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

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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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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• also read my review of Song’s book in *Asian Medicine* (forthcoming) |
| 3.    | Sept 17  | Health: Public health & Chinese hospital II | 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)*  
• A chapter from Yanzhong Huang’s *Governing Health in Contemporary China* (Routledge, 2012) |
• news clippings from SCMP |
|       | Oct 1     | Public holiday                     |                                                                                        |
• A chapter from Mark Clifford’s *The Greening of Asia: The Business Case for Solving Asia’s Environmental Emergency* (Columbia UP, 2015) |
| 6.    | Oct 15   | Environment: marine reserve & research | Field trip to Cape D’Aguilar (Hong Kong’s first-and-only marine reserve) |
|       | Oct 22   |                                    |                                                                                        |
|       | Oct 29   |                                    |                                                                                        |
|       | Nov 5    |                                    |                                                                                        |
• also read my review of Schmalzer’s book in *Journal of the History of Biology* (2018) |