

SINO 3005 Science, technology, and society in China
School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts
University of Hong Kong

2018-19 Sem 1, Mon 3:30-5:20, CPD 3.01

Instructor:	Dr. Christine Y. L. Luk	Office:	May Hall 116
Email:	chrisluk@hku.hk	Phone:	3917-8110

Course description

Many students in the Faculty of Arts tend to think of “science” and “technology” as irrelevant to them. Typical reactions range from “I am not a science major,” “science is boring,” or “it’s too technical.” However, science and technology actually interact with the contemporary history and society of China in significant ways. For example, how many of you are using Lenovo laptop computers? Do you know the history behind Lenovo, IBM, and the entrepreneurial initiative of the Chinese Academy of Sciences since the 1980s? When you go grocery-shopping at a local supermarket, do you actively accept or reject genetically modified foods? How do new health and reproductive technologies (vaccines, new drugs, contraceptives) transform the healthcare system in China, for better or worse? These are some of the questions that we will explore in the course.

This course will introduce students to the multiple ways in which science, technology, and society mutually shape one another in modern and contemporary China. Instead of giving a celebratory history of science and China (i.e. China is so great now because of science), the course will take a balanced approach to discuss the beneficial as well as destructive powers of science. The key is to develop the ability to critically understand the good and bad aspects of science and technology. Instead of asking “why do I need to understand science?” as some of you might ask, I want students to consider “how could we understand contemporary China without science?” This course offers a general foundation for China studies majors, minors, and students in other faculties who are interested in thinking the intersection between science, technology, and society in contemporary China.

Assessment

Class participation: 30%

Field trip: 10%

Final paper & presentation: 60%

You will be asked to write a final term paper based on your chosen topic (and agreed by the instructor). The topic is flexible but it should highlight the intersections between some aspects of science and technology and the Chinese society (broadly conceived). You will be asked to give a presentation about your paper at the end of the term. A good paper is one that demonstrates critical understanding of the issue at hand, and connects the topic with other readings, discussions, and course materials. You are encouraged to talk to the lecturer for advice.

(Tentative) Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Readings/assignments
1.	Sept 3	Introduction	
2.	Sept 10	Health: Public health & Chinese hospital I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chapter from Priscilla Song's <i>Biomedical Odysseys: Fetal Cell Experiments from Cyberspace to China</i> (Princeton UP: 2017) • also read my review of Song's book in <i>Asian Medicine</i> (forthcoming)
3.	Sept 17	Health: Public health & Chinese hospital II	<p>Go to Priscilla Song's talk "Medical Violence: Assaults on Medical Workers in Urban Chinese Hospitals" 4pm, Room 4.36, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU (TBD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chapter from Yanzhong Huang's <i>Governing Health in Contemporary China</i> (Routledge, 2012)
4.	Sept 24	Health: Surrogacy and IVF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jiang, Lijing. "IVF the Chinese Way: Zhang Lizhu and Post-mao Human In Vitro Fertilization Research," <i>EASTS</i> 2015: 23-45 • news clippings from SCMP
	Oct 1	Public holiday	
5.	Oct 8	Environment: environmental health & China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFR's 6-page report on "Environmental Health Crisis & China's Rise" • A chapter from Mark Clifford's <i>The Greening of Asia: The Business Case for Solving Asia's Environmental Emergency</i> (Columbia UP, 2015)
6.	Oct 15 (Reading/Field trip week)	Environment: marine reserve & research	Field trip to Cape D'Aguiar (Hong Kong's first-and-only marine reserve)
	Oct 22 Oct 29 Nov 5	Christine is away	
7.	Nov 12	Food: GM food and public trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cui and Shoemaker, "Public Perception of Genetically-Modified (GM) Food: A Nationwide Chinese Consumer Study," <i>Science of Food</i> (2018)
8.	Nov 19	Food: agriculture and aquaculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chapter from Sigrid Schmalzer's <i>Red Revolution, Green Revolution: Scientific Farming in Socialist China</i> (University of Chicago Press: 2016) • also read my review of Schmalzer's book in <i>Journal of the History of Biology</i> (2018)
9.	Nov 26	Future: science fiction and 21 st C China	Yan Wu, "'Great Wall Planet:' Introducing Chinese Science Fiction," <i>Science Fiction Studies</i> (2013)
10	Dec 3	Revision + final presentation	Optional reading: Verso, Francesco, Nexhuman (2014 winner of the Best Italian Science Fiction Award)

