

ANTH 2420/UGEA2332
Culture and Modernity in China
Autumn 2020
(Provisional outline)

Instructor: Andrew KIPNIS

Class meeting: Wednesday 12:30-2:15, TBA.

Tutorial: Wednesday 2:30-3:15, TBA.

Instructor Office Hours: Thursday 4:00-5:00 and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description: The remarkable economic emergence of China and Asia more broadly has transformed many impoverished and largely agricultural societies into the most dynamic region of the contemporary world. China's burgeoning middle classes, rapid urbanisation, time-space compression and the shift from command economies to de-regulated markets have had profound effects on people's everyday lives and the diverse cultural practices. This course offers an introduction into anthropological approaches to the study of culture, modernity and globalisation in China and Asia more broadly. Relevant themes that have attracted anthropological interest include changing traditions and popular culture, adaptive custom and cosmopolitanism, migration and citizenship, identity politics and social movements as well as the distinctive and emergent forms of governance.

Drawing on a rich corpus of social theory and ethnographic research from anthropologists past and present, the course will provide students with conceptual and analytical tools to appreciate adaptive cultural practices in comparative terms, to review and appreciate the key anthropological debates and influential works in the study of modernity, and to introduce students to ethnographic approaches for researching and writing on modernity.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate understanding of theories and debates around the concepts of modernity and culture, as they relate to China.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts in anthropology and its central research method - ethnography.
3. Critically utilize Chinese case studies and relevant source material when arguing analytical points.
4. Understand the relationships between processes of modernization, cultural change and cultural reproduction in China.

Language of Instruction: English.

Assessment:

1. Tutorial participation/forum posts: 25%: Attendance and active participation in tutorial meetings. Posting questions and comments on readings for tutorial on blackboard. You should post twice a week for at least 8 weeks and the deadline for each week is Wednesday morning before class at 9am.

Forum posts: For eight weeks of your choice, you will need to submit two forum posts on assigned readings (these should be either responses to your classmates' comments or your own post if you would like to discuss something different). Your posts do not have to be long—they could be as brief as two-three sentences, but they must meet the following criteria:

- be pertinent to the main arguments of the readings (demonstrate that you have read the texts)
- be meaningful and original (demonstrate that you have thought about the texts)
- be polite and respectful

The posts should be posted to the forum "Discussion Forum" on Blackboard.

2. Take-home midterm exam: 35%: Exam questions covering the lectures and readings for the first six weeks will be passed out after the lecture on October 14. Students will be required to answer 4 questions in approximately 1600 words. Exam responses are to be double-spaced, in 12-point font and submitted via the plagiarism detection engine VERIGUIDE and use any coherent academic style for citations. Hard copies are to be turned in to the department office. The due date is Friday October 23 at 12 noon.

3. Final exam: 40%: Exam questions covering the lectures and readings for the last six weeks will be passed out on the last day of class, December 2. Students will be required to answer 5 questions in approximately 2000 words. Exam responses are to be double-spaced, in 12-point font and submitted via the plagiarism detection engine VERIGUIDE and use any coherent academic style for citations. Hard copies are to be turned in to the department office. The due date is Monday December 14 at 12 noon.

Course Schedule:

Week One: 09 September **Introduction**

- Course Introduction
- Definitions of Modernity

Week Two: 16 September, **Modernity**

Read: Kipnis, Andrew B. 2016 *From Village to City*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-25,

watch the short YouTube video "What is modernity"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGgqmInwwlk>

- Ideas about Modernity, continued.
- Postmodernity, alternative modernity, etc.

Week Three: 23 September, Concept of Culture

Read the following three short newspaper articles/blog posts

<https://www.sharingculture.info/my-culture.html>

<https://www.counseling.org/news/aca-blogs/aca-member-blogs/aca-member-blogs/2011/02/28/i'm-white-i-don't-have-a-culture->

<https://theconversation.com/not-your-prom-dress-why-a-chinese-dress-set-off-a-cultural-debate-about-identity-and-history-96020>

- Debates about Culture
- Criticisms of the Concept of Culture

Week Four: 30 September, Urbanization and City Planning

Read: Scott, James 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.53-63.

