

ANTH 2410B/UGEA 2180B

Chinese Culture and Society

Summer 2021, 18 May- 5 July

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 – 13:15

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

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Office (NAH 411) hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This course examines Chinese culture and society within the temporal frames of the past, the present, with a view towards the future. To avoid thinking of Chinese culture and society as self-contained and isolated from other cultural and civilisational influences, we do this by deploying a comparative cultural perspective. The course will also afford students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The goals of the course are threefold:

First, because any cultural process plays out over time, it is necessary that we deal first with the past to locate its beginnings. The course provides an historical and anthropological approach to examining Chinese culture and society. Some of the questions we raise include: What makes a certain culture 'Chinese'? What does it mean to be Chinese? What role does culture play in being Chinese, and what constitutes Chinese society? Is being Chinese primarily given by ethnicity, nationality, cultural/civilizational practices, some combination of the above, or all of them? Our emphasis is on the dominant cultural practices of societies around the world that render them 'Chinese.' Additionally, our comparative orientation compels us to ask whether there is anything unique or exceptional in the civilizational/cultural, economic, political, and social practices found in China.

Second, the course will situate contemporary China historically within the world-system and examine the dramatic transformations it has undergone since the post-Mao reforms which began in the late-1970s. Because of China's subaltern place in the world, first as a semi-colonised entity in the form of Qing China, then as an explicit champion of anti-imperialist internationalism in the form of the PRC, before taking the form it does today, we raise the problem central to this historical evolution of modern China by asking: what is 'China'? The aim here is to understand contemporary China as it has evolved historically, politically, and culturally within the capitalist world-system.

The third goal of this course is to reflect on questions of 'sustainability'. This is important especially given that our epoch is one increasingly marked by planetary-scale ecological as well as social crises. Here, we ask: what makes for more sustainable ways of being? Because China has become the world's most dynamic centre of economic growth since its market reforms were launched, the Chinese experience offers itself as a case-study of the benefits as

well as challenges thrown up by modern development. In particular, the PRC's post-Mao development experience renders it a fitting case-study through which we can examine the SDGs.

As China has committed to implementing the 2030 development agenda, including SDGs such as clean water, affordable clean energy, and climate action, this course will offer students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the discourse of sustainability as articulated by the SDGs.

Because it is well-known that economic growth causes environmental degradation, the course will afford students the opportunity to reflect upon the apparent contradictions existing between 'development' and 'sustainability' by way of examining the relationship between Chinese development and the SDGs.

There should be lots to discover and discuss about China, the Chinese, and the sustainability of China's societal, cultural, political, and economic system, and the world-system of which it is a part.

Language of instruction: English

Topics

1. Traditional Chinese religion, thought, politics, and society
2. Cultures and societies of the Chinese: overseas and on the mainland
3. Features of Modern China/PRC:
 - (i) post-1949, Maoist phase
 - (ii) post-Maoist/Reform China
4. Sustainability and the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)

Evaluation [still to be finalised, 13/4/2021]

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%

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:

- account for dominant features of traditional Chinese ways of thinking and living
- explain why there are similarities as well as differences across different Chinese societies
- historically as well as anthropologically account for the place of modern China within the world-system
- critically discuss the major social institutions and features of Maoist and post-Mao China.
- discuss the sustainable development goals (SDGs), their significance in our times, and how 'sustainability' challenges ideas of development in general and Chinese development specifically.

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

Lecture 1 (18/5): 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.

Lecture 2 (20/5): CHINESE CULTURE, THE WORLD, AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE ISSUES AT STAKE

Required:

Ames, Roger. 2020. "Preface" and "Introduction", *Human Becomings*, New York: SUNY Press.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. 2021. This is your Covid wake-up call: it's 100 seconds to midnight, January 27, available online at:

<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/> [accessed 1 April 2021].

The UN's 2015 Sustainable Development Goals: https://www.unhcr.org/hk/en/what-we-do/2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhPj8IYnu7wIVCGoqCh34SA0FEAAYASAAEgKhQvD_BwE [Accessed 1 April 2021].

Lecture 3 (25/5): WHAT IS 'CHINESE' CULTURE, PART I?: MICRO-RELATIONS

Required:

Chen, Lai. 2017. "The Philosophical Foundations of Chinese Civilization," pp. 1-20, In *The Core Values of Chinese Civilization*. Singapore: Springer.

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.

Lecture 4 (27/5): WHAT IS 'CHINESE' CULTURE, PART II?: MACRO-RELATIONS

Required:

Zhao, Tingyang, 'A Political World Philosophy in terms of All-under-heaven (Tian-xia)', *Diogenes* 2009, 221: 5-18

Zhang, Feng. 2009. Rethinking the "Tribute System": Broadening the Conceptual Horizon of Historical East Asian Politics. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2(4), 597–626. doi:10.1093/cjip/pop010

Zhao, Gang 2006. Reinventing China: Imperial Qing Ideology and the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century. *Modern China*, 32(1), pp. 3-30.

