

GEOG3102 China: Environment and Sustainable Development (6 credits)

Course Teacher: Dr C N Ng

Objectives

The course aims to enhance students' understanding of the environmental issues in China, the strategy for tackling them, and the prospect of achieving sustainability for such great country.

Course Synopsis

Due to its geographic characteristics and its large population, China is prone to natural resources degradation. Environmental problems have been accelerated by the rapid economic growth of recent years, high intensity of energy use, particularly in the industrial sector, and economic and pricing policies that have not taken into account the intrinsic value of the resources. These factors combine to cause over-exploitation of natural resources. To critically analyze China's development, this course comprises three main parts. Following the introduction, Part I provides an overview of the state of the country's natural environment. Part II focuses on the institution, legislative and administrative framework for environment protection and nature conservation. Finally, Part III discusses the government's strategy for the environment and sustainable development as stipulated in recent Five-Year plans and China's Agenda 21.

Lecture Topics

- Geographical background. The state of the environment
- Underlying causes for environmental degradation
- National Policy. Institution, laws and regulations
- Policy instruments for environmental management: The Eight systems
- Nature conservation: Policy & difficulties
- State's policy and strategy for Sustainable Development

Assessment

Examination (two hours) 60%; Coursework 40% (consists of a term paper and a presentation).

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge:

- An overview of the state of the environment in China
- A comprehensive knowledge of the institution, legislative and administrative framework for environment protection and nature conservation in China
- The causes for failures in environmental policies and management in China
- The government's policy and strategies for Sustainable Development

Skills:

- Ability to evaluate the causes of environmental problems in China
- Ability to think critically about the relationship between economic development and environmental protection in China

Recommended Reading List

1. Day, K.A. (ed.) (2005) *China's environment and the challenge of sustainable development*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, c2005.
2. Economy, Elizabeth (2010) *The river runs black: the environmental challenge to China's future*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.