

GEOG2082 Economic Development in Rural China (6 credits)

Course Teacher: Dr Simon X Zhao

Objectives

To provide an in-depth insight into the transformation of the agricultural and rural sectors in China over the past five decades. To increase students' ability of observation and judgment in terms of business investment opportunities within a broad rural economy.

Course Synopsis

China is still largely an agricultural country with an overwhelmingly rural population. This course examines China's rural and agricultural development issues from both developmental and geographical perspectives. It focuses on three areas of knowledge: basic theories in rural and agricultural development, existing condition and situation of Chinese agricultural production and the rural economy, and hot topics of debates on contemporary reform and development in the Chinese countryside. Agricultural and rural problems, government policies and the associated impacts will be analyzed along with the natural environment and its conditions. The course emphasizes the training of critical thinking and comprehensive analytical skills, as well as practical problem-solving ability. The course is primarily organized into three parts: lectures, a fieldtrip and fieldtrip sharing. Part I are lectures, Part II is a field excursion to China, and Part III are fieldtrip presentations by students, by topics and in groups.

Lecture Topics

- A general survey into economic development theories in agricultural and rural sector
- Basic understanding of natural constraints on China's agricultural production and existing rural development status
- Socialist rural transformation under Mao: 1949-1978 and economic reform since 1978
- China's grain production and problems of food supply and economic incentive, price policy and their effectiveness
- China's dilemmas in maintaining sufficient food supply and adequate rural employment - TVE and rural industrialization: A grand solution or failure?

Assessment

Coursework 100% (consists of field trip participation, presentation and field trip report).

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge:

- A general socio-economic development theory for the agricultural and rural sector
- An understanding of the current state and hot topics of rural and agricultural development in China
- An understanding of economic incentive, price and policy as well as their effectiveness in China

Skills:

- Critical reading, thinking, observation, interpretation and analytical skills
- Enhancement of ability to present and support an argument
- Develop the confidence and independence of spirit to work and live in mainland China

Recommended Reading List

1. Shi, L., Li, S., Sato, H., & Sicular, T. (Eds.). (2013). *Rising Inequality in China: Challenges to a Harmonious Society*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Brown, L. (1995) *Who Will Feed China? Wake Up Call for a Small Planet*. New York, US: W.W. Norton.
3. Carter, C.A., Zhong, F. & Cai, F. (1996) *China's Ongoing Agricultural Reform*. San Francisco, USA: The 1990 Institute.