

HMMA 5001 – Fundamentals of Chinese Culture

Fall 2021

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Class Time: Fridays 10:30AM - 01:20PM

Classroom: Room 1410 (Lift 25-26)

I. Course Description:

This is an integrated multidisciplinary course on Chinese culture. It aims at providing students with a broad understanding of the perspectives and methodologies of humanistic studies on Chinese culture across various disciplines, including anthropology, history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, and religion. In each offering of the course, 4 out of 6 humanities disciplines will be offered, with an emphasis placed on the introduction of fundamental concepts and general methodological/theoretical underpinnings of the studies of Chinese culture in humanities. This is a mandatory foundation course for all students in the MA program in Chinese Culture.

II. Course Objectives:

Upon the completion of the course, students may be expected to attain the following attributes:

- 1) A broad understanding of the nature, scope and value of the studies of Chinese culture in humanities perspectives;
- 2) Better appreciation of the basic concepts, theories and methods in different humanities disciplines essential to the building of a holistic, dynamic and integrated understanding of Chinese culture;
- 3) Ability to respond critically to Chinese cultural texts and issues of various nature;
- 4) Strengthened skills in humanistic inquiry pertaining to Chinese culture, such as questioning, analyzing, interpreting, making connections and constructing arguments.

III. Course Assessment:

1) Attendance & in-class participation: 20%

Students are expected to complete the reading assignment PRIOR to coming to class and be ready to discuss and engage in class. All assigned reading materials are either in electronic form or posted on Canvas, with the full-length books or additional reference materials placed on reserve in the library under this course code.

2) 4 short module papers: (1,500-2,000 words each) 80% (20% per module)

Each module paper should be around 1,500-2,000 words long and is due 3 weeks after the completion of respective module. The topic of each module paper varies, depending on the content of individual module and instructor's requirement.

IV. Class Schedule:

Module	Dates	Instructor
History	Sept 3, 10, 17	ZHANG, Lawrence L C
Philosophy	Sept 24, Oct 8, 15	WONG, Simon Man-ho
Anthropology	Oct 22, 29, Nov 5	CHEUNG, Siu-woo
Film/ Literature	Nov 12,19, 26	DU, Daisy Yan

V. Module Description:

1) History Module: The Meaning of History

History is the study of the past, but the questions we ask and the conclusions we draw are inevitably influenced by the present. Using three important debates as examples, this module is designed to familiarize students with the basic methods of academic inquiry within the discipline of history. Each of the debates discussed in this module touch on a significant question in China's recent history, with strong implications on China's society today.

Sept 3 – Seeds of Capitalism

- Mark Elvin, "The High-Level Equilibrium Trap: The Causes of the Decline of Invention in the Traditional Chinese Textile Industries," Willmott, ed. *Economic Organization in Chinese Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 137-182.
- Arif Dirlik, "Chinese Historians and the Marxist Concept of Capitalism: A Critical Examination", *Modern China* 8:1 (1982), 105-132.

- Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000,
- Sept 10 – Social Mobility**
- Ho Ping-ti, *Ladder of Success in Imperial China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.
 - Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elites of Fu-chou*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
 - Elman, “Political, Social, and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 50:1 (Feb 1991), 7-28.
 - Zhang Weiwei, “Meritocracy Versus Democracy”, NYT,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/10/opinion/meritocracy-versus-democracy.html>
 - Mark Elliott, “The Real China Model”, NYT,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/14/opinion/the-real-china-model.html>

Sept 17 – New Qing History

- Ho Ping-ti, “The Significance of the Ch’ing-Period,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 26:2 (Feb 1967), 189-95.
- Evelyn Rawski, “Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55:4 (Nov 1996), 829-50.
- Ho Ping-ti, “In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski’s ‘Reenvisioning the Qing’,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57:1 (Feb 1998), 123-55.
- Li Zhiting, “A Righteous View of History”
<http://cmp.hku.hk/2015/04/22/a-righteous-view-of-history/>
http://www.cssn.cn/zx/201504/t20150420_1592588.shtml
- Wang Rongzu, “To defend New Qing History you must first understand New Qing History”
<https://www.aisixiang.com/data/98776.html>
- 從「新清史」到滿學範式, 《二十一世紀》雙月刊, 2016年10月號(總第157期)
<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/media/articles/c157-201609009.pdf>

2) Philosophy Module: Chinese Approaches to the Meaning of Life

The three lectures on Chinese philosophy will be devoted to Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, the so-called “Three Teachings”, respectively. Notwithstanding the frequent interactions among them in the long history of China, they represent three distinctively different approaches to human predicament and human destiny. Following a chronological order, each of these lectures will concentrate on some of the

most influential philosophers or representative schools of the three teachings. Through examining one after the other their metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, spiritual discipline and ethical theory, the lectures will demonstrate how the three teachings as a whole distinguish from one another in their views on the very nature of the ultimate reality, the intricate relationships between that reality and humanity, the uplifting program through which a union, or a reunion, of them can be achieved and a fulfilling and noble life attained. It is only on the basis of this comparison can we begin evaluating what legacies these teachings might leave to posterity.

