ANTH 2410B/UGEA 2180B
Chinese Culture and Society
Fall 2019

Lecture: Tuesday 15:30 – 17:15 NAH 115
Tutorial: Tuesday 17:30 – 18:15 NAH 115
   Monday 14:30-15:15 NAH 401
   Monday 15:30-16:15 NAH 401 & TBC
Instructor: Dr. Tung-Yi Kho, tungyikho@cuhk.edu.hk
TA: Wang Chunchun, wangchunchun@link.cuhk.edu.hk
Office (NAH 411) hours: Monday 16:00-18:00hrs, or by appointment

Course Description
What does it mean to be Chinese? What role does culture play in being Chinese? And what constitutes Chinese society? When Chinese populations elsewhere (e.g. overseas Chinese) lay claim to being Chinese, what are they invoking? On the other hand, when ethnic Chinese Hong Kongers claim that they are not Chinese, for instance, what are they implying? Is being Chinese primarily given by ethnicity, nationality, cultural/civilizational practices, some combination of the above, or all of them?

This line of questioning would suggest that when we invoke “Chinese culture and society”, we refer not only to culture and society in China but also beyond, to Chinese societies elsewhere that have emerged as a result of the Chinese diaspora. Yet at the heart of this discussion still lies the question with which we first began: what does it mean to be Chinese? And what binds mainland Chinese societies with those overseas?

Because the shared identity of being Chinese has here been shown to transcend geographical and national boundaries, I would propose that being Chinese pertains more to the evolving practices of culture than it does the more limiting constraints of ethnicity, geography, or nationality. This class therefore examines the constituents of being Chinese, with the emphasis placed on culture as its animating force.

Indeed, it is because culture is a cumulative and evolving social phenomenon – a process - that accounts for the diversity of Chinese societies around the world: there is something identifiably Chinese in each of them, yet something else that differentiates them. A pluralist cultural view of “Chinese” - a civilizational view (?) - will thus be taken as we tease out the similarities and differences existing across these societies.

There should be lots to discover and discuss, not just about China, the Chinese and Chineseeness, but also about ourselves regardless of how we choose to identify. Highlighted here, also, will be the significance of culture, en generale, in making us human. And we seem
ideally situated in place and time – as events continue to unfold here in H.K. – to be having such a discussion. With a significant proportion of the Hong Kong S.A.R. population expressing concern about China’s political governance, H.K. appears to be a fitting site to be examining the complexities surrounding issues of Chineseness.

**Required Text**


**Language of instruction: English**

**Topics**

[Classical/traditional] Chinese religion and thought

Cultures and societies of the Chinese: overseas and on the mainland

Modern China/PRC:

  (i) post-1949, Maoist phase

  (ii) post-Mao China

**Evaluation**

*Tutorial participation* involving *class presentation*: 25% (with up to 5% additional extra-credit points).

Tutorial attendance is an expectation; evaluation is based on class presentation though there are up to 5% extra-credit points awarded for consistently thoughtful engagement in class and tutorials.

1500 word *review paper* of any particular week’s topics: 35%

There are **two submission dates** for your review paper **depending on the topics you choose** to review. Reviews of topics covered from *Weeks 2-6* of the course are due **15 October**; reviews of topics covered from *Weeks 7-13* of the course are due **26 November**.

Take-home final *exam*: 40%

Exam will consist of short-answer questions as well as a short essay-type questions related to materials covered in lectures and tutorials. Dates of the exam will be determined later in the course.

**Learning outcomes:**

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- explain why claims about being Chinese and Chineseness can be such a source of contention

- explain why there are similarities as well as differences across different Chinese societies

- historically as well as anthropologically account for the place of contemporary China within the world-system
- critically discuss the major social institutions in Maoist and post-Mao China.

**Grade Descriptors**

Grades will be issued as follows for the assessment of this course:

A: Exceptional performance demonstrated on all learning outcomes

A-: Very good performance demonstrated on almost all learning outcomes

B: Competence demonstrated on all learning outcomes. This includes good performances in some areas which offset weaker performances in others.

C: Satisfactory performance demonstrated on most learning outcomes.

D: Barely satisfactory performance demonstrated on majority of learning outcomes.

F: Unsatisfactory performance on most learning outcomes, or failure to meet assessment requirements.

**Assessment policies:**

Late submission: will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. Hence, an A will become an A-.

Academic honesty: you are required to cite properly (guidelines: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc)

Also, students are required to upload every piece of work to VeriGuide for plagiarism check and then sign their receipts sent by the system and submit with their assignments.

VeriGuide: https://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/about.jsp

**Course Outline**

**Week 1 (September 3): INTRODUCTION**

What to expect from the course, assessment requirements etc.

Topics: knowledge and reality, social knowledge, anthropological knowledge, our personal life-worlds and the world-system.

Rudimentary concepts, anthropological and otherwise: culture, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, ethnography, neo-liberal globalization.

**Week 2 (September 10): CULTURE AND HUMANITY**

Required:


**Week 3 (September 17): WHAT IS ‘CHINESE’ ABOUT CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY?**


Recommended:

Week 4 (September 24): OTHER CHINESE CULTURES AND SOCIETIES, I

Required:


Recommended:


Week 5 (October 1):
PUBLIC HOLIDAY. NO CLASS!

Week 6 (October 8): OTHER CHINESE CULTURES AND SOCIETIES, II

Required:

Introduction (pp. 1-13); pp. 75-77 and Chapter 4 (pp. 77-103): “Hong Kong Betwixt and Between: The Liminality of Culture Before the End of History”

Week 7 (October 15): SITUATING THE PRC IN A HISTORICAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

Required:

Recommended:

*N.B. Reviews of Week 2-6 topics course due today, October 15.*

Week 8 (October 22): VIGNETTES OF MAOIST-SOCIALIST CHINA

Required:


Recommended:
[Peasant Revolution]

[Life and Work in Urban Socialist Spaces]

[Gender]

Week 9 (October 29): THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF POST-REFORM CHINA

Required:


Week 10 (November 5): Making Global Chinese Modernity, Part I: Class-making and Consumption

Required:
Recommended:


Week 11 (November 12): Making Global Chinese Modernity, II: Rural-Urban Migration, Urbanization and Urban Aspirations

Required:


Recommended:


Week 12 (November 19): Making Global Chinese Modernity, III: Subjectivity in Post-Mao China

Required:


Recommended:


**Week 13 (November 26): Environmental and Ecological Challenges**

**Required:**


**N.B.**

i. **Reviews of Week 7-13 topics due today, October 26.**

ii. **Take-home exam questions will be uploaded onto Blackboard today. Due date for submission: 10 December.**

**Week 14 (December 3, make-up class): Religion, Everyday, and the Good Life**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**Exam responses due on December 10!**