Anthropological Studies of China

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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 May (Saturday), Week 13

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


Week 2: The Concept of Culture and Anthropology Research Method

Required readings


Week 3: Gender, Chinese Family and Marriage

Chinese family organization; varieties of marriage; gender differences.

Required readings


Week 4: The Lineage Model

Frontier society and state-making: Lineages in southern China

Required readings


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


Week 6 Marketing Hierarchy and Regional System

Required readings


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


**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

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**


**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**


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


Week 11

Ethnic Diversity and the Chinese World Order

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

Required readings


Week 12

Chinese Cultural Identity and Nationalism

What is Chinese? Chinese Cultural Identity

Folk models, imperial culturalism, and modern nationalism

Required readings


Research paper due 13 May (Saturday), Week 13

late submission will be subject to automatic mark reduction