



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

ICS presents the "China in Transition" Lecture Series

Seeing Ghosts: Parsing China's Ghost City Controversy

Friday, February 3, 2017

4:00-5:30 pm

Mendenhall Lab 115

125 S Oval Mall

Max Woodworth

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Abstract: Controversy has arisen in recent years over the creation of so-called "ghost cities" across China. The ghost city term tends to describe large-scale urban areas, sometimes planned as new towns, featuring an abundance of new built space and appearing to also have extremely low tenancy. This article examines key questions related to the ghost city phenomenon, such as: What is a ghost city? Are ghost cities driven by a tendency toward over-supply in housing? How are local-level political incentives aligned to foster the production of ghost cities? Are ghost cities temporary



anomalies or structural features of China's urban-led economic growth model? This talk will assess recent scholarly research into ghost cities and present original findings to show how an excess of urban space may plague certain Chinese cities.

Bio: Dr. Woodworth is an urban geographer with a research and teaching background in political economy, Chinese land policy, and resource geographies. His research has focused to date on urban development in coal-mining regions of China's northwest with an emphasis on the local politics of large-scale land-development projects in resource boomtowns. By examining urban transformation in regions constructed as marginal through national politics and economies, his work re-theorizes the frontier in its relation to multi-scalar flows of capital and city-building practices. His current research projects examine the politics of new-town planning and construction in China, new geographies of energy in China and comparative boomtown dynamics. His work has been published in *The Professional Geographer*, *Geoforum*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, and *Inner Asia*, among other journals.



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