

Karabel, Jerome. 2005. *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*. Houghton Mifflin: 1-10

David Y. Zuo and James Z. Lee. 2024. “China’s Two Educational Revolutions: Comparing China’s Elite University Students to Elite Scientific Researchers 1890-2023.” Submitted to *Nature Human Behavior*.

Dongqian Liu, Shengbin Wei, James Z. Lee. 2025. China-US PhD Examination and Application Programs (CUSPEA), the Second Wave: Physics, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Math, 1979-1989

*The Harvard Crimson*

Class of 2022 by the Numbers <https://features.thecrimson.com/2018/freshman-survey>

Class of 2023 by the Numbers <https://features.thecrimson.com/2019/freshman-survey/>

*Yale Daily News*

Class of 2022 <http://features.yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/09/06/class-of-2022-by-the-numbers/> [the-numbers/](http://features.yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/09/06/class-of-2022-by-the-numbers/)

Class of 2023 <http://features.yaledailynews.com/blog/2019/09/05/class-of-2023-by-the-numbers/>

*Optional:*

Bodenhorn, Terry, Burns, John, & Palmer, Michael. 2020. "Change, Contradiction and the State: Higher Education in Greater China." *The China Quarterly*, 244, 903-919.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741020001228>

程猛. 2017. 《读书的料：及其文化产生 – 当代农家子弟成长叙事研究》北京师范大学博士学位论文: 21-36, 74-100, 135-163

### ***Part Three: The Wealthy***

#### ***Lesson 9: Who Gets Property Worldwide, 9 April***

- Videos:

Video 3.1.1 Wealth Distribution in the UK and US, 1700-2000

- Readings:

*Required:*

Piketty, Thomas. 2014. 'Introduction' and 'Merit and Inheritance in the Long Run' In *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press: 1-38, 377-429

Piketty, Thomas. 2020. 'Inequality Regimes in History' In *Capital and Ideology*. Harvard University Press, Introduction and Chapters One-Three, 1-125

#### ***Lesson 10: Who Gets Property During the Qing, 16 April***

Video 3.1.2 Big Data and New Scholarship of Who Gets Wealth

Video 3.1.3 Land Distribution in Shuangcheng, 1870-1906

- Readings:

*Required:*

Chen, Shuang. 2017. *State-sponsored inequality: The Banner System and social stratification in Northeast China*. Stanford University Press: 1-30, 162-224

Kishimoto, Mio. 2011. "Property Rights, Land, and Law in Imperial China." In Debin Ma and Jan Luiten van Zanden, Eds. *Law and Long-Term Economic Change: A Eurasian Perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 68-90

Lindert, Peter H. 1991. 'Toward a Comparative History of Income and Wealth Inequality.' in *Income Distribution in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge University Press: 212-231

*Optional:*

Chen, Shuang. 2017. *State-sponsored inequality: The Banner System and social stratification in Northeast China*. Stanford University Press: 61-88

***Lesson 11: Who Gets Property During Rural Reconstruction, 23 April***

• Videos:

Video 3.2.1 Wealth Distribution and Regime Change

Video 3.2.2 Wealth Distribution in Pre-Revolutionary China

Video 3.2.3 Have-Nots and Have-A-Littles in Pre-Revolutionary China

Video 3.2.4 Political Processes and Institutions of Regime Change in Shuangcheng, 1946-1948

Video 3.2.5 Revolutionary Victims in Shuangcheng and Elsewhere

Video 3.3.1 Collectivization and Wealth Distribution in the Mid-Twentieth China

Video 3.3.2 Collectivization and the Rise of New Inequalities, 1946-1966

Video 3.3.3 Collectivization and Social Change

• Readings:

*Required:*

Noellert, Matthew. 2020. *Power Over Property: The Politics of Land Reform in China, 1946-1948*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, , Chapters 5-7, 115-204

*Optional:*

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Beacon Press: 453-483

Hinton, William. 1966. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. Monthly Review Press: 147-156, 332-366

***Lesson 12: Who Gets Property Today, 30 April***

• Videos:

Video 3.4.1 Rural Decollectivization and Housing Policy

Video 3.4.2 Urban Housing Reforms and the Growth of Wealth

Video 3.4.3 Household Property and Residential Ownership

Video 3.4.4 Comparative Wealth Distribution: Past/Present and East/West

Video 3.4.5 Conclusion Who Gets What and Why

• Readings:

*Required:*

Piketty, Thomas, Li Yang, and Gabriel Zucman. 2019. "Capital Accumulation, Private

Property, and Rising Inequality in China, 1978–2015.” *American Economic Review* 109 (7): 2469–96. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20170973>.