Lecture 5 (1/6): 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:

Tan, Chee-Beng, Colin Storey, and Julia Zimmerman. 2007. *Chinese Overseas: Migration, Research and Documentation*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

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>

Lecture 6 (3/6): OTHER CHINESE CULTURES AND SOCIETIES, II – HK-PRC RELATIONS

Required:

Lowe, John & Tsang, Eileen. 2017. "Disunited in ethnicity: the racialization of Chinese Mainlanders in Hong Kong." *Patterns of Prejudice*, 51(2), 137-158. doi:10.1080/0031322x.2017.1304349.

Zhang, Jun. 2020. "Is Mainland China the source of all of Hong Kong's problems?" *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 10(2): 313-318.

Cheung, Yuk-man. 2020. "Liberate Hong Kong, the revolution of our times": the birth of the first Orient nation in the twenty-first century." In Greenfeld, Liah and Wu Zeying (eds.). *Research Handbook on Nationalism*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Introduction (pp. 1-13) of Chun, Allen. 2017. *Forget Chineseness: On the Geopolitics of Cultural Identification*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Recommended:

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

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

Lecture 7 (8/6): THE PRC IN HISTORICAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT , I

Required:

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.

Feuchtwang, Stephan and Hans Steinmuller. 2017. "Statehood and National Independence." In *China in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 85-104. Singapore: World Scientific.

Tsang, Eileen Yuk-ha. 2016. "Chinese Society in Pre-Reform China." In *Understanding Chinese Society: Changes and Transformations*, pp. 3-11.

Recommended:

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

Lecture 7 (8/6): THE PRC IN HISTORICAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT , II

Required:

Feuchtwang, Stephan and Hans Steinmuller. 2017. "Revolution and Maoism." In *China in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 105-116. Singapore: World Scientific.

Feuchtwang, Stephan and Hans Steinmuller. 2017. "Socialism." In *China in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 117-128. Singapore: World Scientific.

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.

Lecture 8 (10/6): VIGNETTES OF MAOIST-SOCIALIST CHINA

Required:

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

Hershatter, Gail. 2011. *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past*; Introduction, pp. 1-12 and Chapter 1, pp. 13-31.

Lecture 9 (15/6): REFORM AND POST-REFORM CHINA, I

Required:

Solinger, Dorothy. 2020. "The State and Privatisation." In Latham, Kevin (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.

Tsang, Eileen Yuk-ha. 2016. "The Institutional Changes in Post-Reform China." In *Understanding Chinese Society: Changes and Transformations*, pp. 13-20.

Yan Yunxiang. 2017. "Egoist Individual, Moralistic Self, and Relational Person: A Tripartite Approach to the Changing Chinese Personhood". Recorded lecture at the UCLA Centre for

Chinese Studies. Accessible at: <https://www.international.ucla.edu/ccs/article/172913> [Last accessed 12/4/21].

Recommended:

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.

Lecture 10 (17/6): REFORM AND POST-REFORM CHINA, II

Required:

Feuchtwang, Stephan and Hans Steinmuller. 2017. "Property Relations and China's Contemporary Economy" In *China in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 147-166. Singapore: World Scientific.

Kleinman, Arthur, Yan Yunxiang, Jing Jun, Sing Lee, Everett Zhang, Pang Tianshu, Wu Fei and Guo Jianhua. 2011. "Introduction: Remaking the Moral Person in New China." In *Deep China: The Moral Life of the Person*. Berkeley: University of California Press; pp. 1-35.

Recommended:

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

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*.

Lecture 11 (22/6): REFORM AND POST-REFORM CHINA, III

Required:

Feuchtwang, Stephan and Hans Steinmuller. 2017. "The City." In *China in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 183-198. Singapore: World Scientific.

Wanning, Sun. 2020. "Rural Migrant Workers in Chinese Cities." In Latham, Kevin (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.

Yiu, Lisa. 2020. "Migrant Children's Education." In Latham, Kevin (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.

Recommended:

Feuchtwang, Stephan and Hans Steinmuller. 2017. "The Countryside and Migration" In *China in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 167-182. Singapore: World Scientific.

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.

Lecture 12 (24/6): ETHNICITY, HEALTH, AND ECOLOGY

Required:

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

Lora-Wainwright, Anna. 2013. "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.

Recommended:

Han, Enze. 2020. "Ethnic identity and inter-ethnic relations in contemporary China." In Latham, Kevin (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.

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.

Lecture 13 (5/7): CONCLUDING DISCUSSION: EVALUATING THE U.N'S SDGs IN THE LIGHT OF CHINESE DEVELOPMENTS