

Spring 2023

HUMA1639/CORE 1554 Marriage, Family and Kinship in Cross-cultural Perspectives

Course Instructor: MA Jianxiong

E-mail: hmjxm@ust.hk

Time & Venue: Room 4621

Tutorial: Room 4621 (Lift 31-32), Friday, 17:00-17:50

Office hours: Thursday, 15:00-18:00;

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Friday, 15:00-16:50

Office: Room 3342

Course description:

This course examines the diverse cultural meaning and structure of kinship relations and organizations. Different anthropological approaches in analyzing kinship structures and practices will be examined. In human societies, marriage, family and kinship are the most common and fundamental cultural practices, although there are diversities. This course equips students with the basic knowledge to understand human culture and society, and stimulates their interest in their own families and kinship organizations.

Learning outcomes:

The students will be able to (1) identify the diverse cultural meaning and structure of kinship relations and organizations, (2) better understand one's own culture and society as well as other cultural practices in the world, (3) identify the technique of studying family and kin relations, and (4) have opportunity to improve presentation skills.

Course content and teaching components:

There will be both lectures and tutorials. The lectures are designed to introduce specific topics in understanding marriage, family, and kinship. In each tutorial, we will be discussing various movies and documentaries as well as readings relating them to students' own experiences. Students are able to participate in discussions and presentations in tutorials, from which they will have opportunity to organize and integrate presentation materials, and give oral presentations. Fieldtrips will also be introduced in the course allowing students a first-hand understanding of kinship in its social and cultural context. Students are required to hand in two assignments (about 5 pages in length respectively), which could focus on the course fieldtrips and their own family.

Assessment scheme:

Two assignments (one field trip report: 15%; one essay on "My Family": 15%)

Class participation and text book presentation: 20%

Final exam: 50%

Course text:

Wolf, Margery

1972 *Women and the family in rural Taiwan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Course schedule:

Weeks 1-3. The invention of family and kinship.

February 3 & February 10. Introduction and basic concepts.

February 17. Family as a basic social institution.

Reading:

Goodenough, Ward H.

2006. "Introduction". In *Description and Comparison in Cultural Anthropology*.

New Brunswick and London, Aldine Transaction, pp. 1-38.

No tutorial on February 3 & 10 during the Add & Drop period.

Tutorial: February 17. Documentary: Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard. GN20 S773 1990 V6.

Weeks 4-5. Marriage, family kinship and descent groups.

February 24. Kinship systems.

March 3. Descent groups: patrilineal and matrilineal descents.

Tutorial: February 24. Documentary: *Mia and Alexandra Twins*. 2013.

Weeks 6-7. Romantic love.

March 10. Romantic love under different cultural context.

March 17. Romantic love in socialist China.

Tutorial: March 10 & 17. *Five golden flowers (1959)*. PN2874 X56 1999.

Reading:

Macfarlane, A.

1995. "Individualism and the ideology of romantic love", in *Rethinking the subject: An anthology of contemporary European social thought*. James D. Faubion Ed.,

Oxford, Westview Press, pp. 125-137.

Weeks 8-9. Chinese lineage.

March 24 & March 31. Chinese lineage system.

Field Trips: *The Ping Shan cases (to be announced)*.

March 24 – April 7. A fieldtrip to study lineages in Pearl River Delta.

Readings:

Potter, Jack M.

1970 "Land and lineage in traditional China", in *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society*, M. Freedman, ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970, pp. 121-138.

Assignment 1: Field trip report due on March 31.

Weeks 11-12. Diverse kinship and marriage ties in Southwest China.

April 14. Marriage ties and kinship.

April 21. Marriage ties and matrilineal societies: the Lahu and the Moso.

Tutorial: April 14. Documentary: 1) *Ladies of the Lake* (20 min.) DS731. N39 L33 1998.

April 21. Documentary: 2) *The women's kingdom* (22 min.) DS793.Y8 W66 2006.

Readings:

Shanshan Du,

2003 "*Chopsticks only work in pairs*": *gender unity and gender equality among the Lahu of Southwest China*, New York, Columbia University Press, pp.52-76.

Weeks 13. Gender and family.

April 28. Gender issues in different cultures & Gender and social change.

Assignment 2: *My family: on anthropological perspective*. Due on April 28.

Readings:

Watson, R.S.

1986. "The named and the nameless: gender and person in Chinese society", *American Ethnologist*, 13, 4, 1986, pp. 619-631.

Week 14. Conclusion. May 5. Kin ties as social and cultural capital.

Tutorial: May 5.

Final exam: Close book examination according to university schedule.