Fall 2026
HUMA 5755 Ethnicity in Chinese Context

Course Instructor: Ma Jianxiong E-mail: hmjxm@ust.hk
Time: Monday, 12:00-14:50 Venue: Room 5566 (Lift 27-28)
Office Hours: Wednesday & Thursday, 15:00-17:00 Office: Room 3342

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.

Major Objectives
The main purposes of this course is to guide students to (1) understand the major ethnic issues such as identity formation, ethnic classification system, ethnic relations, assimilation, social conflicts, nation-building, and ethnic hierarchy, (2) 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, and (3) appreciate ethnic diversity in Chinese society.

Requirements and Evaluation: Regular attendance is expected; Required readings and any other assignments should be completed before class-time, and questions prepared in advance for discussion. Final grades will be calculated on the following basis:

- Class participation and reading reports (30%).
- Presentation, discussion, and attendance (20%).
- Research paper (50%).

Texts and Main References:

Honing, Emily,
1992 *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei people in Shanghai, 1850-1980*. New

Heaven and London: Yale University Press.
Blake, C. Fred,
1981 *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Confino, Alon
2014 *A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Course content and teaching components:

September 7. Week 1. Introduction: Defining ethnicity

Fenton, Steven,
2003 *Ethnicity*. London: Polity Press. Pp.1-24.

Eriksen, Thomas,
2003 *Ethnicity and nationalism*. London: Polity Press. Pp. 1-18.

Weber, Max and Smith, Anthony,
1997 "What is an ethnic group?" , and "Structure and persistence of ethnie", in Monserrat Guibernau and John Rex (ed,), *The ethnicity reader: nationalism, multiculturalism and migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 15-32.

September 14. Week 2. The Chinese ethnicity as an imperial legacy.

Prasenjit Duara,
1996 "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation", in Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Chinese nationalism*, New York: M. E. Sharpe. Pp. 31-55.

Townsend, James,
1996 "Chinese nationalism", in Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Chinese nationalism*, New York, M. E. Sharpe. Pp. 1-30.

王明珂，
1997 《华夏边缘：历史记忆与族群认同》，台北：允晨文化实业股份有限公司。

葛兆光，
2011 "重建关于'中国'的历史论述"，"'中国'意识在宋代的凸显"&"山海经、职贡图和旅行记中的异域记忆"，《宅兹中国：重建有关'中国'的历史论述》，北京：中华书局，页3-90.

September 21. Week 3. Plurality and unity: the making of a modern multiethnic China.

Dikotter, Frank,
1992 *The discourse of race in Modern China*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Fitzgerald, John,
1996 "The nationless state: the search for a nation in Modern Chinese Nation." In Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Chinese nationalism*, New York, M. E. Sharpe. Pp. 56-85.

黄兴涛，
2017 《重塑中华：近代中国"中华民族"观念研究》, 绪论："'中华民族'：近代国人民族自觉的新概念与新符号"、 第一章："清代中国'中华民族'观念的酝酿"、& 第二章："现代中华民族观念的确立与传播"，北京：北京师范大学出版社，2017，页1-164。

***Reading Report on *Creating Chinese Ethnicity* is due on September 21.**

September 28. Week 4. The Communist theoretical framework for nation formation.

Engels, Frederick,
1972 *The origin of the family, private property, and the state*, London, Penguin Books, 1986.

Dreyer, June Teufel,
1976 *China's forty millions: minority nationalities and national integration in The People's Republic of China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 16-59.

October 5. Week 5. The making of the Chinese Communist's policy on minority nationalities.

Dreyer, June Teufel,
1977 *China's forty millions: minority nationalities and national integration in The People's Republic of China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 63-137.

Diamond, Norma,
1995 "Defining the Miao: Ming, Qing and contemporary views." In Stevan Harrell (ed*.), Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers*. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press. Pp. 92-116.

October 12. Week 6. Ethnic identification in the People's Republic of China.

Fei, Xiaotong,

1980 "Ethnic identification in China." *Social Science in China*. 1980 (1): 94-107.

1988 "Plurality and unity in the configuration of the Chinese people." Paper prepared for the Tanner Lecture delivered at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Novermber 15 and 17, 1988.

Mullaney, Thomas S.,

2011 "Identity crisis in postimperial China" (chapter 1) & "Ethnicity as language" (chapter 2), in *Coming to terms with the nation: ethnic classification in Modern China*. Berkeley, Los Angles, London: University of California Press. Pp. 18-68.

Cohen, Myron L.

1996 "The Hakka or 'Guest People': Dialect as a sociocultural variable in Southeast China." In *Guest people: Hakka identity in China and abroad*. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press. Pp.36-79.

October 26. Week 7. Political economy among Chinese minorities.

Cheung, Sui-woo,

1997 "Representation and negotiation of Ge identities in Southeast China." In Melissa J. Brown (ed.), *Negotiating ethnicities in China and Taiwan.* Berkeley, Berkeley: Center for Chinese studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Pp. 240-273.

Khan, Almaz,

1996 "Who are the Mongols? State, ethnicity, and politics of representation in the PRC." In Melissa J. Brown (ed.), *Negotiating ethnicities in China and Taiwan.* Berkeley: Center for Chinese studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley. Pp. 125-159.

***Reading Report on *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town* is due on October 26**.

November 2. Week 8. Gender and ethnic hierarchy among Chinese minorities.

Gladney, Dru C.

1994 "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53 (1): 92-123.

Schein, Louisa,

1997 "Gender and internal Orientalism in China.", in *Modern China,* 23 (1): 69-99.

November 9. Week 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 *Violence in China: essays in culture and counterculture*. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell, eds. Albany: State University of New York Press. Pp. 65-87.

Harrell, Stevan.

1990 "Introuduction" In *Violence in China: essays in culture and counterculture*. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell, eds. Albany: State University of New York Press. Pp. 1-20.

Ma, Jianxiong,

2012 "Salt and Revenue in the Frontier Formation: State Mobilized Ethnic Politics in Yunnan-Burma Borderland since the 1720s." In *Modern Asian Studies*.

November 16. Week 10. Southwestern minorities and their recent situations.

Harrell, Stevan,

1995 "The history of the history of the Yi", in Stevan Harrell (ed.), *Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press. Pp. 63-91.

Mueggler, Eric,

2002 "Dancing fools: Politics of culture and place in a 'traditional nationality Festival'." In *Modern China*. 28 (1): 3-38.

Ma, Jianxiong,

2016 "Ethnic Minority Groups in Southwest China (Chapter 3)" & "Ethnic Marginalization in China: the Case of the Lahu (Chapter 16)", in *Handbook on Minorities in China*, edited by Zang Xiaowei, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Pp20-36.

November 23. Week 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.), *Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers*. Pp. 3-36.

Ma, Rong,

2007 "A new perspective in guiding ethnic relations in the Twenty-first century: 'De-politicization' of ethnicity in China. " In *Asian Ethnicity*, 8 (3). Pp. 199-217.

Fenton, Steve,

2003 *Ethnicity*. Cambridge and Malden, Polity. Pp. 135-197.

***Reading Report on *A World without Jew* is due on November 23.**

November 30. Week 12. Student research paper project presentations.