

CCSS2005 Contemporary Chinese Popular Culture
CHES2103/UGEC2434 Popular Culture in Contemporary China

2020-21, Term 1, Thursdays 3:30-6:15pm
ZOOM system (until further notice)

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

Teaching Assistant: Liu Fengwei (fengwei.liu@link.cuhk.edu.hk)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The rise of China as a global power has drawn critical attention from all over the world from various perspectives. This course will approach this phenomenon from the angle of popular culture. Examining contemporary Chinese popular culture in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, this course considers the process of globalization, the cultural flows among East Asian popular culture, particularly, with Japan and Korea, as well as interactions among Sinophone communities around the world. This course takes an interdisciplinary methodology, incorporating materials in the form of literature, films, TV series, pop music, reality shows, online forums, video games, and so on, to explore how economic development, technological innovations, and political atmosphere shape the youth culture, gender dynamics, class structure and many other issues on a daily basis. **All readings are in English. No prior knowledge of Chinese is assumed.**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Demonstrate a basic familiarity with theories about globalization and popular culture;
- 2) Understand the economic, socio-cultural, and political background of contemporary China
- 3) Critically analyze culture phenomena in contemporary China;
- 4) Develop reading, writing, and presentation skills in a professional manner.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

1. Participation (10%) Students are required to come to class prepared, having completed the required readings and watched the assigned audio-visual materials. Students are expected to critically engage with the course content and contribute to class discussion. Students with more than **3 unexcused absences** will receive no points for participation. Extreme lateness will be counted as absence.

In the case of online teaching, 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.

2. Pop Quizzes (4% each - 20% total) Each of the five (5) quizzes will consist of two (2) multiple-choice questions. **In the case of online teaching, the pop quizzes will take place online via Zoom's "poll" function.**

3. 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 plot summaries, but should engage with critical issues discussed in class; address specific passages, quotes, or scenes from the assigned readings. Posts are due by 7pm every Wednesday before the class.

4. Discussion Facilitation (20%) Each student will be assigned to a group to present on a cultural phenomenon in contemporary China of their choice for **20-25 minutes** during the tutorials with the aid of PowerPoint or other visual materials. Students will be asked to sign up for a group in **Week 2**.

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.

5. Term Paper (30%) Students are expected to analyze a phenomenon of popular culture that we have discussed for this course, and write a paper of 2000-2500 words (12pt, Times New Roman, double-spaced) by the end of the semester. Essay prompts will be posted on the **Blackboard**. Term paper should be uploaded to the **Blackboard** together with a **PDF** file of the signed **Veriguide** receipt no later than **11:59pm, December 10**. No late submission will be accepted.

COURSE READINGS

Required Readings:

1. Latham, Kevin. *Pop Culture China! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007. **(abbreviated as Pop Culture)**
2. Yu, Li Anne. *Consumption in China: How China's New Consumer Ideology is Shaping the Nation*. Cambridge: Polity, 2014. **(abbreviated as Consumer)**
3. All other required readings and audio/visual materials should be available through Blackboard and/or be on reserve.

Recommended Reading:

1. Rojas, Carlos and Eileen Cheng-yin Chow. *Rethinking Chinese Popular Culture: Cannibalizations of the Canon*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. **(abbreviated as Canon)**
2. Hockx, Michel. *Internet Literature in China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. **(abbreviated as Internet)**
3. Jenkins, Henry. *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2006. **(abbreviated as Fans)**

Academic Honesty: Students should submit the papers to the Veriguide system and print out the Veriguide receipt and scan it into a PDF file before submitting to the Blackboard. See the website: https://services.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jsp. Any cases of plagiarism will be severely penalized and reported to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, which could result in failure or expulsion from the University.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Sep 10 **Course Overview: What is Popular Culture? (NO tutorial)**

- “Understanding Popular Culture in China” in *Pop Culture*, 1-34.