Sept 24: The Confucian Approach

- Mou, Zongsan. “The Emphasis of Chinese Philosophy and the Origin of Early Thinkers” in *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy—A Brief Outline of Chinese Philosophy and the Issues It Entails*. Tran. Esther C. Su (San Jose, CA: Foundation for the Study of Chinese Philosophy and Culture, 2015), pp. 41-62, 64-65.
- “Moral and Social Programs: The Great Learning” in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Tran & comp. Wing-tsit Chan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 84-94.

Oct. 8: The Taoist Approach

- “Introduction” in *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. Tran. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 1-28.
- “Autumn Floods” in *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. Tran. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 175-189.

Oct. 15: The Buddhist Approach

- “Basic Teachings of Buddhism” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. 2 vols. Ed. & Comp. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 415-420.
- “The Meditation School” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. 2 vols. Ed. & Comp. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 491-504.

3) Anthropology Module: Field Research and Understanding Chinese Culture and Society

One of the key tools for studying human societies in anthropology is fieldwork. Anthropologists live in the community that they study and participate in people’s daily life. Through the method of participant observation, they collect field data and experience the local ways of life. Adopting the holistic approach, a fieldworker tries to understand how local people make their living, organize their society, and interact with the supernatural world. This approach also requires putting the local community in the wider regional and

global contexts, to make sense of the data that the fieldworker have collected. In this section, students will be introduced to this anthropological research method, guided to practise field observation and interview in two nearby Hakka and fishermen communities in Saikung, and through these Hong Kong cases to engage with anthropological readings on the diversity and unity of Chinese culture and society in folk models, imperial culturalism, and modern nationalism.

Oct 22: Anthropological concept of culture and fieldwork research

- Peoples, James and Garrick Bailey. 2012. *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (9th ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. (Chapter 2: Culture; Chapter 5: Methods of Investigation).
- Whyte, William Foote. 1994. "Learning to be a Participant Observer." In his *Participation Observer: An Autobiography*, pp. 67-84. Ithaca: ILR Press.

Oct 29: Field study in Yimtint sai Hakka Village and Kausai Fishermen Village, Saikung

- Watson, James L. and Rubie S. Watson. 2004. "Fieldwork in Hong Kong New Territories (1969-1977)." In *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*, pp. 3-18. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Barbara E. Ward. 1965. "Varieties of the Conscious Model: The Fishermen of South China." In Michael Banton, ed., *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, pp. 113-138. London: Tavistock Publications.

Nov 5: The Diversity and Unity of Chinese Cultural Identity

- James L. Watson. 1993. "Rites or Beliefs? The Construction of a Unified Culture in Late Imperial China." In Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, eds., *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press), pp.80-103.
- Myron L. Cohn. 1991. "Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity." *Daedalus* 120(2): 113-134.
- Cheung Siu-woo. 2012. "Appropriating Otherness and the Contention of Miao Ethnic identity in Southwest China." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 142-169.

4) Film/Literature Module: Introduction to Film Studies

This module maps the overall field of film studies. It introduces the multiple approaches to film studies, including but not limited to historical approach, literary approach, formal analysis, psychoanalysis, auteur studies, film projection, viewing, and audience studies, feminist film criticism, genre studies, and postcolonial criticism. There are no clear-cut boundaries between these approaches, as they often overlap with each other. In addition, this module will introduce a variety of film forms, such as fictional film, documentary, and animation from the Republican era to the present as case studies. The aim of this module is to build a foundation for beginning graduate students who are interested in film studies.

Nov 12: Left-Wing Cinema

Film Screening:

- *New Women* (Cai Chusheng, 1934) Shanghai: Lianhua, 114 minutes
- *Princess Iron Fan* (Wan Brothers, 1941) Shanghai: Xinhua.

Readings:

- Kristine Harris, “The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai,” *Transnational Chinese Cinemas* (University of Hawaii press, Honolulu, 1997), 277-302.
- Laikwan Pang, “The Left-wing Cinema Movement,” *Building a New China in Cinema: The Chinese Left-Wing Cinema Movement, 1932-1937*, 37-72.

Nov 19: Socialist Realism

Film Screening:

- *Five Golden Flowers* (Wang Jiayi, 1959) Changchun: Changchun Film Studio, 90 minutes
- *Uproar in Heaven* (Wan Laiming and Tang Cheng, 1961-1964) Shanghai Animation Film Studio.

Readings:

- Paul Clark, “Ethnic Minorities in Chinese Films: Cinema and the Exotic,” *East-West Film Journal* 1.2 (1987): 15-32.
- Yingjin Zhang, “From ‘Minority Film’ to ‘Minority Discourse’ Questions of Nationhood and Ethnicity in Chinese Cinema,” *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, 81–104.

Nov 26: Independent Cinema

Film Screening:

- *Artisan Pickpocket* (aka *Xiao Wu*, Jia Zhangke, 1997)
- *Putting on the Mask* (animated documentary, Isabel Galwey, 2020)

Readings:

- Jason McGrath, “The Independent Cinema of Jia Zhangke,” in *The Urban Generation*, 81-114.
- Zhen Zhang and Angela Zito, “Introduction,” in *DV-Made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformations after Independent Film*, 2015.
- Paul Pickowicz, “Social and Political Dynamics of Underground Filmmaking in China,” in *From Underground to Independent: Alternative Film Culture in Contemporary China*, 2006.