HIST-UA 282 / EAST-UA 312
Ecology and Economy in Modern China

Fall 2016
Time TBA
Location TBA

INSTRUCTOR:
Masato Hasegawa
Office: KJCC 526
Phone: (212) 998-8645
Email: masato.hasegawa@nyu.edu
Office Hours: Wed 11 am or by appointment

DESCRIPTION: This seminar examines the historical processes of China’s engagement with its natural environment from the pre-modern period to the modern era. China’s rapid economic growth during the last three decades has generated immense wealth and opportunities. Yet, it has also caused serious environmental degradation within and beyond the Chinese borders, including soil contamination, air and water pollution, and deforestation and desiccation. In recent years, the magnitude and global nature of China’s environmental problems have drawn growing attention and raised concerns over health risks worldwide. At the same time, there has also been a renewed interest in better understanding China’s past and the historical roots of the environmental challenges in present-day China. This course aims to situate China’s contemporary environmental changes in a broader historical context and examines the relationships between the state, society, and the environment over the last three millennia of Chinese history. Themes covered will include visions of the environment in early Chinese thought, irrigation and flood control, and population growth and urbanization. The general course format combines critical reading and active discussion. Some background knowledge of Chinese history will be helpful, but is not required.

GOALS: The goals of the course are threefold. First, this course seeks to provide an overview of the recent scholarship on the environmental history of China, and to introduce a range of approaches and primary sources that scholars have employed in their analyses. Second, this course emphasizes the importance of critically assessing not only primary sources but also scholars’ historical arguments based on evidence. Paper assignments and oral presentations in this course are designed to help hone skills in effectively articulating ideas in both written and oral format. Third, this course addresses the issue of identifying and locating primary sources in historical research. In this course, students will be introduced to a wide range of primary source materials and reference works that are available for use in the NYU Libraries.

REQUIREMENTS:

• Class Participation: You are expected to come to class regularly, complete all reading
assignments before class, and actively participate in in-class discussions.

- **Weekly Web Postings:** As part of class participation, each week you should submit to the course website (under Forum) a reflection of no more than a paragraph on your reading of the assigned material. Postings need not be in polished form, and you are welcome to focus on one or two of the week’s readings. Possible postings may take the form of a question about the reading, a comparison with other or previous readings, or a response to another student’s posting. These postings are designed to start a dialogue about the readings before class and facilitate our discussion and analysis during class. Postings should be submitted online no later than 5 pm each Monday, and everyone is expected to look them over before arriving in class.

- **Two Oral Presentations:** On a rotating basis, you will present on selected readings to the class and lead discussion, with particular attention to the author’s analysis of evidence or, in the case of presentations on primary sources, to the material’s value as historical evidence. Each presentation should be no more than 10 minutes. No additional research is required for these presentations.

- **Class Reports on Contemporary Events (on September 13 and November 8):** Over the course of the semester, check news reports on China’s environmental issues regularly (e.g. in The New York Times or The Economist magazine) and consider connections between our readings and developments in contemporary China. On two designated days, select one news story and bring to class a printed copy of your story. We will discuss everyone’s news story in small and large groups.

- **Map Quiz:** We will hold a map quiz on the geography of contemporary China in class on September 20.

- **Short Paper (1000 words, due in paper & electronic copy on October 4):** The first written assignment centers on the importance of evidential support in historical argument. Read with care Charles Sanft’s article, “Environment and Law in Early Imperial China” (assigned in week 3), and critically assess his argument and evidence. Where necessary, also consult the Qin and Han statutes translated in Sanft, “Edict of Monthly Ordinances for the Four Seasons in Fifty Articles from 5 C.E.” Pay particular attention to the manner in which the author uses and presents evidence in the article. Be sure to provide specific examples from the text to illustrate your analysis.

- **Final Paper (2500 words, due in electronic copy on Tuesday, December 13 by 5 pm):** In the final paper, you will closely examine FOUR readings—three from the syllabus and one external source—and critically compare and contrast different approaches to one of the historical questions addressed in the course. Your paper should address the importance of your chosen topic and firmly situate its analysis among existing perspectives. A proposed title and a one-paragraph description of your topic are due in class in week 8 (October 25). Brief presentations (10 min each) on individual paper topics are scheduled for weeks 12–13.
(November 22 & 29). For identifying an external source(s), consult the following excellent bibliographies:


GRADING: Grades for the course will be based on class participation, including weekly web postings, oral presentations, and class reports (20%), a map quiz (5%), a short paper (25%), and a final paper (50%).

ACADEMIC WRITING & REFERENCING: For the purpose of facilitating discussion of source materials, citations should be provided in footnotes in accordance with the format recommended by The Chicago Manual of Style. The Chicago Manual (16th ed.) is available online via BobCat (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html) and in Bobst Library’s Reference Collection on the 1st floor. Writing advice is also available at the Writing Center (http://ewp.cas.nyu.edu/page/writing.center) located at 411 Lafayette St. You can schedule an appointment online to discuss a draft of your paper with a writing consultant.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic integrity and honesty are our most fundamental commitment and responsibility as members of the Community. Academic dishonesty of any kind will be penalized according to university policy. The guidelines on academic integrity are outlined at http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity. It is your responsibility to read and understand the guidelines before submitting your assignments. Papers should be submitted in both paper and electronic format. Make sure that you provide a full and accurate citation whenever you include the words or ideas of others in your written work. If you have any questions about how to cite sources or how to avoid unintentional plagiarism, please consult the instructor.

