

Social Inequality in China: Education, Migrant Communities, and Volunteerism

Instructor: Rachel Leng

Faculty Supervisor: Ralph Litzinger, Cultural Anthropology

Meeting Time and Place: Wednesdays, 7 - 9pm, Keohane 4D 201

Course Description:

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the culture and politics of migrant life – particularly migrant education – through a wide spectrum of readings, documentaries, and films. Since the late 1950s, China has made tremendous efforts to improve education, with the aim of promoting economic and social development. Nevertheless, despite the tremendous strides China has made in the global sphere, the current rural-urban divide is startling and there is still much effort needed to improve the education system. While the rising middle-class enjoys its new money and lifestyle, their rural counterparts often struggle with poverty reminiscent of China twenty years ago.

In spite of the series of education reforms before, during, and after the Cultural Revolution, striking deficiencies nevertheless remain in the Chinese educational system, and enormous difficulties still lie ahead for ongoing educational reform. As China's markets underwent reform post-1977 (the end of the period of Maoist command socialism), opportunities for development and employment began to open up in urban areas. The privatization of public goods increased the demand for higher-salaried employment as goods and services once provided by the government were cut, and local and foreign business enterprises and investment were allowed to flourish. When foreign investment came in, these areas grew spectacularly in wealth and population, attracting migrant workers from all of the country in pursuit of a better life. However, because migrants have limited access to public goods due to the continued existence of the 1950's household registration (*hukou*), the children of these rural-to-urban migrants have been denied access to public education in China's cities and factory towns.

Over the course of this semester, we will look at various aspects of the migrant condition. We will examine the historical and current barriers to migrant education, and specifically at a non-profit school dedicated to improving education for migrant children. This class is geared towards preparing students for their participation in the DukeEngage Beijing program at the Dandelion Middle School. There will be reflections and discussions interspersed throughout the course on teaching at the school and on the lived experiences of the migrant community at the school. In light of the growing non-profit response to various issues of social inequality in China, we will also take the Dandelion Middle School as a case study in order to discuss the potential benefits and repercussions of volunteerism, including the problem of poverty tourism. The course will culminate in a final project or essay where students will reflect upon and propose projects to address the complex issues of social injustice, volunteerism, inequitable education and the marginalization of migrant communities in China today. The overall aim is to better prepare the next class of Duke Engage students to make informed decisions and take principled action through social engagement at the Dandelion school and beyond.

Course Materials:

All of our reading materials, with the exception of the required books (see below), will be available for access via Sakai. Most will be posted as PDFs. There will be a few readings with a link to an external website. The readings are listed on the date they are due. Please download them well in advance and come to class each week prepared to discuss what you have read.

The two books required for the class, “Factory Girls” and “Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms,” are lengthy but easy readings. These are available on Amazon or can be ordered through the Regulator Bookstore on Ninth Street. Please note the due dates for longer readings and manage your time accordingly.

Assignments:

1. Seven one-page reflections on readings/movies (due at **beginning** of class)
2. Weekly current events articles (each student should find a recent article pertaining to the class topic for discussion and debate)
3. Student Presentations – in groups of two or individually, students will be given an opportunity to explore a relevant topic/issue of interest to them as it relates to migrant education. More information regarding structure and content will be provided on the first day of class.
4. Final ten-page paper analyzing the effectiveness of civic engagement in education reform, drawing upon the Dandelion Middle School as a case study. This paper must concisely describe the problem, outline proposed solutions, and include supporting materials to demonstrate and substantiate an argument.

Attendance:

Mandatory for every class period. Missing class for extra-curricular meetings is not acceptable. Attending fewer than 11 sessions will result in an automatic failure. (or, you could say: if you miss more than five classes you will automatically fail).

Grading:

A grade of satisfactory in this course requires more than satisfactory completion of all assignments, including written and oral assignments, attendance, and class participation.

Book list:

[Factory Girls](#) by Leslie Chang

[Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms](#) by Lily Yeh

[English Language Teaching in China: New Approaches, Perspectives and Standards](#) by Jun Liu

Films (These first two films will be put on reserve in Lilly):

1. Turning Point 1977 / 高考 (2009), film directed by Jiang Haiyan
 - a. *Set at the close of the Cultural Revolution, Turning Point 1977 tells the story of a group of young idealists battling for the right to return home and restart their lives after years of toil on a state run re-education farm in China.* (Summary: IMDb.com)

2. Last Train Home (2009), documentary directed by Lixin Fan
 - a. *A couple embarks on a journey home for Chinese new year along with 130 million other migrant workers, to reunite with their children and struggle for a future. Their unseen story plays out as China soars towards being a world superpower.* (Summary: IMDb.com)
3. Social History of the Dandelion School, Chinese CCTV news documentary, subtitled by Kristine Tjia and Rachel Leng during DukeEngage Beijing 2012
 - a. *A news documentary by local Chinese CCTV reporters that looks at the social environment and development of the Dandelion Middle School. Includes interviews of teachers and staff and how their work contributes to the school.*

Schedule:

Week 1:

Lesson 1: Civic Engagement, Education and Volunteerism in China

Faculty sponsor in attendance.