Song, Xi and Yu Xie. 2014. “Market Transition Theory Revisited: Changing Regimes of Housing Inequality in China, 1988-2002.” *Sociological Science* 1: 277-291. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v1.a18>

Walder, Andrew G., and Xiaobin He. 2014. "Public housing into private assets: Wealth creation in urban China." *Social Science Research* 46: 85-99

Xie, Y., & Jin, Y. 2015. “Household Wealth in China.” *Chinese Sociological Review*, 47(3): 203-229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21620555.2015.1032158>

*Optional:*

Knight, J. and Shi, L. 2016. “The Increasing Inequality of Wealth in China, 2002-2013.” Economics Series Working Papers 816, University of Oxford, Department of Economics. <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:9b988adb-cbd2-457f-a05b-8ed7de8de84d>

Piketty, Thomas. 2014. ‘The Metamorphoses of Capital’ and ‘Global Inequality of Wealth in the Twenty-first Century’ In *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press: 113-139, 430-470

## ***Part Four: The Powerful***

### ***Lesson 13: Who Gets Political Authority in Qing and Republican China, 07 May***

- Videos:

Video 4.1.1 Who Gets Authority

Video 4.1.2 Three Elite Populations and Two Pathways

Video 4.1.3 Banner Officials: Exam Performance and Careers

Video 4.1.4 Qualifications and Careers of Exam Degree Holders

Video 4.1.5 Purchase Degree Holders in the Late Qing Civil Service

- Readings:

*Required:*

Chen, Bijia, Cameron Campbell, Yuxue Ren, and James Z. Lee. 2020. “Big Data for the Study of Qing Officialdom: The China Government Employee Database-Qing (CGED-Q).” *Journal of Chinese History*, 4(2): 431-460. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jch.2020.15>

康文林. 2020. “清末科举停废对士人文官群体的影响 —— 基于微观大数据的宏观新视角” (The Influence of the Abolition of the *Keju* Examinations at the End of the Qing on the Holders of Exam Degrees). 《社会科学辑刊》 (*Social Science Journal*) 2020.4 (249):156–166

*Optional:*

陈必佳, 康文林, 李中清. 2018. “清末新政前后旗人与宗室官员的官职变化初探” (Banner and Imperial Lineage Officials During the Late Qing Reform Period) 《清史研究》 第四期 (November): 10-20

任玉雪, 陈必佳, 郝小雯, 康文林, 李中清. 2016. “清代缙绅录量化数据库与官僚群体研究” (The Qing Jinshenlu Database: A New Source for the Study of Qing Officials). 《清史研究》 第四期 (November): 61-77

## Individual Reflective Essay Due May 17, 2026

### ***Required Re-reading:***

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1989/1996. *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Stanford University Press: 263-339.

### ***Optional Reading:***

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984/1996. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Harvard University Press.

In his many writings, Pierre Bourdieu (1984/1996) distinguishes between three analytic concepts which he refers to as types of capital underlying contemporary cultural and social hegemony:

1. economic capital by which he means private property
2. cultural capital, which includes personal cultural capital (formal education, knowledge); objective cultural capital (books, art); and institutionalized cultural capital (honours and titles)
3. social capital by which he means the quantity and social status of friends, family, and personal and business contacts

In addition, in the above reading for lesson 7, Bourdieu also discusses the relationship between cultural capital and political power.

Given that political power is more dominant in China than in France, would it make sense to add a fourth type of capital, political capital, by which I mean political authority (as opposed to other definitions which are less appropriate for China), and would that allow us to extend Bourdieu's model to embrace the objective inequalities in endowments and opportunities which we have categorized as The Fittest, The Chosen, The Wealthy, and The Powerful and to better interpret inequality in Chinese perspective? How do these four kinds of capital interact? To what extent are they independent or interdependent of each other?

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## Appendix A: Assessment Rubrics

The grading rubric: All group presentations, comments, and individual written exercises should be based on the relevant lectures and/or reading materials for each respective week.

### ***Group PPT Oral Assignments:***

**Textual and Graphic Narratives** –Your ability to conceptualize key takeaways in your slides and use graphics where appropriate to make your presentation more compelling

- Below standard (P-):
  - Textual: texts are barely comprehensible, and slides lack consistent message, sentence clarity;
  - Graphics: confusing slide design, lacking theme-appropriate illustrations, graphics, tables and charts.
- Meets standard (P):
  - Textual: texts are overall comprehensible, but slides contain repetitive or irrelevant texts;
  - Graphics: proper slide design, theme-appropriate illustrations and graphics are used in the slides to enhance the comprehensiveness of the presentation.
- Above standard (P+):
  - Textual: texts are readily comprehensible and virtually error-free, the narratives are expressed clearly and fluently, slides are highly relevant and consistent;
  - Graphics: thoughtful slide design, strongly theme-appropriate illustrations with value-added graphics, tables and charts.

