

## Arch 403: Special Topics

Place and Heritage: Chinese Vernacular Place and Cultural Heritage  
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Spring 2025



With over 5,000 years of documented history, China has a rich tapestry of cultural traditions that permeate every aspect of social life. Despite extensive global cultural exchange, many of these cultural traditions remain vibrant, particularly in rural China, where millions of vernacular settlements exist. In recent decades, the revitalization of rural places through the promotion of cultural heritage—both tangible and intangible—and rural tourism has become the focus of both central and governments. However, rural revitalization projects often pose a threat to the existing meaning of place and endanger local traditions, raising critical questions: whose place is it and who defines its meaning? whose heritage is it and how to assess its value?

Using vernacular places in China as both the social context and an interdisciplinary and dynamic framework for cultural heritage, this course examines the theory and practice of placemaking and heritage management. The initial weeks focus on understanding the cultural landscape and vernacular practices in rural China, including family structure, gender hierarchies, material cultural, and building traditions. The remainder of the course delves into theories related to the concepts of place and heritage, such as space and place, placemaking, tradition and heritage, memory and identity, globalization and localization, social sustainability, and sustainable heritage management. Informed by these theories, students will analyze case studies to contextualize their understanding of place and heritage in rural China.