

EAST ASIAN STUDIES SPEAKER SERIES 2022-2023

CRITICAL JUNCTURE: WITNESS TO CHINA AT THE DAWN OF REFORM, 1979-1980

MAY 18TH, 4:10 - 5:30 PM

L.J. ANDREWS CONFERENCE ROOM (SSH 2203)



Thomas Gold is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at UC Berkeley. He has published widely on issues such as youth, entrepreneurship, civil society and popular culture in China, and economic, social, cultural and political change in Taiwan. He is working on a memoir of his year in China, 1979-1980, and a study of social change in Taiwan since the end of Martial Law in 1987.

Thomas Gold went to China in the late 1970s as a US government-sponsored exchange student, shortly after the Chinese Communist Party introduced plans for economic reforms. This presentation introduces the “baggage” he took with him to China and how it shaped his expectations and interactions. He engaged primarily with three communities: his classmates at Fudan University; people associated with the Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association in Shanxi Province; and athletes, performers, and officials he interpreted for during their trips to the US beginning in 1974. He gained an understanding of how people thought about the reforms and how they might take advantage of new opportunities.