Week 2

Sep 17 **Globalization and Consumerism in China (NO tutorial, Sign up for Tutorial Facilitation)**

- “Introduction” in *Consumer*.
- Gong Shou Dao (dir. WEN Zhang), 2017. ([WebLink](#))

I. From Page to Stage

Week 3

Sep 24 **Jin Yong I: Martial Arts, the Rivers and Lakes, and Cultural Nationalism**

- Hamm, John Christopher. “Canonizing the Popular: the Case of Jin Yong” in *Canon*, 75-88. ([PDF](#))
- Ng, Kang-chung. “Tributes pour in for Chinese literary giant Louis Cha ‘Jin Yong’, the ‘greatest epic writer of our time who embodied the martial arts spirit.’” *South China Morning Post*. 30 Oct 2018. ([WebLink](#))

Week 4

Oct.1 National Day, No Class

Week 5

Oct 8 **Jin Yong II: Hong Kong, the Shaw Brothers, and the Sinophone World**

- “Introduction: Jin Yong and Martial Arts Fiction” in Ann Huss and LIU Jianmei eds., *The Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History*, Cambria Press, 2007, 1-22. ([PDF](#))

Week 6

Oct 15 **Han Han, Microblog, and Internet Literature**

- “Linear Innovations: Han Han” in *Internet*, 93-107. ([WebLink](#))
- Kan, Karoline. “Once a Voice of Young China, Han Han Stakes Out a Different Path.” *The New York Times: Sinosphere*. 20 Sept 2016. ([WebLink](#))
- Channel NewsAsia Interview with Han Han. 20 Sept 2011. ([WebLink](#))

Week 7

Oct 22 **Guo Jingming: Tiny Times, Plagiarism, and Consumerism**

- “The Social Construction of A Myth: An Interpretation of Guo Jingming’s Parable.” *Oriental Archive* 78, (2010): 397-419.
- King, Aventurina. “China’s Pop Fiction.” *The New York Times: Sunday Book Review*. 4 May 2008. ([WebLink](#))
- Film: *Tiny Times I* (dir. GUO Jingming), 2013.

II. Amusing Ourselves to Death

Week 8

Oct 29 From Cui Jian to Jay Chou: Stardom, Sinophone Voices, and Inter-Asian Affects

- "Popular Music" in *Pop Culture*, 335-356.
- "Western Style, Chinese Pop: Jay Chou's Rap and Hip-Hop in China." *Asian Music* Vol.39, No.1 (Winter-Spring 2008): 69-80.
- *The Rap of China* EP1. ([WebLink](#))
- ** Jones, Andrew. Chapter 4 and 5 in *Like a Knife: Ideology and Genre in Contemporary Chinese Popular Music*. 91-144.

Week 9

Nov 5 From Teresa Teng to Li Yuchun: Gendered Voices, Fandom, and Participatory Culture

- Jones, Andrew. Chapter 1-2 in *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*. Durham: Duke University Press. 21-72.
- "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. ([PDF](#))
- Fan, Shuhong. "After 'China's Beyonce,' Reality Show 'Produce 101' Creates Another Controversial Star." *RadiiChina*. 14 June 2018. ([WebLink](#))
- **Witzleben, J. Lawrence. "Cantopop and Mandapop in Pre-Postcolonial Hong Kong: Identity Negotiation in the Performances of Anita Mui Yim-Fong." *Oriental Archive* 78, (2010): 397-419. ([WebLink](#))

Week 10

Nov 12 *The 88th Congregation (tentative), No Class*

Week 11

Nov 19 Qing Palace Drama, Time Travel Narratives, and Censorship

- "Television" in *Pop Culture*, 43-79.
- Liu, Haining. "What the Popularity of a Qing dynasty drama, The Story of *Yanxi* Palace, says about China's appetite for feminism." *South China Morning Post*. 19 Sept 2018. ([WebLink](#))
- **Yang, Renren. "Buried Alive in History: Poetics, Politics and Ethics of Time in Starling by Each Step (Bubu jingxin) and Other Chinese Time-Travel Historical Romances. *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*. Vol. 10, No. 4 (2016): 699-742. ([PDF](#))

Week 12

Nov 26 Queering the Cyberspace: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China

- Humayun, Hira and Susannah Cullinane. "Taiwan voters reject same-sex marriage." *CNN*. 25 Nov 2018. ([WebLink](#))
- Geng SONG, "Chinese Masculinities Revisited: Male Images in Contemporary Television Drama Serials." *Modern China* 36:4 (July 2010): 404-434.
- Song, Jingyi. "Low-budget bi-love show becomes an unexpected hit." *China Daily*. 12 Jan 2016. ([WebLink](#))

Week 13

Dec 3 Left-over Women, Marriagescape, and the Dating Scene

- “Chinese Youth: Hot Romance and Cold Calculation” in *Restless China*, 189-210.
- Chen, Heather. “Emotional advert about China’s ‘leftover women’ goes viral.” BBC News.8 Apr 2016. ([WebLink](#))
- Clips of *You Are the One* (非誠勿擾 Feicheng wurao) ([WebLink](#))

Term Paper due by Dec 10, 2020