

CHES 5110 Selected Themes on Chinese Media CCSS3101 Media China

Digital China--1980s till Today

2020-21, Spring Term, Wednesdays 830 – 1115 in Cheng Yu Tong Bldg 203

Mixed mode. Can be conducted face to face as well as streamed real-time on Zoom for remote participation.

Lecturer: Dr Séverine Arsène [severine.arsene@sciencespo.fr]

Teaching Assistant: Cecilia Chan

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the digital transformation of China, including the rise of online social movements and digital contention, censorship and control, digitization of the state and efforts to encourage indigenous technology, as well as the notion of China as a new global cyberpower.

The structure of the course will help students understand the articulation between different facets of digital China: political economy, social movements, and geopolitics. A choice of readings will provide opportunities to discuss various methods used to study digital politics, from ethnographic observation and interviews to digital humanities.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, you should:

- have a basic understanding of the landscape and history of the Chinese digital industry and services,
- understand the articulation of the digital with social movements and transnational trends,
- be able to discuss the different research methods one can use to study the developments of the digital from a social science perspective.

Learning activities

Each class will be composed of a lecture (1/2) and discussions with the class or student presentations (1/2).

This course uses Blackboard as a main platform to share readings, class contents and other planning documents. Students experiencing difficulties to access Blackboard should get in touch for alternative options.

All sessions will be conducted in real time in class and, if necessary, partially, or entirely on ZOOM. The meeting details and password will be shared on Blackboard as well as by email before classes start.

Recording of classes is not permitted.

Assessment scheme

- Essay: 30%

CHES 5102: 2000 words

CHES3004 / CCSS3101: 1500 words

Each student will **pick a subject among the presentation topics** proposed in the schedule below and inform the instructor by email **on or before session 5**.

It is possible to propose a subject that is not in the list, upon agreement with the instructor.

Several students can choose the same subject, but this is an individual assessment, it is not permitted to write the essay together. Strong similarities between essays will lead both students to lose points.

Specific instructions and recommendations will be posted after the start of the semester.

10% of the grade will be deducted for each day of late submission.

Essays should be submitted **with signed VeriGuide receipt**. Links for submission will be provided on Blackboard.

- Oral presentation (groups of 2): 20%

Each group will **pick a subject among the presentation topics** proposed in the schedule. Only one group for each topic, first come first served.

CHES 5102: It must be a different subject from the one chosen for the essay.

CHES3004 / CCSS3101: It can be the same topic as the one chosen for the essay.

Specific instructions and recommendations will be posted after the start of the semester.

- Pop-up questions: 30%

Open questions in class will test the acquisition of facts and concepts.

There will be 6 pop-up questions, about one every other class, but not completely regularly and not announced in advance.

One question will be displayed each time, and students will have about 20 min to submit short answers. This will be announced closer to the date in accordance with the actual situation.

- Participation and mind-mapping: 20%

At every session, the instructor will provide some questions to prepare for the next session. Students need to prepare elements to answer these questions, such as ideas from the readings, links to news articles, illustrations, interesting charts or figures or just personal reflections.

On the evening before each class session, students are required to post findings to a collective mind map online (Padlet).

These questions will be discussed in class.

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/>.

If you are unsure about what plagiarism is, or more generally how to comply with standards of academic honesty, you should check the resources at the link above.

You are encouraged to review your note-taking and writing methods, notably by looking at tips provided by various universities (tips [here](#), tips and exercises [here](#), more detailed tips [here](#), and a video [here](#)).

Course schedule

PDF versions of all readings and assignments are available to registered students on Blackboard.

Readings are optional but strongly encouraged. They can and should be used to answer the weekly questions (participation) and to complete the mind map.

Term dates: 11 January 2021 (Mon) – 24 April 2021 (Sat)

Add/Drop: 11 January 2021 (Mon) – 25 January 2021 (Mon)

The reading list and presentation and essay topics will be updated closer to the beginning of the semester.

Session 1: Introduction 13 January

Goals of the course and evaluation
First contact with course contents
Guidelines on sources of information about the Chinese Internet

No reading required

Part 1: Infrastructure Policy and the Creation of the Chinese Digital Landscape

Optional: general reading for part 1

HONG, Yu. *Networking China: The Digital Transformation of the Chinese Economy*. University of Illinois Press. Chicago, 2017.

Session 2: Historical legacies of Chinese telecom networks 20 January

HONG, Yu. 2015. "Colonial Legacies and Peripheral Strategies: Social-Spatial Logic of China's Communications Development since 1840." *Global Media and Communication* 11(2): 89-102

HARWIT, Eric. 2008. "China's Internet and Government Policy." In *China's Telecommunications Revolution*, 79-111. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Session 3: Forms of the digital divide in China 27 January

MCDONALD, Tom. *Social Media in Rural China*. London: UCL Press, 2016.
(chap 4)

CARTIER, Carolyn, Manuel CASTELLS, and Jack Linchuan QIU. 2005. "The Information Have-Less: Inequality, Mobility, and Translocal Networks in Chinese Cities." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 40: 9-34.

Choice of subjects for presentations

Session 4: The digitization of the state 3 February

LAGERKVIST, Johan. 2005. "The Techno-cadre's Dream: Administrative Reform by Electronic Governance in China Today?" *China Information* 19(2): 189-216.