**Oral Delivery** – your ability to orally convey the information and arguments

- Below standard (P-): oral presentation does not convey facts and ideas clearly. The presenter keeps looking at the screen without facing the audience, reads the words on the slides, stands passively behind the podium, lacks proper body language to emphasize key messages.
- Meets standard (P): oral presentation conveys most facts and ideas clearly. The presenter uses appropriate body language and make necessary eye contact with audience to help convey special meaning and ideas.
- Above standard (P+): oral delivery greatly enhances the presentation of facts and ideas. The presenter delivers the presentation through efficient interaction between oral delivery and written content on the slides, and uses appropriate body language and eye contact to keep audience focused.

**Evidence** – your ability to demonstrate independent *evidence-based critical thinking* and to provide sufficient evidence to support your analytic thesis

- Below standard (P-): simply asserts personal opinion or attempts to use evidence to support ideas but it is irrelevant, partial, ineffective, and/or not convincing.
- Meets standard (P): generally integrated using *documented* sources, facts, and details, able to demonstrate meaningful connections between your evidence and your analytic

thesis but is not totally effective or convincing.

- Above standard (P+): uses relevant *documented* evidence to convincingly support your analytic thesis and effectively develop your ideas.

**Persuasiveness** – your ability to present a convincing narrative expressing your own personal voice

- Below standard (P-): simply repeats a collection of available ideas with insufficient evidence and weak logic.
- Meets standard (P): expresses convincing voice and attempts to create unique ideas, but still lacks persuasiveness and depth.
- Above standard (P+): creates strongly convincing and innovative ideas and extends their implications to broader topics.

### ***Individual Writing Assignments***

**English language** – your ability to write a short prose narrative with proper word choice and grammar

- Below standard (P-): two or more sentences and ideas are incomprehensible, informal, simplistic, or imprecise. Uses inappropriate jargon/vocabulary.
- Meets standard (P): overall meaning and ideas are clear, but still contains some minor grammar mistakes and poor word choices. Expresses ideas by employing a mix of general, semi-formal, and precise language.
- Above standard (P+): writing is virtually error-free, and ideas are expressed clearly, fluently and professionally. Writes in a formal style using precise academic and appropriate vocabulary for the audience.

**Organization** – your ability to organize a descriptive, analytic, and / or persuasive narrative using paragraphs with topic sentences and segues

- Below standard (P-): no topic sentences, segues, or coherent paragraphs. Ideas progress unevenly from beginning to end.
- Meets standard (P): employs topic sentences and basic segues, but paragraph organization and overall narrative structure are still incomplete. Ideas progress in a smooth flow from beginning to end with appropriate style and an objective tone.
- Above standard (P+): constructs a solid, complete narrative based on clearly- stated topic sentences, fluent segues, and succinct paragraphs. Ideas progress logically and the essay structure contributes to the persuasiveness of the argument.

**Evidence** – See Group PPT Assignments.

**Persuasiveness** – See Group PPT Assignments.

## ***Class Discussion***

- ◆ **Discussion** – your ability to lead a discussion, raise questions effectively and respond to questions logically and skillfully
- Way below standard (P--): Attendance but no discussion +0.5 points per class (6 out of 15)
- Below standard (P-): Discussion is passive and ineffective with little interaction between presenters and audience. +0.75 points per class (9 out of 15)
- Meets standard (P): Discussion reflects critical thinking with continuous interactions between presenters and audience. 1.25 point per class (15 out of 15)
- Above standard (P+): Discussion is highly efficient and informative with deep questions and skillful and insightful responses. 1.5 or more points per class

## ***Teamwork Peer Assessment***

**Teamwork** - your ability to work with your team mates to produce high quality work

- Below standard (P-): Passively participate in preparation for team presentations writings. Avoid taking ownership for more demanding tasks. Insist on own point of view without considering team views. Do not acknowledge contributions made by other team members. Miss deadlines.
- Meets standard (P): Make significant efforts to participate in and contribute to team preparations for presentations and writing assignments. Occasionally take ownership for specific tasks including leadership of at least one team presentation and one team writing assignment. Acknowledge contributions of other teammates and show ability to subordinate personal views to those of your team. Meet deadlines.
- Above standard (P+): Proactively make contributions to preparation for team presentations and writings. Enthusiastically assume ownership and leadership of group tasks. Motivate other teammates to make contributions in highly efficient cooperation and show strong ability to integrate and synthesize personal views with others. Never miss a deadline.

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## Appendix B: Grading Equivalencies

The grading rubrics in Appendix A are organized by Pass+, Pass, and Pass-. However, since many universities require letter or 0-100 grades, we use the following grading equivalencies:

P++	A+	97-100
P+	A	93-96
P/P++	A-	90-92
P/P+	B+	87-89
P	B	83-86
P/P-	B-	80-82
P-	C+	77-79
P-	C	73-76
P--	C-	70-72
F	D+	67-69
F	D	63-66
F	D-	60-62

### *A Word to the Wise:*

In our experience, every semester the final grade for many students is driven by the 15-point class discussion grade and by the 10-point group teamwork peer assessment grade. Do take your class responsibilities and group responsibilities seriously. Treat your teammates with respect and participate in our weekly class discussions.