Readings (111 pages):

- Aunon, Frances. “Good Works – Changing (with) Civic Engagement at Duke University,” Chapter 3 – Conclusion, pp. 86-139.
- Jing, L., & Yongling, Z. (2008). Volunteerism in China (I): National Policies, Student Responses, and Two Case Studies of Self-Organized Volunteer Programs. *Chinese Education And Society*, 41(3), 3-13.
- Jing, L., & Yongling, Z. (2008) “Volunteerism in China II: Implementation, Issues, and Challenges,” *Chinese Education & Society*, July 2008;41(4):3-12.
- Gray, Maryann J., et al. “Assessing Service-Learning: Results From a Survey of ‘Learn and Serve America, Higher Education,’” pp. 30-39.
- Ding, G. “Nationalization and Internationalization: Two Turning Points in China’s Education in the Twentieth Century,” pp. 161-186. *Education, Identity, and Culture in Twentieth-Century China*.

Week 2:

Lesson 2: The Hukou System and Chinese Migrant Condition

Readings (113 pages):

- MacKenzie, Peter W. “Strangers in the City: The Hukou and Urban Citizenship in China,” pp. 305-319.
- Zhang, L. “Strangers in the city : Reconfigurations of space, power, and social networks within China's floating population,” Chapter 1: The Floating Population as Subjects, pp. 23-46.
- Zhang, L. “Strangers in the city : reconfigurations of space, power, and social networks within China's floating

population,” Chapter 5: Reconfigurations of Gender, Work, and Household, pp. 115-136.

- Congressional-Executive Commission on China. “China’s Household Registration System: Sustained Reform Needed to Protect China’s Rural Migrants,” pp. 1-14.
- Chan, K.W. and Zhang, L. “The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes,” pp. 818-855.

Assignment 1 due: One-page summary/reflection on Hukou system readings.

Week 3:

Lesson 3: The Educational System and Achievement Gap in China

Readings (222 pages):

- **Film - 高考**
- Yu, L. and Suen, H. K. “Historical and Contemporary Exam-driven Education Fever in China,” pp. 17-33.
- Bai, C. and Chi, W. “Determinants of undergraduate GPAs in China: college entrance examination scores, high school achievement, and admission route,” pp. 1-25.
- Sautman, Barry. “Expanding Access to Higher Education for China’s National Minorities,” pp. 173-210. *China’s National Minority Education*.
- Kipnis, A. B. “Governing Educational Desire,” Chapter 2: Educational Desire in Local Context, pp. 18-56.
- Peterson, G. “Peasant Education and the Reconstruction of Village Society,” pp. 217-237. *Education, Identity, and Culture in Twentieth-Century China*.
- Li, W., Park, A., and Wang, S. “School Equity in Rural China,” pp. 27-43. *Education and Reform in China*.
- Hannum, E. and Park, A. “Academic Achievement and Engagement in Rural China,” pp. 154-172. *Education and Reform in China*.
- Han, Dongping. “The Unknown Cultural Revolution: Educational Reforms and their Impact on China’s Rural Development.” Chapter 5: Rural Education Reforms During the Cultural Revolution, pp. 97-126.
- Chan, D. K. K. and Mok, K. “The Resurgence of Private Education in Post-Mao China: Problems and Prospects,” pp. 297-314. *Education, Identity, and Culture in Twentieth-Century China*.

Assignment 2 due: One-page summary/reflection on education system (migrants) readings.

Week 4:

Lesson 4: The Status of Migrant Education in China

Faculty sponsor in attendance.

Readings (129 pages):

- Human Rights Watch. “One Year of My Blood,” pp. 1-61.
- Human Rights in China. “Shutting Out the Poorest: Discrimination Against the Most Disadvantaged Migrant Children in City Schools,” pp. 1-42.
- Kwong, Julia. “Educating Migrant Children: Negotiations between the State and Civil Society,” pp. 1-17.
- The Economist. “Beijing’s migrant workers/ School’s out,” pp. 1-2.
- Jacobs, Andrew. The New York Times. “China Takes Aim at Rural Influx,” pp. 1-4.
- Jiang, Chengcheng. Time. “In Beijing, Students in Limbo After Migrant Schools Closed,” pp. 1-3.

Optional Readings:

- Chan, Jenny and Pun, Ngai. “Suicide as Protest for the New Generation of Chinese Migrant Workers: Foxconn, Global Capital, and the State,” pp. 1-22..
- Zhou, Rencong, et al. Short Stories, selected readings. <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue4_contents.html>

Assignment 3 due: One-page summary/reflection on achievement gap readings.

