

**ANTH 2410 / UGEA 2180**

# **CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Fall 2024**

Lecture: Wednesdays 1:30 pm-3:15 pm (NAH 213)  
Tutorial-1: Wednesdays 3:30 pm-4:15 pm (UCC 208)  
Tutorial-2: Wednesdays 4:30 pm-5:15 pm (UCC 208)  
Tutorial-3: Wednesdays 5:30 pm-6:15 pm (UCC 208)

Faculty Instructor: ZHANG Chaoxiong ([chaoxiongzhang@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:chaoxiongzhang@cuhk.edu.hk))  
Office Hours: By appointment (NAH 323)

## **Course Description**

This course offers an anthropological perspective on Chinese culture and society. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the ways in which China's contemporary developments draw upon from its pre-socialist past and Maoist revolutions. Key anthropological concepts, theories, and frameworks necessary for analyzing Chinese culture and society will be introduced. Through ethnographic materials and case studies, we will examine a range of topics in the anthropological study of China, including kinship and family, religion and belief, rural-urban relations, ethnicity, gender, food, health, and environment. Readings, lectures, films, and discussions will highlight both macro-level processes of social change and continuity, as well as the everyday experiences of individuals involved in these processes.

**Language of instruction:** English

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- acquire a good understanding of Chinese culture and society.
- be acquainted with a wide range of classical and contemporary topics, themes, and theoretical frameworks in the anthropological study of Chinese culture and society.
- be familiar with anthropological holistic perspectives.
- reflect upon the challenges related to inequality, marginality, sustainability, and inclusiveness based on the analysis of China.
- establish their own critical perspectives on contemporary China.

**Reading materials:** All readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Participation (20%):**
  - Come to class on time and have completed the readings. Attendance will be taken for the tutorials (10%).
  - Students will be divided into groups and be responsible for **leading ONE tutorial discussion** (10%).
  - You are allowed two unexcused absences. For each unexcused absence thereafter, two points will be deducted from the final grade. Excused absence requires written documentation.
- **Online Response Posts (5% x 4 weeks = 20%):**
  - Students are expected to submit online response comments/questions (100-250 words) in **FOUR different weeks** of the semester. Please post the response posts in the “Online Posts” section of the course Blackboard site **no later than 11:59 pm on the day before class** (11:59 pm on Tuesdays) to receive credit.
  - You can either summarize the major arguments of the readings or identify a passage from one of the readings that excites or puzzles you and write your comments. In your post, you are also **required to raise at least one question** for tutorial discussion.
  - Response posts will be graded as check-plus (5 points for an excellent response), check (4 points for a satisfactory response), and check-minus (3 points for an unsatisfactory response).
  - Late submission: if you submit your post after the deadline but before that week’s class (Wednesday at 1:30 pm), two points will be deducted. If you submit your work after the class has begun, all five points will be deducted and no points will be gained.
- **Midterm Exam (25%):**
  - In-Class Exam on Oct 30 (Week 9)
  - Based on lectures and required readings from Week 2-week 7 (Sep 11 – Oct 16).
  - A single sheet of notes is allowed to bring to the exam (A4, double-sided)
- **Final Paper (35%):**
  - Choose one of our weekly topics and write an essay to explain your idea. Students are required to engage with what we learned in the class to develop the theme and arguments. The final paper should be 1500-2000 words in English or 3000-4000 words in Chinese.
  - The final paper is due by **Dec 20**. A minimum of **three** academic references are required.
  - Format: double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12, standard margins. Please upload it to VeriGuide, and then upload your paper and **signed** VeriGuide Certificate to Blackboard.

## Course Schedule and Readings

(Subject to modification)

- **Week 1 (Sep 4): Course Overview**

- No readings
- No tutorial

### Section I. What is China?

- **Week 2 (Sep 11): The Building of Modern China**

- “Introduction.” 2013. In *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change*, by Tamara Jacka, Andrew B. Kipnis, and Sally Sargeson, 6–22. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Duara, Prasenjit. 1995. “Introduction,” in *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, 3-16. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tutorial: Self-introduction & Grouping for tutorial leaders

- **Week 3 (Sep 18): Public Holiday**

- No Class

- **Week 4 (Sep 25): Modernization: “Wholesale Westernization” 全盤西化 or “China-Centered Cultural Transformation” 中國本位?**

- Teng, Ssu-yu and J.K. Fairbank. 1954. “Introduction,” in Teng and Fairbank, eds., *China’s Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*, 1-6. Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, Paul. 2010. “Introduction” in *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, 1-7. Columbia University Press.
- Liu, Shao-hua. 2011. “Chapter 1: The Meandering Road to Modernity.” In *Passage to Manhood: Youth Migration, Heroin, and AIDS in Southwest China*, 27-50. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

### Section II. Topics of China

- **Week 5 (Oct 2): Kinship, Family, and Marriage**

- Shi, Lihong. 2021. “Losing an Only Child: Parental Grief among China’s Shidu Parents.” In *Chinese Families Upside Down: Intergenerational Dynamics and Neo-Familism in the Early 21st Century*, edited by Yunxiang Yan, 176–93. Boston: Brill.
- Wei, Wei, and Yunxiang Yan. 2021. “Rainbow Parents and the Familial Model of Tongzhi (LGBT) Activism in Contemporary China.” *Chinese Sociological Review* 53 (5): 451–72.

