

HUMA 5700 (Spring 2023)

## **Anthropological Studies of China**

**Instructor** : Siu-woo Cheung 張兆和  
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### **Class Meetings**

Time : Thur 15:00 –17:50  
Venue : Rm 5506, Lift 25-26

### **Course Description**

This course addresses the major paradigms in anthropological studies of China. It examines the relationship between anthropological studies and the politico-economic circumstances within and outside China under which the knowledge about Chinese culture and society was produced. We will give particular attention to four issues:

- (1) the relationship of anthropological practices to domestic political and economic concerns;
- (2) the interplay between anthropology and different forms of colonialism and imperialism; (3) the significance of class, gender and ethnicity in the production of anthropological understanding; and
- (4) the politics of fieldwork and ethnographic writing.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this course, students should be able to

1. Comprehend basic terms, concepts and theories in cultural anthropology about Chinese cultures and societies in ethnographic writings;
2. Write critical essays on the development of particular topics anthropological studies of Chinese societies.
3. Develop appreciation and respect of cultural diversity and understand the importance of cultural awareness for social interaction in contemporary daily

### **Seminar organization**

The course will be organized as a seminar and normally will involve a close reading of both major anthropological works and secondary texts that relate these works to the historical conditions under which they have emerged. Besides some introductory lectures on course topics, usually presented by the instructor a week before the topic to be addressed, the principal responsibility for running each class will fall upon those participants who have been assigned as chief discussants for individual reading materials. The assignment for each week--two participants being responsible

for one reading item according to the reading schedule, one for presentation and the other for guiding discussion--will be made one week before following the alphabetical order of the participants' names running in a cycle. Both of the presenter and the discussant are required to make a ppt file for the class that outlines the presentation or the questions and topics relating to the reading item to organize the discussion. The presenter should get to the main issues addressed and the arguments of the author(s), within his or her 15 minutes of presentation. The discussant should have not only "a firm grasp" on the subject but also a fully positioned stake in the direction of the discussion. The person will open the discussion with an extremely clear and concise 10 to 15 minutes presentation of issues and questions to be addressed. S/he is then responsible for eliciting and directing the discussion to make sure that important points get covered. Every student is required at all times to actively contribute to the discussion. Everyone should come every week, having read all of the required readings extremely carefully and creatively. Students failing to attend a particular class is required to write up a summary of all the reading materials for that class, and absence for more than 4 classes will lead to the F grade for the course.

### **Fieldtrip Requirement**

Students are required to attend **one fieldtrip out of 2 options** and work on the related worksheet (by partnership of two teammates).

#### **Fieldtrip option 1: Hungshing Festival in a Fishermen village**

Venue: Kaosai Island, Saikung

Date and Time: Mar 3 (Fri) evening (6:00pm – 12:00pm)

or Mar 4 (Sat) morning (8:30am --1:30pm)

- Fieldtrip worksheet submission due April 23 Saturday

#### **Fieldtrip Option 2: Heritage and community revitalization in Yimtintsai, Saikung**

Venue: Yimtintsai Island, Saikung

Date and Time: April 1 (Sat) 10:00-14:30

(Self-paid round-trip ferry ticket HK\$70)

- Fieldtrip worksheet submission due May 7 Saturday

### **Research Project Requirement**

2 students form a team (MA program) or work singlehandedly (MPhil/PhD program) to conduct an ethnographic research project independently. The student is required to submit a research proposal (fill in the form), to write 1 critical review essay (2,000-2,500 words) on some chosen research topics related to the course topics (based on required class readings and reference readings listed on the course website), and then work on one research paper (5000 words long for MA and 6,000 words long for MPhil, PhD) based on first-hand ethnographic data collected from a Chinese community about the chosen research topic and analysis built upon the critical review essay.

### **Important dates for research project schedule**

Research paper proposal due

25 March (Saturday), Week 7

Discussion meeting by appointment

Within Week 8 and 9

Critical review due

22 April (Saturday), Week 10

Research paper due  
13

13 May (Saturday), Week

### **Planned Assessment Tasks**

Grades will be based on the following components of the course work:

- Class reading presentation and discussion 15%
- Class participation 15%  
(1 mark per try)
- Fieldtrip and worksheet 10%
- Research project
- 1. proposal 10%
- 2. Critical review 15%
- 3. Research paper 35%

### **Tentative Course Outline and readings**

#### **Week 1: Course organization**

The Nature and Practices of Anthropology: An Introduction

#### **Required readings**

Garrick Bailey and James Peoples · "Chapter1 : The Study of Humanity," In Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, pp. 1-13. Belmont, CA: West/Wadsworth, 1999.

#### **Week 2: The Concept of Culture and Anthropology Research Method**

#### **Required readings**

Garrick Bailey and James Peoples. "Chapter 2: Culture," and "Chapter 3: Studying Culture: Approaches and Methods." In Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, pp. 14-68. Belmont, CA: West/Wadsworth, 1999.

Whyte, William Foote. "Learning to be a Participant Observer." In Participant Observer: An Autobiography, pp. 67-84. Ithaca: ILR Press, 1994.

#### **Week 3: Gender, Chinese Family and Marriage**

Chinese family organization; varieties of marriage; gender differences.

#### **Required readings**

Rubie S. Watson. 1986. "The Named and the Nameless: Gender and Person in Chinese Society." American Ethnologist, 13(4): 619-631.

Rubie S. Watson. 1991. "Wives, Concubines, and Maids: Servitude and Kinship in the Hong Kong Region, 1900-1940." In Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society, Rubie S. Watson and Patricia Buckley Ebrey, eds., pp. 231-255. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Margery Wolf. 1972. "Chapter 3: Uterine Families and the Women's Community." Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan, pp. 32-41. Stanford : Stanford University Press.

