

ANTH 2410B/UGEA 2180B

Chinese Culture and Society

Fall 2019

Lecture: Tuesday 15:30 – 17:15 NAH 115

Tutorial: Tuesday 17:30 – 18:15 NAH 115

Monday 14:30-15:15 NAH 401

Monday 15:30-16:15 NAH 401 & TBC

Instructor: Dr. Tung-Yi Kho, tungyikho@cuhk.edu.hk

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Office (NAH 411) hours: Monday 16:00-18:00hrs, or by appointment

Course Description

What does it mean to be Chinese? What role does culture play in being Chinese? And what constitutes Chinese society? When Chinese populations elsewhere (e.g. overseas Chinese) lay claim to being Chinese, what are they invoking? On the other hand, when ethnic Chinese Hong Kongers claim that they are not Chinese, for instance, what are they implying? Is being Chinese primarily given by ethnicity, nationality, cultural/civilizational practices, some combination of the above, or all of them?

This line of questioning would suggest that when we invoke “Chinese culture and society”, we refer not only to culture and society *in* China but also beyond, to Chinese societies elsewhere that have emerged as a result of the Chinese diaspora. Yet at the heart of this discussion still lies the question with which we first began: what does it mean to be Chinese? And what binds mainland Chinese societies with those overseas?

Because the shared identity of being Chinese has here been shown to transcend geographical and national boundaries, I would propose that being Chinese pertains more to the evolving practices of culture than it does the more limiting constraints of ethnicity, geography, or nationality. This class therefore examines the constituents of being Chinese, with the emphasis placed on *culture* as its animating force.

Indeed, it is because culture is a cumulative and evolving social phenomenon – a process - that accounts for the diversity of Chinese societies around the world: there is something identifiably Chinese in each of them, yet something else that differentiates them. A pluralist cultural view of “Chinese” - a civilizational view (?) - will thus be taken as we tease out the similarities and differences existing across these societies.

There should be lots to discover and discuss, not just about China, the Chinese and Chineseness, but also about ourselves regardless of how we choose to identify. Highlighted here, also, will be *the significance of culture, en generale, in making us human*. And we seem

ideally situated in place and time – as events continue to unfold here in H.K. – to be having such a discussion. With a significant proportion of the Hong Kong S.A.R. population expressing concern about China's political governance, H.K. appears to be a fitting site to be examining the complexities surrounding issues of Chineseness.

Required Text

Jacka, Tamara, Andrew B. Kipnis and Sally Sargeson. 2013. *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Language of instruction: English

Topics

[Classical/traditional] Chinese religion and thought

Cultures and societies of the Chinese: overseas and on the mainland

Modern China/PRC:

- (i) post-1949, Maoist phase
- (ii) post-Mao China

Evaluation

Tutorial participation involving class presentation: 25% (with up to 5% additional extra-credit points).

Tutorial attendance is an expectation; evaluation is based on class presentation though there are up to 5% extra-credit points awarded for consistently thoughtful engagement in class and tutorials.

1500 word *review paper* of any particular week's topics: 35%

There are **two submission dates** for your review paper **depending on the topics you choose** to review. Reviews of topics covered from Weeks 2-6 of the course are due **15 October**; reviews of topics covered from Weeks 7-13 of the course are due **26 November**.

Take-home final *exam*: 40%

Exam will consist of short-answer questions as well as a short essay-type questions related to materials covered in lectures and tutorials. Dates of the exam will be determined later in the course.

Learning outcomes:

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- explain why claims about being Chinese and Chineseness can be such a source of contention
- explain why there are similarities as well as differences across different Chinese societies
- historically as well as anthropologically account for the place of contemporary China within the world-system

- critically discuss the major social institutions in Maoist and post-Mao China.

Grade Descriptors

Grades will be issued as follows for the assessment of this course:

A: Exceptional performance demonstrated on all learning outcomes

A-: Very good performance demonstrated on almost all learning outcomes

B: Competence demonstrated on all learning outcomes. This includes good performances in some areas which offset weaker performances in others.

C: Satisfactory performance demonstrated on most learning outcomes.

