

## **CHES5106 Selected Themes on Chinese Anthropology: Family, Marriage and Love: Exploring Intimate Relationships in Contemporary China**

*2020-21, Term 1, Wednesdays 2:30-5:15pm*  
**ZOOM system**

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

**Teaching Assistant:** TBC

### **Course description**

This course introduces anthropological perspectives on a range of intimate relationships in contemporary Chinese society. It seeks to denaturalize notions such as family, marriage and love through contextualization--putting them back in the historical, political and socio-cultural context in which they are embedded. The questions that will be raised in class include: What factors shape the economic and social formations of intimate relationships in contemporary China? What does it mean to say that romantic love is an ideology? How do Chinese people “do” family today? Are intimate relationships formed in the virtual world any less authentic than those formed in the real world?

The course approaches various kinds of intimate relationships through an anthropological lens, which means that we will explore people’s intimate life experiences via ethnography. Based on a series of captivating readings, video clips, discussions and other class activities, this course invites the students to pay attention to the interconnectedness between the “private” and the “public” -- the everyday practices and the economic and socio-political processes. Moreover, this course aims to show how to conduct ethnographic fieldwork and how to use the data collected during fieldwork for analyzing intimate relationships in Chinese society.

### **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:

- Critically understand key concepts related to intimate relationships, such as love, marriage, and family;
- Apply a theoretical debate on the social and cultural construction of one’s “private” versus “public” life and their historical significance;
- Learn ethnographic methods to collect data on people’s everyday intimate experiences;
- be able to locate and use secondary sources relevant to selected 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.** Since 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%):

9 tutorials will be open to facilitation by 3 to 4 student(s). Sign up for the topic you are interested in **during the 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture** (Week of Sep.16).

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. The tutorial facilitation will be hold on ZOOM until face-to-face class resumes.

- 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 Tuesday.

- Research paper (40%):

Students should write a paper on a specific intimate relationship of their choice. Using the analytical tools you have acquired and the critical distance you have gained throughout the course from your own ideals of intimacy/family/marriage, 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 **November 18 before class (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 December 11 (Fri.), 2020. 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 (9 Sep): An Anthropological Approach to Intimate Relationships in Contemporary China**  
**NO TUTORIAL**

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. "Introduction: The Chinese Family and the Study of Private Life". In *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village 1949-1999*, pp. 1-13. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

**WEEK 2 (16 Sep): Constructing Ideals: Changing Public Discourses Surrounding Family, Love and Sexuality I**

**NO TUTORIAL (Sign up for the tutorial facilitation)**

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.

Lee, Haiyan. 2007. "Introduction: What's Love Got to Do with It?", In *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950*, pp. 1-8. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

\*\*1Illouz, Eva. 1997. "Constructing the Romantic Utopia", In *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, pp. 25-47. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**WEEK 3 (23 Sep): Constructing Ideals: Changing Public Discourses Surrounding Family, Love and Sexuality II**

Hooper, Beverley. 1998. "'Flower Vase and Housewife': Women and Consumerism in Post-Mao China." In Sen, Krishna, Malia Stivens eds., *Gender and Power in Affluent Asia*, pp.167-194. London: Routledge.

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

**WEEK 4 (30 Sep): 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 5 (7 Oct): Courtship, Love and Premarital Sex**

Yan, Yunxiang, 2002. "Courtship, Love and Premarital Sex in a North China Village". *The China Journal* (48): 29-53.

Farrer, James. 2014: "Love, Sex, and Commitment: Delinking Premarital Intimacy from Marriage in Urban China". In Deborah David, ed., *Wives, Husbands, and Lovers: Marriage and Sexuality in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Urban China*, pp. 62-96.

<sup>1</sup> Readings with \*\* are recommended readings.

WEEK 6 (14 Oct): *The Politics of Conjugal Relationship I (gender dynamics)*

Jankowiak, William. 2002. "Proper Men and Proper Women: Parental Affection in the Chinese Family". In *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Read*, pp. 361-380.

Du, Shanshan. 2000. "'Husband and Wife Do It Together': Sex/Gender Allocation of Labor among the Qhawqhat Lahu of Lancang, China." *American Anthropologist* 102(3): 520-537.

\*\*Song, Geng, and Derek Hird. 2014. "Masculinities at Home". In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*, pp. 211-253. Leiden: Brill.

