

BEIJING, ITS HISTORY & URBAN CULTURE

Prof. Michael Chapman



OVERVIEW: Beginning with Beijing's Mongol heritage at the time of Marco Polo's visit, this multi-disciplinary seminar studies the history and urban culture of one of the world's most fascinating capital cities. Topics include Confucian ecology and *fengshui*, native-place lodges and alley neighborhoods (*hutong*), court society in the Forbidden City, the Boxer Rebellion, high-modernist planning, and the New Beijing of the 2008 Olympics. In addition to investigating the intersection of architecture, urban space, and Confucian esthetics, this seminar engages the issues of refurbishment versus new construction, as well as citizen action and property ownership in a centrally planned state. Why are the world's capitals so different; what functions do they serve? Is there a relationship between a city's physical characteristics and a nation's cultural/spiritual/social ideology? Includes optional Sunday morning walking tours around Beijing's offbeat neighborhoods.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Geremie R. Barmé *The Forbidden City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008). [FORBIDDEN]
ISBN: 9780674027794

Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic Story of China's War on Foreigners That Shook the World in the Summer of 1900* (New York: Walker & Company, 2001). Plenty of used copies, e.g. at abebooks.com. [BOXERS]

Michael Meyer, *The Last Days of Old Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed* (New York: Walker & Company, 2009). [LAST DAYS] Just out in paperback, ISBN: 9780802717504

Additional assigned readings in a photocopy packet (copy-shop price).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Beijing City Atlas, available at the Foreign Language Bookstore, Wangfujing (25 kuai). ISBN: 978-7-116-05439-4

Michael E. Chapman, *Historian's Companion*, available from the instructor (45 kuai).

POLICIES & ASSIGNMENTS:

Plagiarism: Be sure to cite all your sources accurately; consult Mike's Style Guide for details on footnoting.

Plagiarism is easier to spot than you might think and the penalty is, at minimum, a failing grade for the assignment. Anyway, how will you advance your own thinking once you become reliant on the ideas of others?

Grading: Following the system in use at American universities, I only award an A for work that is exceptional in its quality and originality; B represents work that rises above the minimum required, C denotes work that is minimally acceptable in accuracy and understanding, while D signifies work well below minimal standards.

Attendance, Participation, and Readings (APR) (25%): This is a seminar, so not only class attendance but also full participation is critical; and it is impossible to participate in discussions without having read the assigned texts. Any unexcused absence (more than five minutes late) automatically reduces your APR grade by 5%.

Reports (15%, 15%): Two 1,000-word site reports, which should interpret and analyze the site not only in terms of factors such as its location/*fengshui*, function/utility, and cultural/ideological significance but also with reference to the assigned texts. These must be to a high academic standard, conform to Mike's Style Guide, be free of errors, contain lots of short quoted phrases from the assigned texts, and include accurate footnotes. They are due—IN CLASS—on W6 and W11. NO REWRITES. NO GRADE IF LATE.

Readings and journal (20%): each week, you will write an entry of 300–500 words—due in class—for what will become a journal of 12–15 (standard double-spaced) pages, recording your observations, as an analysis of, and informed by, primarily the assigned text for the week as well as your visits to Beijing's neighborhoods; use subheads to introduce each entry. This error-free journal must also conform to full academic standards and include quotes.

Midterm (10%): 20-min. in-class midterm, comprising six IDs (short answers), a map exercise, and objective questions.

Final exam (15%): 45-min. in-class final exam, comprising nine IDs and a selection of objective questions.

Note: this class is a serious scholarly endeavor—while I hope that learning about Beijing's history and exploring its urban culture proves to be an enjoyable experience, please do not underestimate the work required—earning a good grade demands both commitment and diligence on your part.

SCHEDULE:

Week 1 lecture: Methodology, theory. Enlightenment ideology and urban historiography. Form and function in Western cities: London, Boston, New York, Paris, Chicago, Madrid.

discussion: Intros. Why are cities—particularly capitals—different, what functions do they serve? Do cities reflect and/or drive cultural/religious/national ideology? What has already struck you as different/the same about Beijing? [Harry Jansen, *The Construction of an Urban Past*, pp. 31–51, 91–101]

W2 lec: Societal models. Yuan (Mongol) Beijing.

dis: Imagining Dadu in 1300 [*Historian's Companion*, HZ.1–8, 8 pp.] [Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion*, pp. 113–39]

W3 lec: Asian syncretism: Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism. Fengshui.

dis: [*Confucianism and Ecology*, Mary Tucker and John Berthrong, pp. xxxv–xliv; Tu Weiming, pp. 3–19, 105–18] [Ole Bruun, *Fengshui in China*, pp. 231–53]

W4 lec: Ming Beijing: Yongle and the Imperial City.

dis: [FORBIDDEN, pp. ix–xvi, 1–191]

W5 lec: Qing Beijing: native-place lodges (huiguan), courtyard homes (siheyuan).

dis: missionaries, Neo-Confucians, reformers, social Darwinists [*Historian's Companion*, BR.1–7, 8 pp.]

Old Beijing site report due.

W6 lec: Modernity and the Boxer Rebellion.

dis: [BOXERS, pp. ix–xxvii, 3–351]

W7 lec: Republican Beijing: May 4th, nationalism, and the public sphere.

dis: [Lynn, —Bazaars, || pp. 83–95] [Chamberlain, —On the Search for Civil Society, || *Modern China*, pp. 199–215] [David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, pp. 20–64] [Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing*, pp. 142–71]

W8 lec: Maoist Beijing: Cultural Revolution, and the socialist modern.

dis: [R.J.R. Kirby, *Urbanization in China*, pp. 1–18] [James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, pp. 1–8, 103–46]

W9 lec: Opening Up Beijing: Ju'er Hutong redevelopment; Zhejiang migrant village.

disc: [Jinggan Zhang, —Beijing: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, || *Urbanization in Asia*, pp. 207–25] [Wu Liangyong, *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing*, pp. 163–76, 182–87, 196–212] [Li Zhang, —Migration and Privatization of Space, || pp. 179–96]

W10 lec: Tiananmen Beijing: hutong refurbishment versus renewal.

dis: [LAST DAYS, pp. 1–309] [Adam Yuet Chau, —An Awful Mark, || *Visual Studies*, pp. 195–206]

New Beijing site report due.

W11 lec: New Beijing: gated communities, environmentalism, and the 2008 Olympics.

dis: [John Friedman, *China's Urban Transition*, pp. 117–29] [Jasper Becker, *City of Heavenly Tranquility*, pp. 314–26] [Michael Dutton, *Beijing Time*, pp. 214–43]

W12 FINAL EXAM:

AD HOC WALKING TOURS: As an adjunct to the course, I organize regular Friday evening socials, and Sunday morning walking tours through Beijing's lesser-known yet particularly fascinating neighborhoods, including:

Huayuan Dongxiang hutong, Yonghe Gong temple, and Huajia Yiyuan roast duck restaurant.

Ancient Observatory, Dongzongbu Hutong, and Sichuan Government restaurant.

Zhengjue Hutong, Guo Moruo's residence, and Kaorouji restaurant.

Jiaodaokou hutongs, Ju'er Hutong redevelopment, Fish Nation restaurant.

Zhejiangcun garment district, Xingshunyuwan Jiuji muton hotpot restaurant.