## **Week 4: The Lineage Model**

Frontier society and state-making: Lineages in southern China

### **Required readings**

James Watson. 1982. "Chinese Kinship Reconsidered: Anthropological Perspectives on Historical Research." China Quarterly, Dec 1982, no. 92, pp. 589-627.

David Faure. 1989. "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta." Modern China, 15(1): 4-36.

### **Fieldtrip option 1: Hungshing Festival in a Fishermen village**

Venue: Kaosai Island, Saikung

Date and Time: Mar 4 (Sat) evening (6:00pm – 12:00pm)

or Mar 5 (Sun) morning (8:30am --1:30pm)

## **Week 5: The Role of Rural Elites**

### **Required readings**

Vivienne Shue. 1988. "Chapter3: The Reach of the State: A Historical Comparative Approach to the 'Modernization' of Local Government in China," In The reach of the state : sketches of the Chinese body politic, pp. 74-121. Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press.

Helen F. Siu. 1989. "Victims and Agents" In Agents and Victims in South China: Accomplices in Rural Revolution, pp. 291-302. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Helen F. Siu. 1989. "Chapter 9: Complicity and Compliance." In Agents and Victims in South China: Accomplices in Rural Revolution, pp. 189-211. New Haven: Yale University Press.

## **Week 6 Marketing Hierarchy and Regional System** **Required readings**

William Skinner. 1964-65. "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China, Part I, Journal of Asian Studies, 24:3-43. (施堅雅著·史建云等譯1998[1964] "第一部分"。《中國農村的市場與社會結構》·頁5-67。北京：中國社會科學出版社。)

William Skinner. 1971. "Chinese Peasants and the Closed Community: An Open and Shut Case." Comparative Studies in Society and History 13(3): 270-281.

王銘銘 1997 "第四章：市場與社會結構理論批判"。《社會人類學與中國研究》· 112-148 頁。北京：三聯書店。

## **Week 7 Popular Religion and the Chinese State**

Research paper proposal due

25 Mar (Saturday)

### **Required readings**

James Watson. 1985. "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of Tien Hou ("Empress of Heaven") Along the South China Coast, 960-1960." In David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, pp. 292-324. Berkeley University of California Press.

Robert Weller. 1985. "Bandits, Beggars, and Ghosts: The Failure of State Control Over Religious Interpretation in Taiwan." American Ethnologist, 12:46-61.

Emily Martin. 1988. "Gender and Ideological Differences in Representations of Life and Death." In James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China, pp. 164-179. Berkeley: University of California Press.

## **Week 8** ***Guanxi* as Social Relations**

Worldview and social relations, local communities and *guanxi*, politics of *guanxi*.

Appointment meeting to discuss research proposal Within Week 8 and 9

### **Fieldtrip Option 2: Heritage and community revitalization in Yimtintsai, Saikung**

Venue: Yimtintsai Island, Saikung

Date and Time: April 1 (Sat) 10:00-14:30

### **Required readings**

Fei, Xiaotong. 1992. *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*. A translation of Fei Xiaotong's *Xiangtu Zhongguo* with an introduction and epilogue by Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 4 and Ch. 5. (Original work: 鄉土中國, 1947.)

Yan, Yunxiang. 1996. "The Culture of Guanxi in a North China Village." *The China Journal* 35: 1-25.

Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui. 1994. *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. Ch. 5: "The Political Economy of Gift Relations". Ch. 8: "Rhizomatic Networks and the Fabric of an Emerging Minjian in China."

## **Week 9** **Cities, Urbanization, and the Flowing Population**

Urbanization and modernization; cities and migrants; globalization and cities, sociocultural urbanization.

Appointment meeting to discuss research proposal Within Week 8 and 9

### **Required readings**

Zhang, Li. 2001. "Introduction" and "Conclusion", In *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population*, pp. 1-22, 202-212. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press.

Zhang, Li. 2001. "Chapter 1: The Floating Population as Subject", In *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population*, pp. 23-46. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press.

Pun Ngai. 2005. "Chapter 3: The Social Body, the Art of Discipline and Resistance". *In Made In China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*, pp. 77-108. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005.

## **Week 10                      Consumption and Economic Behavior**

Concepts of rationality and fate; capitalism and traditional economic culture; post-reform consumption and consumerism

Critical review due

22 April (Saturday), Week 10

### **Required readings**

Pun Ngai. 2003. "Subsumption or Consumption? The Phantom of Consumer Revolution in 'Globalizing' China." *Cultural Anthropology* 18 (4): 469-492.

Yan Yunxiang. 2000. "Of Hamburgers and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing." In Deborah S. Davis, ed. *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China* pp. 201-225.

Greenhalgh, S. (1994). De-Orientalizing the Chinese family firm. *American Ethnologist*, 21(4), 746-775.

## **Week 11                      Ethnic Diversity and the Chinese World**

### **Order**

From "barbarians" to "national minorities": Minority politics and the Miao case.

### **Required readings**

Stevan Harrell. 1995. "Introduction: Civilization Projects and the Reaction to Them." In Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, pp. 3-36. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

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

"Appropriating Otherness and the Contention of Miao Ethnic identity in Southwest China." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 2012, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 142-169.

## **Week 12    Chinese Cultural Identity and Nationalism**

What is Chinese? Chinese Cultural Identity

Folk models, imperial culturalism, and modern nationalism

### **Required readings**

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. (中譯本：華德英 1985[1965]"意識模型的類別：兼論華南漁民"。華德英著，馮承聰等編譯，《從人類學看香港社會--華德英教授論文集》，頁35-54。香港：大學出版印務公司。)

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.

Research paper due

13 May (Saturday), Week 13

**late submission will be subject to automatic mark reduction**