

HMMA 5006 (Spring 2025)
ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES OF CHINA

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Class Meetings

Time : Wed 18:00 –20:50
Venue : G001, CYT Bldg

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 (ILO)

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 particular topics in 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 life.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Class reading presentation and discussion	15%	Twice according to name order
Class participation	15%	Every class by accumulation
Fieldtrip attendance and Worksheet	10%	Fieldtrip (12 March Wednesday) Worksheet due 12 April Saturday
Research project a) proposal	10%	14 March (Friday), Week 6 Discussion meeting with instructor by appointment Within Week 7 and 8
Research project b) Critical review	10%	3 April (Thursday) Week 9
Research project c) research report	40%	15 May (Friday), Week 14

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Class reading presentation and discussion	ILO1, ILO3	Attending class is the basic condition for comprehending course contents, learning how to conduct fieldwork and ethnographic research, and develop appreciation and respect of cultural diversity and social awareness.
Class participation	ILO1, ILO3	Presentation on case studies of community issues is to assess students' understanding of course contents, their development of appreciation and respect of cultural diversity and social awareness.
Fieldtrip attendance and Worksheet	ILO1, ILO3	Participation in tutorial discussion on case studies of community issues is to assess students' understanding of course contents, their development of appreciation and respect of cultural diversity and social awareness.
Research project a) Research proposal b) Literature review c) Research report	ILO2, ILO3	Fieldtrip report is to assess students' understanding of how to how to conduct fieldwork and ethnographic research, and their development of appreciation and respect of cultural diversity and social awareness.

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** and work on the worksheet (by partnership of two teammates).

Hungshing Festival in a Fishermen village

Venue: Kaosai Island, Saikung

Date and Time: 12 Mar (Wed) 8:30am --2:30pm

- Fieldtrip worksheet submission **due 12 April (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 (related to research objective and questions 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	15 March (Saturday), Week 6
Discussion meeting by appointment	Within Week 7 and 8
Critical review due	5 April (Saturday) Week 9
Research paper due	15 May (Friday), Week 14

Research Project Assessment

(1) Research project	
a) proposal	10%
b) Critical review	10%
c) Research paper	40%

Rubric for Grading Research Project

Assessment Items	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Needs work	Score (250)
Abstract	8-10 Succinct statements of clear objective, key research question and concise argument, clear academic significance	4-7 Lack of concise argument, and clear academic significance	1-3 Lack of clear objective, key research question, concise argument, and clear academic significance	
Research topic, phenomena and objective	8-10 Clear Phenomena and research objective in good relation to the course topics	4-7 Clear Phenomena but research objective unclear	1-3 Unclear Phenomena and unclear research objective	
Research questions	8-10 Key research questions with good correspondence with empirical research questions	4-7 Clear key research questions but unclear empirical research questions	1-3 Unclear key research questions and unclear empirical research questions	
Community engagement arrangement	8-10 Good community engagement and sufficient reflection	4-7 Good community engagement but insufficient reflection	1-3 Lack of community engagement and insufficient reflection	
Data sources and data collecting methods	8-10 Clear data sources and clear data collecting methods	4-7 Clear data sources but unclear data collecting methods	1-3 Unclear data sources and data collecting methods	
Literature review	21-30 Literature review with good correspondence with research questions	11-20 Literature review with insufficient correspondence with research questions	1-10 Lack of or insufficient literature review	

Community engagement arrangement	8-10 Good community engagement and sufficient reflection	4-7 Good community engagement but insufficient reflection	1-3 Lack of community engagement and Insufficient reflection	
Data	51-60 Good presentation of useful field data and other data sources	26-50 Weak in field data while relying on other data sources, unclear presentation	1-25 Lack of field data and other data sources	
Analysis	41-50 Thorough and logical analysis	21-40 Logical but shallow analysis	1-20 Insufficient analysis	
Application of course materials	21-30 Sufficient applications with proper mentioning of sources	11--20 Sufficient applications but lack of mentioning about the sources	1-10 Lack of application of course materials	
Cited References	8-10 Thorough and significant references	4-7 Sufficient references	1-3 Insufficient references	
Citation and cited references format	16-20 Sufficient citations with correct format	11-15 Sufficient citations but incorrect format	1-10 Insufficient citations	

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.

Week 5: The Role of Rural Elites

Required readings

Vivienne Shue. 1988. "Chapter 3: 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 Fieldtrip: Hungshing Festival in a Fishermen village on Kausai Island, Saikung

Research paper proposal due 15 Fri (Saturday)

Appointment meeting to discuss research proposal Within Week 7 and 8

Week 7 Marketing Hierarchy and Regional System

Required readings

G. 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。)

G. 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 8 Popular Religion and the Chinese State

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 9 *Guanxi* as Social Relations

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

Critical review due 5 April (Saturday) Week 9

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 10 Cities, Urbanization, and the Flowing Population

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

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 11 Consumption and Economic Behavior

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

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 12 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 13 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

15 May (Friday), Week 14

late submission will be subject to automatic mark reduction