Al, Stephan 2014. *Villages in the City: A Guide to South China's Informal Settlements*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 1-8.

- Introduction to Zouping
- Planning and Process of Urbanization

Week Five: 7 October, Industrialization

Read: Kipnis, Andrew B. 2015 "For the Love (and Hate) of Factory Work" *Asian Currents*, 26 June, <http://asaa.asn.au/for-the-loveand-hateof-factory-work/>

Chang, Leslie T. 2009 *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, pp.98-115.

Additional recommended reading: (really useful if you are shooting for an A): Pun, Ngai 1999 *Becoming Dagongmei (Working girls): The Politics of Identity and Difference in Reform China*. *The China Journal* (42):1-18.

- Industrialization in Zouping
- Work Unit Culture

Week Six: 14 October, Technology, Time-Space Compression, MIDTERM HANDED OUT

Read: Wang, Xinyuan. 2016 *Social Media in Industrial China*, UCL Press, pp. 57-96. Pages 97-127 are also recommended. The entire book may be downloaded for free.

- Technology and Time Space Compression
- Midterm handed out at the end of class. **DUE** Friday October 23 at 12 noon.

Week Seven: 21 October, **Modernity and Education**

There is no reading this week. No attendance will be taken in tutorial. I will use tutorial to answer any last-minute questions about the midterm.

- Education in Zouping
- Education and Modernity
- Education and Culture

Week Eight: 28 October, **Modernity and Familial Change**

Read: Fong, Vanessa. 2002 China's One-Child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters. *American Anthropologist* 104(4):1098-1106.

Additional recommended reading (really useful if you are shooting for an A): Yan, Yunxiang. 1997 The Triumph of Conjuality: Structural Transformation of Family Relations in a Chinese Village. *Ethnology* 36(3):191-209.

- Kinship and Family Structure
- Chinese Policy and Demographic Change in Zouping

Week Nine: 4 November, **Globalization and Change**

Read: Mathews, Gordon with Linessa Dan Lin and Yang Yang. 2017. *The World in Guangzhou*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press: Chapter 4: Low-End Globalization, pp. 81-114.

- Globalization and Worlding
- Disparate Actors in Global Projects

Week Ten: 11 November, **Development and Its Failures**

Read: Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2005 *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 27-50.

- Watch Film: Peasant Family Happiness (possible)
- Development and Anti-Development
- Tourism, Tradition and Modernity

Week Eleven: 18 November, **Religion and Modernization**

Read: Kipnis, Andrew B. 2021. *The Funeral of Mr. Wang*, Chapter One.

Also recommended: Johnson, Ian. 2017. *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion after Mao*. New York: Pantheon: 34-51; 304-317

- Religion and Modernity
- Religious Modernity in China
- Contemporary Funerals

Week Twelve: 25 November, **Youth and Modernity**

Read: Weiss, Brad 2002 Thug Realism: Inhabiting Fantasy in Urban Tanzania. *Cultural Anthropology* 17(1):100-124. Chinese and Tanzania cases will be compared in lecture.

- Youth and Modernity
- Youth in Zouping
- Youth and Factory Work in China

Week Thirteen: 2 December, **Stranger Society and the Internet**

Read: MacDonald, Tom. 2019. “Strangership and Social Media: Moral Imaginaries of Gendered Strangers in Rural China” *American Anthropologist* 121(1)76-88.

Also recommended; Wang, Tricia 2013. “Introduction” to PhD thesis *Talking to Strangers: Chinese Youth and Social Media* UCSD Sociology Department pp. 1-28.

- Strangers and Urbanization
- Strangers and Ghosts
- Strangers and the Internet
- Hand out Final Exam

FINAL EXAM DUE Monday December 14 at 12 noon

GRADE DESCRIPTORS:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</i>
A	1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. 2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.
A-	1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes. 2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.
B-range	1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. 2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive

	argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence.
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</p> <p>2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</p>