

**Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus**

Course Code: HUMA 5755
Course Title: Ethnicity in Chinese Context
Course Offered in: Fall 2026
Course Instructor: Ma Jianxiong

Course Description:

Ethnicity is an important socio-cultural institution in China. This course aims to explore the issue of ethnicity in China in the context of a nation-state, including identity construction, ethnic classification system and local reactions in Chinese society. In addition, nationalism, ethnic identities, and ethnic diversity will be examined from anthropological perspectives. Historical changes and contemporary development of the phenomenon of ethnicity will be discussed from anthropological perspectives as well.

This course explores the issue of ethnicity in China in the context of a nation-state. Issues of nationalism, ethnic identities, and ethnic diversity will be examined from anthropological perspectives. Ethnicity has become an important socio-cultural institution in China. This course explores issues of identity construction, ethnic classification system and local reactions in Chinese society. Historical changes and contemporary development of the phenomenon of ethnicity will be examined in anthropological perspectives.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

	Course ILOs
1	The main purposes of this course is to guide students to understand the major ethnic issues such as identity formation, ethnic classification system, ethnic relations, assimilation, social conflicts, nation-building, and ethnic hierarchy.
2	To learn the approaches to study the multiethnic history of Chinese society, the Communist and Western theories on nationality and ethnicity, and the formation of distinctive minority cultures in the context of the Chinese nation-state.
3	To appreciate ethnic diversity in Chinese society.

Course Outline:

Week	
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1	Introduction: Defining ethnicity Fenton, Steven, 2003. <i>Ethnicity</i> . London: Polity Press. Pp.1-24.
2	The Chinese ethnicity as an imperial legacy Prasenjit Duara, 1996. "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation", in Jonathan Unger (ed.), <i>Chinese nationalism</i> , New York: M. E. Sharpe. Pp. 31-55.
3	Plurality and unity: the making of a modern multiethnic China Dikotter, Frank, 1992. <i>The discourse of race in Modern China</i> . Stanford, Stanford University.
4	The Communist theoretical framework for nation formation Engels, Frederick, 1986. <i>The origin of the family, private property, and the state</i> , London, Penguin Books.
5	The making of the Chinese Communist's policy on minority nationalities Dreyer, June Teufel, 1977. <i>China's forty millions: minority nationalities and national integration in The People's Republic of China</i> . Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 63-137.
6	Ethnic identification in the People's Republic of China Mullaney, Thomas S., 2011. "Identity crisis in postimperial China" (chapter 1) & "Ethnicity as language" (chapter 2), in <i>Coming to terms with the nation: ethnic classification in Modern China</i> . Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California. Press. Pp. 18-68.
7	Political economy among Chinese minorities Cheung, Sui-woo, 1997. "Representation and negotiation of Ge identities in Southeast China."
8	Gender and ethnic hierarchy among Chinese minorities Gladney, Dru C. 1994. "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities." <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i> 53 (1): 92-123.
9	Ethnic relations and ethnic conflict in China Lipman, Jonathan N. 1990. "Ethnic Violence in Modern China: Hans and Huis in Gansu, 1781-1929." In <i>Violence in China: essays in culture and counterculture</i> . Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell, eds. Albany: State University of New York Press. Pp. 65-87.

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10	Southwestern minorities and their recent situations Mueggler, Eric, 2002. "Dancing fools: Politics of culture and place in a 'traditional nationality Festival'." In <i>Modern China</i> . 28 (1): 3-38.
11	Theories of nationality and ethnicity in Western social sciences Harrell, Stevan, 1996. "Introduction: civilizing projects and the reaction to them." In Stevan Harrell (ed.), <i>Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers</i> . Pp. 3-36.
12	Student research paper project presentations.
13	Student research paper project presentations.

Planned Assessment Tasks:

Presentation and discussion:	20%
Research paper:	50%
Participation in class and reading reports:	30%

Readings:

1. Honing, Emily. 1992. *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei people in Shanghai, 1850-1980*. New Heaven and London: Yale University Press.
2. Blake, C. Fred, 1981. *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
3. Ge, Zhaoguang, 2018. *What is China? Territory, Ethnicity, Culture and History*. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.