THE TRANSITIONAL CHINESE SOCIETY

Instructors:  SHEN Ke, shenke@fudan.edu.cn

Class Meeting Time: Thursdays 18:30-21:05

Credits: 3 credits

Course Description

China has been undergoing two exceedingly rapid transformations in the past half a century: a demographic transition with dramatic decrease in fertility and mortality, and an economic transition from a planned economy to a market economy. The compressed demographic transition has made China a country with a very low population growth rate and accelerating population aging, and unprecedented economic reform has lifted China to the ranks of middle-income countries. These two historical transformations are not independent of each, but have been closely intertwined. Thus, this course not only introduces various demographic events and socio-economic reforms, but also explores the linkages between population change and socio-economic transformation. We raise a series of questions: What are social and economic implications of one-child policy? How will China’s imbalanced sex ratio at birth influence the marriage market? Will China lose the competitive edge in labor-intensive industry in the near future due to low fertility rates? How can China accommodate the expanding elderly population in the context of frequent migration of young people? Investigations into these questions may provide students with a deeper understanding on China’s contemporary society.

Requirements and Evaluation

Course evaluation will be based on class participation, presentation, and a term-paper. Students are expected to read the assigned materials before class and to participate in group discussions in class. For the term-paper, enrolled students need to select a topic related to demographic and economic transitions, and examine it within the context of the student’s own country. Students will have an opportunity to present a progress report of their term-paper, and a final paper is due at the end of the semester. The paper should have a length of 3,000 English words. This term-paper is expected to follow the style of an academic research paper, consisting of introduction, literature review, findings and conclusion. The course grading is comprised of: Class attendance and discussion (20%), presentation (40%), Term paper (40%).
General Textbook Reference


Course Syllabus and Reading List

Week 1 (Feb 27) Introduction to Demography and Chinese Population


Week 2, 3 (Mar 6, 13) Fertility Transitions


Week 4, 5 (Mar 20, 27) Fertility Policies


Week 6 (April 3) Mortality and Health

Week 7 (April 10) Demographic Transition and Population Aging


Week 8, 9 (April 17, 24) Migration and Urbanization


Week 10 (May 1) Holiday of Labor Day

Week 11 (May 8) Social Change and Marriage

Cai, Yong and Wang, Feng. 2011. (Re)emergence of Late Marriage in New Shanghai. Paper Prepared for the Conference on Marriage in Cosmopolitan China, Hong Kong University, July 4-6, 2011

Week 12 (May 15) Population and Economic Change

Wang, Feng and Mason, Andrew. 2008. The Demographic Factor in China's transition. In

Week 13, 14, 15 (May 22, 29, June 5) Student Presentations