

CHES5101 Selected Themes on Gender in China: Gender and Culture in Contemporary China

2020-21, Term 2, Tuesdays 1:30-4:15pm
Venue: TBC

Instructor: Lynn SUN (lynnsun@link.cuhk.edu.hk)

Teaching Assistant: TBC

Course description

This course takes an anthropological perspective to debate on a general human category, gender, in the context of contemporary Chinese society. Through this approach the course will show how the notion of gender is largely a sociocultural product. The anthropological approach helps us contemplate taken for granted beliefs regarding gender and sexuality. Gender politics in essence address difference and inequality. Reflecting upon how gender became a category of analysis for anthropologists, we bring to the fore the relationship between culture and power. Students will explore material, economic, political, and sociocultural factors that underpin such processes of construction. This course will start from introducing core concerns, arguments, and approaches related to gender and sexuality in China. After the introductory sessions, we will focus, week by week, on common (or controversial) gender and sexual issues we encounter in our daily lives. Students are encouraged to examine their own gender identities and beliefs critically; to not only understand how our gender assumptions are shaped but also to develop one's own gender statement.

Learning Activities

Students are required to attend a two-hour lecture, followed by a one-hour tutorial session every week presenting and discussing the relevant readings on that week's chosen topic. They are expected to have done the required readings before lecture, so that they can ask informed questions. Some tutorial time will also be spent on discussing ethnographic methods to help the students develop their own research papers. This course uses the CUHK eLearning system, which can be found at <https://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk>. The course readings, assignments and recent announcements are uploaded on this platform. Make sure to check it regularly.

Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, students should:

- examine how gender becomes an analytical category for anthropology;
- understand gender and sexual diversities in contemporary China;
- analyze how gender intersects with other forms of differences and understand hierarchies in Chinese society;
- cultivate critical reflections about gender stereotypes and choose one's standpoint;
- also, do independent research on gender-related topics.

Assessment Scheme

- Attendance and participation (15%)

Prompt attendance at each class meeting, active and informed participation are keys to a meaningful learning experience. Completing assigned readings before coming to each class, listening attentively to others, raising insightful questions, posing alternative interpretations, sharing your related experiences are some of the effective ways to do so. **The evaluation will be based on both your attendance, and more importantly, your engagement in classes.**

*In the case that teaching will be conducted online via ZOOM system, students are required to join the ZOOM classroom on time. Please make sure your electronic device is equipped with a ZOOM app and a camera (available on Desktop, iPad, Mobile Phone). The instructor or TA will ask all students to show up in front of the camera at the beginning and the end of the lecture to check attendance. During the lecture, participants might be muted to avoid

echo/noise. There might be group discussion questions during the lecture as well as tutorial to ensure everyone is actively listening and participating.

- Discussion Facilitation (25%):

Nine tutorials will be open to facilitation by 2 to 3 students. Sign up for the topic you are interested in **during the 2nd lecture** (Week of Jan.19).

Your cardinal job is to raise critical questions and lead the class to discuss particular issues that your group finds important. Feel free to bring in outside material – news stories, case studies, film clips, and use a variety of formats – role play, debate, games etc. – to facilitate learning. As facilitators, it is important for you to think through these exercises carefully before coming to class, planning it step by step with clear instructions.

*In the case of online teaching, the tutorial facilitation will be hold on ZOOM.

- TWO (2) Discussion Posts (10% each - 20% total)

Students should post initial responses (no less than 400 words, no more than 500 words, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margin at all sides, double-spaced, page numbered) to the **Blackboard** together with a **PDF** file of the signed **Veriguide** receipt. Each post should address a topic of your interest listed in the weekly readings. Posts should not be simple reading summaries, but should engage with critical issues discussed in class; address specific passages, quotes, or scenes from the assigned readings. Posts are due by 8pm every Monday.

- Research paper (40%):

Students should write a paper on a specific gender issue in China of their choice. Students are required to use materials from this course to develop their arguments. Using extra materials is certainly welcome too. Write an essay based on the ethnographic research (mainly one or two in-depth interviews, as well as some participant observation if feasible) you conducted during the semester.

The writing of the paper is divided into two steps. First, students will be required to submit a brief proposal outline related to their paper topic (10%), due on **April 6 (Submit a soft copy of your piece via Blackboard to the instructor)**. The final research paper (3,000-3,500 words) accounts for 30% of the class grade. Students will receive two sessions of how to conduct ethnographic research and write an ethnographic paper in the fourth session (WEEK 4) and the last session (WEEK 13). **A soft copy** of the final paper should be submitted via Blackboard to the instructor together with a **signed Veriguide receipt no later than April 30, 2021. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.**

VeriGuide can be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide>.

Course Grading System:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Discussion Facilitation	25%
Discussion Posts	20%
Research paper	40% (10% proposal+30% final research paper)

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1 (12 Jan): *An Anthropological Approach to Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary China*
NO TUTORIAL

WEEK 2 (19 Jan): *Gender in Cross-cultural Perspective: China and Beyond*
NO TUTORIAL (Sign up for the tutorial facilitation)

Rosaldo, Michelle. 1974. "Woman, Culture and Society: A theoretical overview." In *Woman, Culture and Society*. Pp. 17-42. M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds.