BOOKS: The books listed below are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore (marked as “B”) and also placed on reserve in Bobst Library. Some books are accessible as e-books via BobCat (marked as “E”). Other assigned materials will be posted in NYU Classes at least one week before class (marked as “C”). If you have any problems locating any of these materials, contact the instructor as soon as possible.


CLASS SCHEDULE:

PART I: THE POWER OF NATURE IN EARLY CHINA [TO 1300 CE]

Week 1  Sept. 6: “China’s Environment and History.”
- Introduction to the course.
- Current events and historical/historiographical questions.
- Comparative perspectives.

Week 2  Sept. 13: “Patterns.”
Read for discussion in class:
- Marks, *China*, pp. 1–53 (chs. 1–2, to 1000 BCE). [B]
- Mark Elvin, “Three Thousand Years of Unsustainable Development: China’s Environment from Archaic Times to the Present,” *East Asian History*, no. 6 (1993): 7–46. [C]

Suggested Readings:

CLASS REPORTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA #1 (ALL PARTICIPANTS), SEPTEMBER 13

Read for discussion in class:
- Henrik H. Sørensen, “Of Eco-Buddhas and Dharma-Roots: Views from the East

**Supplementary Readings:**


**Suggested Readings:**


**MAP QUIZ IN CLASS, SEPTEMBER 20**

**Week 4 Sept. 27: “Water Control.”**

Read for discussion in class:

- Shiba Yoshinobu, “Environment versus Water Control: The Case of the Southern Hangzhou Bay Area from the Mid-Tang through the Qing,” in Elvin and Liu, *Sediments of Time*, pp. 135–64. [C]

**Suggested Readings:**

- David A. Pietz, *The Yellow River: The Problem of Water in Modern China*

PART II: NATURE AND STATE FORMATION [1300–1949]

Week 5 Oct. 4: “Environment and Statecraft.”
Read for discussion in class:
- Marks, China, pp. 169–222 (ch. 5, 1300–1800 CE).

Screening: Waking the Green Tiger (2011), directed by Gary Marcuse.

SHORT PAPER DUE IN PAPER & ELECTRONIC COPY, OCTOBER 4

Suggested Readings:

Read for discussion in class:
- Marks, China, pp. 223–63 (ch. 6, 1800–1949).
- Liu Ts’ui-jung, “Han Migration and the Settlement of Taiwan: The Onset of Environmental Change,” in Elvin and Liu, Sediments of Time, pp. 165–99. [C]
- David Bello, “To Go Where No Han Could Go for Long: Malaria and the Qing Construction of Ethnic Administrative Space in Frontier Yunnan,” Modern China 31, no. 3 (2005): 1–33. [C]

Suggested Readings:
- Yong Xue, “‘Treasure Nightsoil As If It Were Gold:’ Economic and Ecological Links between Urban and Rural Areas in Late Imperial Jiangnan,” Late Imperial China 26, no. 1 (2005): 41–71.
Week 7  
Oct. 18: “Environment and Warfare.”
Read for discussion in class:
• Li, *Fighting Famine in North China*, pp. 283–340 (chs. 10–11). [C]

Suggested Readings:

PART III: CHINA AND THE ENVIRONMENT SINCE 1949

Week 8  
Read for discussion in class:

FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE IN CLASS, OCTOBER 25

Week 9  
Nov. 1: “Mao’s Legacy.”
Read for discussion in class:
• Lieh Tzu, “The Stupid Old Man Who Moved a Mountain,” in Mair, *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, 78–79. [C]

Week 10  
Nov. 8: “China’s Environmental Policy in the Reform Era.”
Read for discussion in class:
• Marks, *China*, pp. 331–46 (ch. 8).
• Richard Sanders, “The Political Economy of Chinese Environmental Protection:

**CLASS REPORTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA #2 (ALL PARTICIPANTS), NOVEMBER 8**

**Week 11 Nov. 15: “Population.”**

Read for discussion in class:


**Screening:** *Beijing Besieged by Waste: The Observations from Wang Jiuliang* (2011), directed by Wang Jiuliang.

**Suggested Readings:**


**Week 12 Nov. 22: “The Three Gorges Dam Project.”**

Read for discussion in class:

- Chen Guojie, “The Environmental Impacts of Resettlement in the Three Gorges
Project,” in Dai Qing, The River Dragon Has Come!: The Three Gorges Dam and the Fate of China’s Yangtze River and Its People (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 63–69. [C]


Screening: China’s Mega Dam (2006), directed by Justin Albert.

CLASS REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL PAPER TOPICS #1 (HALF OF PARTICIPANTS)

Week 13 Nov. 29: “Environmental Justice and Civil Society.”
Read for discussion in class:

Suggested Readings:

CLASS REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL PAPER TOPICS #2 (HALF OF PARTICIPANTS)

Week 14 Dec. 6: “Paths for the Future.”
Read for discussion in class:

Suggested Readings:

Week 15 Dec. 13: LEGISLATIVE DAY, NO CLASS
FINAL PAPER DUE IN ELECTRONIC COPY, MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 5 PM