

Syllabus

“K-P: Educational Changes in China”

Cluster	Subject Title	Instructor	Credit	Semester
K-P	Educational Changes in China	Academic team from Nanjing Normal University	2	Winter 2025
Subject Description				
<p>This course mainly explores important ideas and evidence of educational change in China. It investigates how policymakers, school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and others experience change. It also examines the social, economic, cultural, and political forces driving educational change. While presenting educational change from different perspectives, it raises many challenging questions about educational change as well. It includes five seminars provided by the academic team from the Faculty of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University.</p>				
Objective				
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) delineate the economic, social, political and international context of development;(2) identify and analyze educational policies and reforms in addressing issues in national development;(3) examine interactions between education and development from multidisciplinary perspectives.				
Learning Method				
Seminars and group discussions				
Content				
<p>The course aims to provide cutting-edge professional knowledge and skills for participants. It has a flexible structure, and will update in real-time. It includes but is not limited to the following sub-areas.</p> <p><i>Digital Technology Supported Teaching and Learning</i></p> <p>Digital technologies have made our lives and learning easier. The COVID-19 pandemic has further deepened the</p>				

use of digital technologies in education. These digital technologies have changed the entire paradigm of the education system. It is not only a provider of knowledge but also a co-creator, instructor, and evaluator of information. Improvements in educational technology have made learning easier for students. Instead of using pen and paper, students today use a variety of software and tools to create presentations and projects. The iPad is relatively lightweight compared to a stack of notebooks. It is easier to navigate an e-book than a heavy book. These methods help to increase students' learning interest. This course explores the basic laws of learning, the characteristics of digitally supported education and its challenges from a multimedia learning theory perspective.

Higher Education Reform in China: The Student-Centered Approach

This course aims to provide an understanding of the recent shifts in educational philosophy and policy in China, focusing specifically on the movement towards a student-centered approach in universities. China's higher education system has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, moving away from traditional, rigid, and teacher-centered methods toward more flexible, innovative, and student-focused models. These reforms aim to foster critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning among students, aligning China's education system with global standards and preparing a new generation of thinkers and leaders for the challenges of the 21st century. Throughout this course, we will examine the drivers behind these reforms, analyze the impact of a student-centered approach on teaching practices, curriculum development, and assessment strategies. We will also explore the challenges and opportunities that arise from implementing these reforms, such as balancing standardized education with individual student needs and navigating the complex dynamics of institutional change.

School choice reform in China: A different story?

Along with the global rise of school choice policy in the 1980s, the debate over freedom of choice has never stopped. Despite the growing voice of the opponents, expanding school choice represents a worldwide trend.

Especially in recent years, school choice policy in countries like the USA has reached a new crossroads where increasing state funding is injected into school choice programs (Berends et al., 2019). Against this background, making expanding school choice policies work has become a major concern in the current western world. School choice policy in China also confronts a tough option, which however, sets foot on another path. After seventeen years of operation, the guiding principle of “no choice in public school, choice allowed private school” (Ding, 2004) ended in 2020. The new school admission reform — Synchronous Admission Reform (SAR) brings private schools back into the proximate-based and test-free admission system. Arguably, SAR contains the most recent educational imaginaries devised by the government. This new admission reform aims to reduce elite private school choice fever and promote educational equality between public and private schools. Nevertheless, the Chinese parents' enthusiasm about school choice has never been relieved. How to understand school choice in China? In what aspects is school choice in China similar to that of other countries? How is school choice different from that in other countries? The participants in this seminar will know school choice reforms in China and develop insights into Chinese parents' policy interpretations and actions. Participants are also welcomed to share their school choice experience, if any. A cross-cultural discussion over school choice will be conducted.

The Historical Footprints of Education Reform

This course explores the evolution of education reforms from ancient to modern times, with a particular focus on China's rich educational heritage. Students will examine the pivotal changes in educational systems, policies, and philosophies that have shaped the way societies approach learning and teaching today. One of the course highlights is a field trip to the China Imperial Examination Museum in Nanjing. Here, students will delve into the history of the imperial examination system, which played a crucial role in shaping China's intellectual and bureaucratic traditions. By understanding this system, students will gain insights into how education has been used as a tool for social mobility, governance, and cultural continuity. Through lectures, discussions, and on-site exploration, students will critically analyze how past reforms have influenced current educational practices and

consider the future direction of global education reform in the context of historical legacies.
Requirement
Active participation.
Evaluation
Class participation (20%) A short essay related to the cluster with no less than 600 words (40%) Group presentation (40%)
Textbook and reference This course does not need extra textbooks or references. Students are encouraged to learn about the educational system, social-economic context and policies related to educational changes in China in advance.
Pre-course reading and preparation (if any)