



**LSE-PKU Summer School**  
**Beijing, China**

**LPS-SA202 | A Complex Society: Social Issues and  
Social Policy in China**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**INSTRUCTOR**

Professor Yuegen Xiong is Professor and Director, The Centre for Social Policy Research (CSPR) in the Department of Sociology at Peking University, China. He is the author of *Needs, Reciprocity and Shared Function: Policy and Practice of Elderly Care in Urban China* (Shanghai Renmin Press, 2008) and *Social Policy: Theories and Analytical Approaches* (Renmin University Press, 2009).

He was the British Academy KC Wong Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford during November 2002- September 2003, the Fellow at the Hanse Institute for Advanced Study (HWK), Delmonhorst, Germany during December 2003- February 2004 and the JSPS Fellow at the University of Tokyo in October, 2005, Visiting professor at the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, UK in October, 2017 and Visiting Professor at the Center for Modern East Asian Studies, University of Gottingen, Germany in December, 2017.

In the past years, he has published extensively in the field of social policy, comparative welfare regimes, social work, NGOs and civil society. He is the editorial member of *Asian Social Work and Policy Review* (Wiley), *Asian Education and Development Studies* (Emerald), the *British Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* (UK) and *International Journal of Community and Social Development* (Sage). Prof. Xiong acted as the external examiner of PhD thesis evaluation for a number of universities, including The University of Hong

Kong, The University of Bergen, Norway, The City University of Hong Kong. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The University of Technology Sydney, Australia and Bremen University-Jacobs University Graduate School of Social Sciences, Germany.

He was the faculty of 483rd Salzburg Global Seminar on "Economic Growth and Social Protection in Asia" held in Austria during 7th-12th November, 2011.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

As China has surfaced as an economic giant in the context of globalization, how this post-socialist country will adjust itself to a profoundly-changed society and strategically respond to the growing social tensions and diverse needs remains appealing. In the advanced industrialized democracies, social policy is widely adopted by government to address social issues, such as poverty, health inequality, ageing, unemployment and housing shortage. In China, social policy didn't exist as an independent policy arena in the period of planned economy. The economic reform and openness started in the late 1970s created massive impact on social fabric and the trajectories of social welfare and social protection development. As the process of market economy and social transition was accelerated, China has encountered a series of daunting challenge in keeping balance between economic growth and social stability. Although economic growth was seemingly kept as a rare primary source of maintaining its institutional legacy, persistent rural poverty and income gap, rural migrants and conflicting cadre-civilian relations, imbalanced health services, soaring educational inequality, declining fertility and rapid population ageing in an absence of integrative workable pension system have made the contour of modernizing its social security system unforeseeable in the context of slowing-down economy.

The past decade witnessed an apparent progress of social policy intervention, however, institutional constraints and contained effects in the domain of social policy has ostensibly marked China's 'soft power deficit as a deeper problem. In October, 2017, President Xi declared that China has smoothly moved toward a new era of building socialism with Chinese characteristics at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Among its sobering missions of the Party, continuously raising its state capacity of meeting the escalating social expectation of improving the quality of life has become a focal point of social policy intervention in the forthcoming years and beyond. Within the 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020), China will achieve its goal of creating a better-off society and substantially increase the income level for all citizens in the country. Before that, winning the war on poverty reduction in the country is a must to fulfill its goal. And how can the government re-adapt itself to a new challenging environment of a turbulent global economy and address social problems in shifting state-society relations is also desirable. The year of 2021 will be crucial both for the Party and the country because it will witness the

centennial founding ceremony of the Communist Party of China and the beginning of the 14th Five-year Plan (2021-2025).

Social policy is somehow a by-product of economic growth that can be used as a rational instrument to solve social problems and maintain social order. However, with progress of human civilization, social policy is becoming a unique domain of socio-economic and political institutions in the industrialized societies. Currently, economic growth and social development is considered as an integrative part of national and international development agenda, which requires government, civil society, community and citizens to work closely to seek better solutions to generate new drives for economic growth and create more opportunities of reducing social inequality in a flux of change. Therefore, social policy has gone beyond the traditional scope of simply providing a safety net for all and sustaining full employment. Rather, social policy can play a crucial role in an innovative way to keep balance of economic growth and social stability by increasing the efficiency of public finance through a better redistribution mechanism of resources, income and opportunities. Especially, social policy can effectively improve the long-term situations of socio-economic development by guaranteeing an equal access to education and health services for everyone in the society. In a new era, China is moving positively toward this direction.

How social policy was made in Chinese society? How was social policy designed as to achieve its goals of government in its political agenda? In what ways do state-society relations influence the policy-making and implementation in the changeable context? This course is mainly designed to meet academic interests of undergraduate and postgraduate-level students and the professionals who are willing to embark an intellectual journey with the course lecturer in probing and examining the complex relationship between social issues and social policy responses in contemporary China.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe and discuss major challenges to socio-economic development in China in the context of economic re-adjustment and global challenge;
- Interpret and argue on different theoretical lens of understanding China's pathways in social policy-making and implementation within the fabric of state-society relations;
- Analyze and explain the newly-emerged social risks, social issues and social policy responses in China;
- Elaborate and reflect on the future direction of social change and social policy in China.

## PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be based on a mid-term essay (worth 50% of the final mark) and a final exam (worth 50% of the final mark).

## READINGS

The list below provides an indication of some of the main recommended texts for the course, but a full reading list and electronic course pack will be provided to registered students approximately six weeks before the beginning of the programme.

- Besharov, D. and Baehler, K. (eds.), 2013. *Chinese Social Policy in a Time of Transition*. Oxford University Press.
- Blachard, J.M. and Lin, K.C. (eds.), *Governance, Domestic Change, and Social Policy in China: 100 Years after the Xinhai Revolution*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chan, C.K., Ngok, K.L. and Phillips, D. (2008). *Social Policy in China – Development and well-being*. The Policy Press.
- Lieberthal, K. and Oksenberg, M. 1988. *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes*. Princeton University Press.