Week 5:

Lesson 5: Middle School in China (Teaching)

Faculty sponsor in attendance

Readings (141 pages):

- Junjun Chen. (2007). “Teacher’s conceptions of excellent teaching in middle school in the North of China.” Asia Pacific Education Review Volume 8, Issue 2, pp 288-297
- Xiaowei, Y. (2012). “Changes in Practice and Reconstruction of Theory.” Chinese Education & Society, 45(1), 51-58.
- Wang, S. (2010) “The Significance of English Grammar to Middle School Students in China.” Journal of Language Teaching and Research, North America, Pp. 313-319.
- Charlotte Goodburn. (2009). “Learning from migrant education: A case study of the schooling of rural migrant children in Beijing, International Journal of Educational Development,” Volume 29, Issue 5, pp. 495-504.
- Lebens, Tanya. (2007). “Radigan, Margie. “Teaching in China: An Outside Look In,” Rural Educator, v28 n2 p13-18 Win 2007, pp. 13-18.

Assignment 4 due: One-page summary/reflection on the middle school experience for Chinese students.

Week 6:

Lesson 6: Film – Last Train Home (Migrants in Urban Cities)

Readings (407 pages):

- Chang, Leslie T. “Factory Girls,” pp. 1-407.

Assignment 5 due: One-page summary/reflection on Factory Girls and Last Train Home film.

Week 7:

Lesson 7: Dandelion Case Study / Student Profiles

Readings (90 pages + websites):

- Dandelion School website.
<<http://www.dandelionschool.org/>>
- Dandelion 2012 Blog:
<http://dandelionschool.tumblr.com/>Yeh, L.
“Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms,” pp. 1-90.

Week 8:

DE Beijing 2012 & Social History at Dandelion Middle School

Readings (120 pages):

- Film – Social History Documentary (sub-titled translation of local Chinese news report)
- Case report of previous DukeEngage Beijing Projects
- Project Reports from 2012 program
- DE 2012 Beijing Student Panel discussing projects and experiences

Week 9:

Spring Break

Week 10:

Video-chat with Dandelion Teachers/Volunteers

Readings (135 pages):

- Mohan, John. “Making a difference? Student volunteerism, service learning and higher education in the USA,” pp. 329-348.
- Yeh, L. “Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms,” pp. 91-205.

Week 11:

Student Presentations

Readings:

- TBD, will be determined by students who are presenting (must be sent out at least 3 days in advance, minimum 1 paper per group)

Week 12:
China

Lesson 8: Why does education matter? Teaching English in

Readings (141 pages):

- Kipnis, A. B. “Governing Educational Desire,” Chapter 5: The Universal in the Local: Globalized and Globalizing Aspects of Educational Desire, pp. 131-159.

- Maurer-Fazio, M. “In Books One Finds a House of Gold: Education and Labor Market Outcomes in Urban China,” pp. 260-276. *Education and Reform in China*.
- Li, H. “Economic transition and returns to education in China,” pp. 317-328.
- Jamison, D. T. and Van der Gaag, J. “Education and Earnings in the People's Republic of China,” pp. 161-166
- Compton, N. (2012). Volunteer Teaching. *Beijing Review*, 55(36), 48.
- Xiaoming, L., Liying, Z., Xiaoyi, F., Stanton, B., Qing, X., Danhua, L., & Mathur, A. (2010). Schooling of migrant children in China: Perspectives of school teachers. *Vulnerable Children & Youth Studies*, 5(1), 79-87.
- Simpson S.T. “Western EFL teachers and East-West classroom-culture conflicts” (2008) *RELC Journal*, 39 (3) , pp. 381-394.
- Liu, Siping. *Teaching English in China : Conflicts and Expectations The International Journal - Language Society and Culture*. Pp. 90-97.
- Book: *English Language Teaching in China*
 - Chapters 1 and 14

Assignment 6 due: One-page summary/reflection on educational achievement readings and struggles of teaching English readings.

Week 13:

Lesson 9: Volunteerism and a Global China

Readings (87 pages + website):

- Confucius Institute Website.
< <http://college.chinese.cn/en/> >
- Paradise, J. F. “China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power,” pp. 647-669.
- Ding, S. and Saunders, R. A. “Talking up China: An analysis of China’s rising cultural power and global promotion of the Chinese language,” pp. 1-31.
- Outterson, K., Selinger, E., & Whyte, K. (2011). “Poverty Tourism, Justice, and Policy.” *Public Integrity*, 14(1), 39-50.
- Manfred, R. (2010). “Poverty tourism: theoretical reflections and empirical findings regarding an extraordinary form of tourism,” *GeoJournal*, Vol. 75 (5), pp. 421-442.

Assignment 7 due: One-page summary/reflection on volunteerism and global China readings.

Week 14:

Student Presentations

Readings:

- TBD, will be determined by students who are presenting (must be sent out at least 3 days in advance)

Week 15:

Conclusion Proposed Initiative for Social Projects

Review and Reflect:

- Aunon, Frances. “Good Works – Changing (with) Civic Engagement at Duke University.”
- English language teaching in China : new approaches, perspectives and standards. London ; New York : Continuum, c2007.
 - *These chapters will provide useful practical tips for teaching English in Chinese schools.*
 - Chapter 2: Redefining grammar in contextualizing communicative competence (Diane Larsen-Freeman) (p. 42)
 - Chapter 14: Teaching pronunciation in twenty-first century China: models and methods (Jette G. Hansen Edwards) (p. 270)

Week 16: May 3

Final Papers/Project Proposals due