**A New History for a New China 1700-2000:**

**Comparative Perspectives on Inequality**

Course Syllabus

Matthew Noellert and James Lee

# Course Description

This course summarizes some of the new understandings of comparative inequality in Chinese history and Chinese social science produced by the construction and analysis of different kinds of large historical and contemporary data sets. We organize this knowledge in a framework that both encourages learning about China in comparative perspective, and differentiates knowing from thinking, i.e. facts from theory and values. The course takes an analytic approach by focusing on specific datasets, and explores what these datasets can teach us about patterns of inequality in education and social mobility, the accumulation and distribution of wealth, and political winners and losers during the last three centuries.

The advantage of such an approach to the teaching of China is that the focus on quantitative measures and models allows the course to compare Chinese past and present experiences with each other as well as with such other societies as the USA, France, and the United Kingdom. All students and teachers are implicitly comparative when studying and teaching humanities and social sciences. The quantitative method allows this course to make such comparisons explicitly and through such explicit comparisons to challenge the ethnocentric, Eurocentric and present-centric flavor of much academic research on inequality.

# The ‘Flipped Classroom’ and Intended Learning Outcomes

We use a flipped classroom approach and require students to watch class lectures outside the classroom before class meetings and to use in-class time instead for active learning through individual and group presentations and discussion.

In addition, we teach students to articulate and develop their thinking through the completion of written assignments and class discussions focusing sequentially on four types of response to the lectures and readings – the three things I learned, the muddiest point, misconception/preconception, and constructive criticism - culminating with a longer research essay on pre-land reform rural wealth distribution, on land reform, or on post land-reform rural collectivization in Shanxi.

# Assignments

1. Watch bi-weekly video lecture – before weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8
2. Four 250-word bi-weekly written responses (4 X 12 percent of course grade)
   1. Weeks 2 and 3 – “Three things I learned”
   2. Weeks 4 and 5 – “Muddiest point”
   3. Weeks 6 and 7 – “Misconception/preconception”
   4. Weeks 8 and 9 – “Constructive criticism”
3. 5-page research essay (40 percent of course grade)
   1. Weeks 10 and 11- Research Proposals
   2. Weeks 12 and 13- Thesis statement
   3. Weeks 14 and 15 - Topic sentence outline
   4. Week 17 – Final essay due
4. Weekly class participation (12 percent of course grade)

# Assessment

The grading rubric: All written response assignments must respond to the relevant lectures and/or reading materials, topic, and writing exercise for each respective week. In addition, we will evaluate your written work based on five criteria:

1) **English language -** your ability to write a short narrative with proper word choice and grammar

Below standard: sentences and ideas are incomprehensible.

Meets standard: overall meaning and ideas can be understood, but still contains some minor grammar mistakes.

Above standard: writing is virtually error-free, and ideas are expressed clearly and fluently

2) **Organization -**your ability to organize your narrative using paragraphs with topic sentences and segues

Below standard: no topic sentences, segues, or coherent paragraphs

Meets standard: employs topic sentences and basic segues, but paragraph organization and overall narrative structure is still incomplete

Above standard: constructs a solid, complete narrative structure based on clearly-stated topic sentences, fluent segues, and succinct paragraphs

3) **Evidence -**your ability to provide sufficient evidence to support your analytic thesis

Below standard: simply asserts personal opinion, or attempts to use evidence to support ideas but is ineffective, irrelevant, and/or not convincing

Meets standard: demonstrates meaningful connections between evidence and conclusion

Above standard: uses relevant evidence to convincingly demonstrate that your evidence and therefore your conclusion complement or are superior to previous scholarship

4) **Interpretation -**your ability to write a constructive narrative expressing your own understanding / interpretation of your evidence

Below standard: simply repeats a collection of available ideas

Meets standard: describe your evidence and show how it contradicts or fits prevailing ideas, but without proposing new ideas

Above standard: persuasively show how your evidence extends our understanding of your topic and perhaps even broader topics

5) **Source materials:** your ability to incorporate outside sources to supplement the assigned readings and lectures.

Below standard: does not effectively employ outside sources to support ideas

Meets standard: uses relevant outside sources to support and inform ideas related to the writing theme, but still lacks development of these ideas

Above standard: uses relevant outside sources to effectively develop ideas, convince the reader, and stimulate further discussion

# Reading Schedule

## Introduction and conceptual discussion

Week 1 (October 9)

梁晨，董浩，李中清。2014.《计量数据库与历史研究》准备投稿至《历史研究》或《中国社会科学》

## I. Education and Social Mobility in the Past

Week 2 (October 18 – Saturday)

Co-taught with Professor James Z. Lee

Campbell, Cameron and James Z. Lee.  2011.  "Kinship and the Long-Term Persistence of Inequality in Liaoning, China, 1749-2005."  *Chinese Sociological Review*.  44(1):71-104.

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

JIANG, Qin. 2012. Essays on Social Mobility in Late Imperial China: Attainments in Civil Exams and Officials’ Career Mobility. HKUST Social Science PhD Dissertation: 19-31.

PPT file by徐泓on the Ming Dynasty Ladder of Success

Week 3 (October 23)

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 ecole 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.

## II. Education and Social Mobility in the Present

Week 4 (October 30)

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.

2014 PPT slides by Lee, James Z., Chen Liang, Hongbo Wang, Matthew Noellert, Limin Liu, and Cameron Campbell. “Changes in the Social Origins of China’s Educated Elite, 1865-2014.”

Week 5 (November 8)

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1996. The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power. Polity Press: 9-29, 263-299.

KARABEL, Jerome. 2005. The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Houghton Mifflin: 1-5.

## III. Wealth Accumulation and Distribution in the Past

Week 6 (November 15)

CHEN, Shuang. 2014. Social Formation under State Domination: State Categories and Wealth Stratification in Northeast China, 1815-1913. Book Manuscript: 1-31.

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

Week 7 (November 21)

Co-taught with Professor 胡英泽

胡英泽。2012.《流动的土地－明清以来黄河小北干流区域社会研究》。北京大学出版社，225-234.

秦晖，苏文. 1996. 田园诗与狂想曲: 关中模式与前近代社会的再认识 (Pastorals and rhapsodies: research on peasant societies and peasant culture).中央编译出版社: 44-68, 69-112, 135-161.

## IV. Wealth Accumulation and Distribution in the Present

Week 8 (November 29)

Co-taught with Professor James Z. Lee

PIKETTY, Thomas. 2014. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century.* Harvard University Press, “Introduction”, 1-35; Chapter 11 “Merit and Inheritance in the Long Run”, 377-429.

Week 9 (December 6)

Three sets of 2013 PPT Slides on Wealth Inequality in Contemporary China by GAN Li and TAN Jijun, LI Shi and WAN Haiyuan, and Albert PARK and SHEN Yan

## V. Inequality and Revolution

Week 10 (December 13)

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

WANG, Feng. 2008. Boundaries and Categories: Rising Inequality in Post-Socialist Urban China. Stanford University Press: 3-45.

Week 11 (December 20)

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

NOELLERT, Matthew. 2014. “New Perspectives on Communist Land Reform: Evidence from Northeast China, 1946-1948.” HKUST Humanities PhD Dissertation.

## VI. Revolution and Social Order

Week 12 (December 27)

Student presentations - Research on Land Reform and Collectivization in Shanxi

Thesis statement due

Week 14 (January 10)

Co-taught with Prof. Cameron Campbell

Student presentations - Research on Land Reform and Collectivization in Shanxi

Week 15 (January 17): Topic sentence outline due

Week 16 (January 24): Final student presentations

Week 17 (January 31): Final research essay due