- **Week 6 (Oct 9): Religion, Ritual, and Belief**

- Yang, C.K. 1973. “Role of Religion in Chinese Society.” In *An Introduction to Chinese Civilization*, edited by John T. Meskill, 643–64. Lexington, Mass: Columbia University.
- Watson, James L. 1985. “Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T’ien Hou (‘Empress of Heaven’) along the South China Coast, 960-1960.” In *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, edited by David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, 292–324. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ￼ Ethnographic film: Mao Festival [卯節]. 2015. Directed by ZHANG Xiaojun and LI Jianming.

- **Week 7 (Oct 16): Ethnicity**
  - Harrell, Stevan. 1995. "Introduction: Civilizing projects and the reaction to them." In *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, 18-24. University of Washington Press.
  - Joniak-Lüthi, Agnieszka. 2013. "The Han 'Minzu', Fragmented Identities, and Ethnicity." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72 (4): 849-71.
  - 蔡志祥. 2019. "族群關係：長洲島的神廟、節日和社區。" In 酬神與超幽：香港傳統中國節日的歷史人類學視野, 195-238. 香港：中華書局。
- **Week 8 (Oct 26): Fieldtrip to Cheung Chau (Saturday)**
  - Saturday, Cheung Chau 長洲 (no class on Oct 23)
  - Meet at 9:20 am at Central Pier No. 5 (9:45 am Ferry)
- **Week 9 (Oct 30): Midterm Exam**
  - In-class midterm exam
  - No tutorial
- **Week 10 (Nov 6): Rural-Urban Relations and Inequalities**
  - Whyte, Martin King. 2010. "The Paradoxes of Rural-Urban Inequality in Contemporary China." In *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Inequality in Contemporary China*, edited by Martin King Whyte, 1-25. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
  - Zhan, Yang. 2018. "The Urbanisation of Rural Migrants and the Making of Urban Villages in Contemporary China." *Urban Studies* 55 (7): 1525-40.
  - 🎬 Film: We Were Smart [殺馬特我愛你]. 2019. Directed by LI Yifan. (excerpt)
- **Week 11 (Nov 13): Gender**
  - 'The "Women Question" and Gender Inequalities'. 2013. In *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change*, by Tamara Jacka, Andrew B. Kipnis, and Sally Sargeson, 237-56. Port Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press.
  - Fong, Vanessa, Greene Ko, Cong Zhang, and Sung won Kim. 2021. "The 'Leftover' Majority: Why Urban Men and Women Born under China's One-Child Policy Remain Unmarried through Age 27." In *Chinese Families Upside Down: Intergenerational Dynamics and Neo-Familism in the Early 21st Century*, edited by Yunxiang Yan, 55-75. Boston: Brill.
- **Week 12 (Nov 20): Food: Identity, Consumption, and Social Change**
  - Gillette, Maris. 2000. "Factory Food, Modernization, and Race." In *Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption Among Urban Chinese Muslims*, 145-166. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
  - Zhang, Li. 2020. "From Left behind to Leader: Gender, Agency, and Food Sovereignty in China." *Agriculture and Human Values* 37 (4): 1111-23.
- **Week 13 (Nov 27): Health and Environment**
  - Shao, Jing. 2015. "The Wealth of Populations: Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Rural Central China." In Veena Das and Clara Han eds. *Living and Dying in Contemporary World*, 217-231. University of California Press.
  - Lora-Wainwright, Anna. 2013. "Water, Hard Work, and Farm Chemicals: The Moral Economy of Cancer." In *Fighting for Breath: Living Morally and Dying of Cancer in a Chinese Village*, 91-116. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
  - 🎬 Film: The Warriors of Qiugang. 2010. Directed by Ruby Yang.

**Course Policies:**

- **Penalties for late work:** All assignments are due on the scheduled day and time. No extensions will be given except under extraordinary circumstances.
- **Class Culture:** Classes are a safe atmosphere where ideas can be discussed and different opinions respected.
- **Academic Honesty:** The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on academic dishonesty. Any such offense will lead to disciplinary action including possible termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source materials and how to avoid plagiarism. Detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgment of sources can be found on the University's website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. All papers must be submitted through VeriGuide.
- **Writing Assistance:** For additional help on your writing, consult the expert staff of the **English Language Teaching Unit (ELT)**. ELT's Peer Tutoring Scheme offers informal opportunities for CUHK undergraduates and postgraduates to consult trained Peer Tutors on English speaking and writing (<https://eltu.cuhk.edu.hk/pts/>).

**Grade descriptors are as follows for the assessment of this course:**

Grade	Overall course
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.