Ortner, Sherry. 1974. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture, and Society*, M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds. Pp. 67-87.

WEEK 3 (26 Jan): *Constructing Womanhood in Contemporary China*

Pei, Yuxin, and Petula Sik-ying Ho. 2006. "Iron Girls, Strong Women, Beautiful Women Writers and Super Girls: A Discourse Analysis of the Gender Performance of Women in Contemporary China." *Lilith* 15: 61-71.

Evans, Harriet. 1997. "The Monogamous Ideals". In *Women and Sexuality in China: Dominant Discourses of Female Sexuality and Gender since 1949*, pp.112-143. Cambridge: Polity Press.

WEEK 4 (2 Feb): *Constructing Manhood in Contemporary China*

Song, Geng, and Derek Hird. 2014. "Chinese Masculinity: Is There Such a Thing?" In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*, pp. 1-21. Leiden: Brill.

Li, Xuan. 2016. "The 'Nursing Dad'? Constructs of Fatherhood in Chinese Popular Media". *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 39.

WEEK 5 (9 Feb): *Learning Ethnographic Methods for Studying Everyday Intimate Experiences*
NO TUTORIAL

Gabb, Jacqui, 2008. "Methodological Approaches and Family Research Methods". In *Researching Intimacy in Families*, pp. 29-63.

WEEK 6 (16 Feb): **NO CLASS (Lunar New Year Holiday)**

WEEK 7 (23 Feb): *Gender and the Chinese State*

Yang, M. M.-H. 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*. M. M.-H. Yang, ed.: Pp. 35-67. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Barlow, Tani E. 1994. "Theorizing Woman: Funü, Guojia, Jiating." In Angela Zito, and Tani E. Barlow, eds., *Body, Subject & Power in China*, pp. 253-290. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

WEEK 8 (2 Mar): *Gender, Marriage, Family and Inequality*

Wolf, Margery. 1972. "CH3: Uterine Families and the women's Community." In *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*. Pp. 32-42. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Shen, Yifei. 2011. "China in the 'Post-Patriarchal Era: Changes in the Power Relationships in Urban Households and an Analysis of the Course of Gender Inequality in Society'". *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 43(4): 5-23.

**Watson, Rubie S. 1991. "Wives, Concubines, and Maids: Servitude and Kinship in the Hong Kong Region, 1900-1940." In *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, edited by Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey, 231-255. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WEEK 9 (9 Mar): Gender, Reproduction and Parenthood

Klein, Kerstin. 2016. "Assisted Reproductive Technologies, Sperm Donation, and Biological Kinship: A Recent Chinese Media Debate." In *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century*: pp. 219-233.

Lan, Pei-Chia. 2014. "Compressed Modernity and Glocal Entanglement: The Contested Transformation of Parenting Discourses in Postwar Taiwan." *Current Sociology Monograph* (2):1-19.

**Martin, Emily. 1991. The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles. In *Signs*. Vol 16(3): 485-501.

WEEK 10 (16 Mar): Gender, Class, and Work

Yan, Hairong. 2008. "Part I 'Intellectuals' Burden' and Domestic Labor." In *New Masters, New Servants: Migration, Development, and Women Workers in China*, pp. 57-79. Durham: Duke University Press.

Pun, Ngai. 2005. "Imaging Sex and Gender in the Workplace." In *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*, pp. 133-164. Durham: Duke University Press.

WEEK 11 (23 Mar): Gender, Eating and Cooking

Martin, Diana. 2001. "Food Restrictions in Pregnancy among Hong Kong Mothers." In David Y. H. Wu and Chee-Beng Tan, eds., *Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia*, pp.97-122. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Gao, James, Z. 2013. "Eating, Cooking, and Shanghai's "Less-than-Manly Men": The Social Consequences of Food Rationing and Economic Reforms." *Front. Hist. China* 8 (2): 259-293.

WEEK 12 (30 Mar): Gender, Consumption and Leisure

Wen, Hua. 2013, "The Commodification of the Body." In *Buying Beauty: Cosmetic Surgery in China*, pp. 125-146.

"Androgynous Beauty, Virtual Sisterhood: Stardom, Fandom, and Chinese Talent Show under Globalization." in *Super Girls, Gangsters, Freeters, and Xenomaniacs*. Eds. Susan Dewey and Karen Brison. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. 104-124.

**Song, Geng, and Derek Hird. 2014. "Masculinities at Leisure." In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*, pp. 169-210. Leiden: Brill.

WEEK 13 (6 Apr): **NO CLASS (Easter Holiday)**
Final Research Paper Proposal Due

WEEK 14 (13 Apr): Normativity and Diversity in Gender and Sexuality

Choi, S.Y.P. and M. Luo. 2016. "Performative Family: Homosexuality, Marriage and Intergenerational Dynamics in China." *The British journal of sociology* Volume 67(2): 260–280.

Siu, Helen F. 1990 "Where were the Women? Rethinking Marriage Resistance and Regional Culture in South China". *Late Imperial China* 2(2): 32-62.

WEEK 15 (20 Apr): Individual Consultation Sessions via ZOOM System
NO TUTORIAL

Friday, 30 April 2021: Final paper due