D: Barely satisfactory performance demonstrated on majority of learning outcomes.

F: Unsatisfactory performance on most learning outcomes, or failure to meet assessment requirements.

Assessment policies:

Late submission: will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. Hence, an A will become an A-.

Academic honesty: you are required to cite properly (guidelines:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc>)

Also, students are required to upload every piece of work to VeriGuide for plagiarism check and then sign their receipts sent by the system and submit with their assignments.

VeriGuide: https://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/about.jsp

Course Outline

Week 1 (September 3): INTRODUCTION

What to expect from the course, assessment requirements etc.

Topics: knowledge and reality, social knowledge, anthropological knowledge, our personal life-worlds and the world-system.

Rudimentary concepts, anthropological and otherwise: culture, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, ethnography, neo-liberal globalization.

Week 2 (September 10): CULTURE AND HUMANITY

Required:

Goodman, Mary Ellen. 1967. "The Nature of Culture". In *The Individual and Culture*. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press; pp. 32-50.

Week 3 (September 17): WHAT IS 'CHINESE' ABOUT CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY?

Required: Textbook, "Families, Kinship and Relatedness". pp. 27-45.

Fei, Xiaotong. 1992 (1947). "Special Characteristics of Rural Society," and "Chaxu Geju: The Differential Mode of Association." In *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*. G.G. Hamilton and Z. Wang, pp. 37-44, 60-70.

Recommended:

Chen, Lai. 2017. *The Core Values of Chinese Civilization*.

Week 4 (September 24): OTHER CHINESE CULTURES AND SOCIETIES, I

Required:

Chun, Allen. 1996. "Discourses of identity in the changing spaces of public culture in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore." *Theory, Culture and Society* 13(1): 51-76.

Wang, Gungwu. 1991. "Among non-Chinese". *Daedalus*. 120(2): 135-157.

Recommended:

Ong, Aihwa and Donald Nonini. Eds. 1997. *Undergrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. London: Routledge.

Wang, Gangwu. 2000. "Seaward Sweep: The Chinese in Southeast Asia" in *The Chinese Overseas*. MA: Harvard University Press.

News article: <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/society/article/3023155/how-chinas-19th-century-crises-shaped-chinese-diaspora>

News article: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3023606/trouble-trying-turn-hong-kongs-young-people-patriotic-youth>

Week 5 (October 1):

PUBLIC HOLIDAY. NO CLASS!

Week 6 (October 8): OTHER CHINESE CULTURES AND SOCIETIES, II

Required:

Chun, Allen. 2017. *Forget Chineseness: On the Geopolitics of Cultural Identification*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Introduction (pp. 1-13); pp. 75-77 and Chapter 4 (pp. 77-103): "Hong Kong Betwixt and Between: The Liminality of Culture Before the End of History"

Week 7 (October 15): SITUATING THE PRC IN A HISTORICAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

Required:

Textbook; "Introduction", pp. 1-23.

Vukovic, Daniel F. 2019. "On Illiberalism and Seeing Like an Other State" In *Illiberal China: The Ideological Challenge of the People's Republic of China*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Recommended:

Hevia, James. 1995. *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1783*. Durham: Duke University Press.

N.B. Reviews of Week 2-6 topics course due today, October 15.

Week 8 (October 22): VIGNETTES OF MAOIST-SOCIALIST CHINA

Required:

Karl, Rebecca. 2010. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth Century: A Concise History*. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 1-34.

Karl, Rebecca. 2019. "Why Mao, Why Now? A Brief Essay on Pedagogy and Possibility". In the PRC History Review. Vol. 4, No. 2. August.

Recommended:

[Peasant Revolution]

Mao, "Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan" In Cheek, Timothy. 2003. *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*; pp. 41-75.

[Life and Work in Urban Socialist Spaces]

Bray, David. "Governing Urban China: Labor, Welfare and the Danwei." In *Social Space and Governance in Urban China*; pp. 94-122.

[Gender]

Hershatter, Gail. 2011. *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past*.