HORSLEY, Jamie. 2018. 'China's Orwellian Social Credit Score Isn't Real'. *Foreign Policy*, 16 November. [Link](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, 2019. "China's Algorithm of Repression. Reverse Engineering a Xinjiang Police Mass Surveillance App." **(Executive summary)** [Link](#)

Part 2: Social media, Social movements and the Control of Online Public Opinion

Optional: general reading for part 1

HAN, Rongbin. *Contesting Cyberspace in China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

Session 5: The rise of civil society online 10 February

YANG, Guobin. 2009. *The power of the Internet in China : citizen activism online*. New York: Columbia University Press. **(Introduction)**

LIU, Jun. 2019. "From Mobilization to Legitimation: Digital Media and the Evolving Repertoire of Contention in Contemporary China," ThinkChina Analysis, University of Copenhagen. [Link](#)

ZHAO, Hui, and Jun LIU. 2015. "Social Media and Collective Remembrance: The debate over China's Great Famine on Weibo." *China Perspectives*, 2015/1: 41-48.

Presentation topic:

- The Sun Zhigang case
- Citizen journalism

Deadline for choice of subject for the essay (email or during class)

17 February: no class, Chinese New Year break.

Session 6: Censorship and propaganda 24 February

ROBERTS, Margaret E. *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton University Press, 2018. **(chap 5)**

HAN, Rongbin. *Contesting Cyberspace in China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. **(chap 5)**

Presentation topic:

- A Chinese Intranet?
- Google and China

Session 7: The complexity of public space 3 March

SZABLEWICZ, Marcella. 2014. "The 'Losers' of China's Internet: Memes as 'Structures of Feeling' for Disillusioned Young Netizens." *China Information* 28 (2): 259-75.

ZHANG, Yinxian, Jiajun LIU, and Ji-Rong WEN. 2018. 'Nationalism on Weibo: Towards a Multifaceted Understanding of Chinese Nationalism'. *The China Quarterly* 235: 758–83.

- Presentation topic:
- The "Little Pinks"
- Human Flesh Search Engines

Session 8: Big Data, algorithms, markets, and labor **10 March**

- LI, Anthony H.F. 2017. "E-commerce and Taobao Villages A Promise for China's Rural Development?" *China Perspectives*, 2017/3: 57-62.
SUN, Ping. 2019. 'Your Order, Their Labor: An Exploration of Algorithms and Laboring on Food Delivery Platforms in China'. *Chinese Journal of Communication* 12(3): 308–23.

- Presentation topics:
- No sense of privacy in China?
- Chinese digital development and gender

Part 3: China and the Global Internet

Session 9: Technonationalism and globalization **17 March**

Exam results and feedback

- QIU, Jack Linchuan. 2010. "Chinese Techno-Nationalism and Global Wifi Policy." In *Re-orienting Global Communication: Indian and Chinese Media Beyond Borders*, ed. Michael Curtin and Hemant Shah, 284-303. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
JIA, Lianrui, and Dwayne WINSECK. 2018. "The Political Economy of Chinese Internet Companies: Financialization, Concentration, and Capitalization." *International Communication Gazette* 80 (1): 30-59.

- Presentation topics:
- Huawei
- Made in China 2025
- Tiktok

Session 10: Internet governance **24 March**

Essay due

- ARSENE, Séverine. 2015. "Internet Domain Names in China: Articulating Local Control with Global Connectivity." *China Perspectives*, 2015/4: 25-34.
SHEN, Hong. 2016. "China and Global Internet Governance: Toward an Alternative Analytical Framework." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 9 (3): 304-24.

- Presentation topics:
- The 2017 Cybersecurity Law
- The World Internet Conference

31 March NO CLASS (reading week for UG; graduate students get a break)

Session 11: Digital humanities and the Chinese Internet

7 April

CHES3004 / CCSS3101 Optional (reading week)

STOCKMANN, Daniela. 2018. "Toward Area-Smart Data Science: Critical Questions for Working With Big Data From China." *Policy & Internet* 10 (4): 393-414.

Presentation topics:

- Measuring public opinion online
- How to detect the 50-cent party?

Session 12: Extraterritoriality, Soft Power and Sharp Power

14 April

Essay results and feedback

NG, Jason Q, Jeffrey KNOCKEL, Lotus RUAN, and Masashi CRETE-NISHIHATA. 2016. "One App, Two Systems: How WeChat uses one censorship policy in China and another internationally." The Citizen Lab. 30 November 2016. [Link](#).

KOKAS, Aynne. 2018. "Platform Patrol: China, the United States, and the Global Battle for Data Security." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77 (4): 923-33.

Presentation topic:

- 5G Technology and China
- Telecommunications and the BRI
- Exporting China's model for Internet governance

Session 13: Hong Kong, Taiwan

21 April

WANG, Yidong. 2018. "Digital Amplification of Fringe Voices: Alternative Media and Street Politics in Hong Kong." *International Journal of Communication* 12 (0): 22.

TSUI, Lokman. 2015. "The Coming Colonization of Hong Kong Cyberspace: government responses to the use of new technologies by the Umbrella Movement." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 8 (4): 1-9.

MILLER, Carl. 2019. 'Taiwan Is Making Democracy Work Again. It's Time We Paid Attention'. *Wired UK*, 26 November. [Link](#).

Presentation topic:

- Audrey Tang and vTaiwan
- Social media and the Umbrella movement
- Social media and the Sun Flower movement