\*\*Ebrey, Patricia. B. 1990. "Women, Marriage, and the Family," in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & Oxford: University of California Press: 197-223.

WEEK 7 (21 Oct): *The Politics of Conjugal Relationship II (Love and Sexuality)*

Jankowiak, William and Xuan Li. 2016. "Emergent Conjugal Love, Mutual Affection, and Female Marital Power". In *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 146-162.

Friedman, Sara. L. 2000. "Spoken Pleasures and Dangerous Desires: Sexuality, Marriage, and the State in Rural Southeastern China." *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 18(4): 13-39.

\*\*Jacka, Tamara, Kipnis, Andrew, and Sargeson, Sally, eds. 2013. Chap 2, "Marriage, Intimacy and Sex." In *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change*, pp.47-63.

\*\*Farrer, James. 2012. "Good Stories: Chinese Women's International Love Stories as Cosmopolitan Sexual Politics". *Sexualities* 16 (1/2): 12-29.

WEEK 8 (28 Oct): *The Politics of Conjugal Relationship III (economic aspect)*

Yan, Yunxiang. 2005. "The Individual and Transformation of Bridewealth in Rural North China." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 11(4): 637-658.

Davis, Deborah S. 2010. "Who Gets the House? Renegotiating Property Rights in Post-Socialist Urban China." *Modern China* 36 (5):463-492.

\*\*Liang, Samuel Y. 2010. "Property-driven Urban Change in Post-Socialist Shanghai: Reading the Television Series *Woju*". *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 39(4): 3-28.

WEEK 9 (4 Nov): *Intergenerational Relationship I: Parenting*

Fong, Vanessa L. 2004. Ch2. "Great Expectations: Singletons as the Vanguard of Modernization." In *Only Hope: Coming of Age under China's One-Child Policy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kuan, Teresa. 2011. "'The Heart Says One Thing But the Hand Does Another': A Story about Emotion-Work, Ambivalence and Popular Advice for Parents." *The China Journal* (65): 77-100.

Zhu, Jianfeng. 2010. "Mothering Expectant Mothers: Consumption, Production, and Two Motherhoods in Contemporary China." *Ethnos* 38(4): 406-421.

\*\*Jankowiak, William. 2011. "The Han Family: The Realignment of Parenting Ideals, Sentiments and Practice." In Shanshan Du and Ya-chen Chen. Lanham, eds., *Women and Gender in Contemporary Chinese Societies: Beyond Han Patriarchy*, pp. 109-131. MD: Lexington Books.

WEEK 10 (11 Nov): Intergenerational Relationship II: Filial Piety

Yan, Yunxiang. 2016. "Intergenerational Intimacy and Descending Familism in Rural China." *American Anthropologist* 0 (0): 1-14.

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.

Hong, Zhang. 2016. "Recalibrating Filial Piety: Realigning the State, Family, and Market Interests in China". In *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 234-250.

WEEK 11 (18 Nov): The Ethics of Intimacy

**Final Research Paper Proposal Due**

Osburg, John. 2013. "Women Entrepreneurs and the 'Beauty Economy': Sexuality, Morality and Wealth". In *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China's New Rich*, pp. 143-182. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Friedman, Sara L. 2012. "Adjudicating the Intersection of Marital Immigration, Domestic Violence, and Spousal Murder: China-Taiwan Marriages and Competing Legal Domains". *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 19 (1): pp. 221-255.

\*\*Farrer, James. 2003. "Extramarital Love in Shanghai" *The China Journal* 50: 1-36.

WEEK 12 (25 Nov): Beyond Nominal Family and Marriage: Sexuality and Performativity

Choi, Susanne. Y. P. and Ming Luo. 2016. "Performative Family: Homosexuality, Marriage and Intergenerational Dynamics in China." *The British Journal of Sociology* 67(2): 260-280.

Lo, Kam Yip Lucetta. 2010. "Opening Up Marriage: Married Lolas in Shanghai". In *As Normal As Possible: Negotiating Sexuality and Gender in Mainland China and Hong Kong*, pp. 87-102.

McLaren, Anne E. 2007. "Online Intimacy in a Chinese Setting". *Asian Studies Review* 31 (4): 401-422.

WEEK 13 (2 Dec): Individual Consultation Sessions via ZOOM System

**NO TUTORIAL**

**Friday, 11 December 2020: Final paper due**