Week 9 (October 29): THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF POST-REFORM CHINA

Required:

Harrell, Steven. 2001. "The Anthropology of Reform and the Reform of Anthropology: Anthropological Narratives of Recovery and Progress in China." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30: 139-161.

Pieke, Frank. 2014. "Anthropology, China and the Chinese Century." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43: 123-138.

Week 10 (November 5): Making Global Chinese Modernity, Part I: Class-making and Consumption

Required:

Textbook; "Social Class and Stratification", pp. 199-216; "Work", pp. 105-126.

Recommended:

Davis Deborah S., ed. 2000. "Introduction: A Revolution in Consumption." In *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*; pp. 1-22. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hanser, Amy. 2008. "Introduction". In *Service Encounters: Class, Gender, and the Market for Social Distinction in Urban China*, pp. 1-24.

Yan, Yunxiang. 2009. "Introduction: The Rise of the Chinese Individual." In *The Individualization of Chinese Society*.

Week 11 (November 12): Making Global Chinese Modernity, II: Rural-Urban Migration, Urbanization and Urban Aspirations

Required:

Textbook; "Citizenship, Household Registration and Migration", pp. 65-81; "Modernity, Youth Identities and Popular Culture", pp. 179-198.

Recommended:

Hoffman, Lisa M. 2010. "Turning Culture into Profit". In *Patriotic Professionalism in Urban China: Fostering Talent*, pp. 103-120.

Kho, Tung-yi. 2017. "Urban Ethnography and the Margins at the Centre: An Account from Shenzhen", in *CITY*.

Zhang, Li. 2010. "Spatializing Class" in *In Search of Paradise: Middle-class living in a Chinese metropolis*, pp. 107-136. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week 12 (November 19): Making Global Chinese Modernity, III: Subjectivity in Post-Mao China

Required:

Textbook; "The 'Woman Question' and Gender Inequalities", pp. 237-256; "Ethnicity", pp. 145-160.

Lin, Chun. 2015. "Modernity and the violence of global accumulation: the ethnic question in China." In Bringel, Breno M. and Domingues, Jose Mauricio (eds.) *Global Modernity and Social Contestation*. London: SAGE

Recommended:

Jacka, Tamara. 2013. "Chinese Discourses on Rurality, Gender and Development: A Feminist Critique," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40:6 (2013): 983-1007.

Zhang, Everett Yuehong. 2007. "The Birth of Nanke (Men's Medicine) in China: The Making of the Subject of Desire." *American Ethnologist*, 34(3): 491-508.

Yang, M. 1999. "From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women's Public Sphere in China." In *Spaces of Their Own: Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China*. Edited by M. Yang. Read pp. 35-54. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 13 (November 26): Environmental and Ecological Challenges

Required:

Hansen, M.H, Li, H. and Svarverud, R. 2018. "Ecological civilization: Interpreting the Chinese past, projecting the global future." *Global Environment Change*. 53: 195-203.

Lora-Wainwright, Anna. "Water, Hard Work and Chemicals: The Moral Economy of Cancer", *Fighting for Breath: Living Morally and Dying of Cancer in a Chinese Village*; pp. 91-116.

N.B.

i. Reviews of Week 7-13 topics due today, October 26.

ii. Take-home exam questions will be uploaded onto Blackboard today. Due date for submission: 10 December.

Week 14 (December 3, make-up class): Religion, Everyday, and the Good Life

Required:

Textbook, "Religion, Ritual and Religiosity", pp. 127-43.

Puett, Michael. 2015. "Ritual and Ritual Obligations: Perspectives on Normativity from Classical China." In *Journal of Value of Inquiry*, 49: 543-550.

Recommended:

Li, Yiyuan. 1998 (1993). "The Traditional Chinese View of the Cosmos and the Practices of Everyday Life." In *Streetlife China*, edited by M.R. Dutton, 31-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:

Chau, Adam Yuet. 2008. "The Sensorial Production of the Social." *Ethnos* 73(4): 485-504.

Kho, Tung-Yi. 2019. "The Good Life in Contemporary China" in *Science, Religion and Culture*.

Exam responses due on December 10!