ANTH 2420/UGEA2332
Culture and Modernity in China
Autumn 2020
(Provisional outline)

Instructor: Andrew KIPNIS
Class meeting: Wednesday 12:30-2:15, TBA.
Tutorial: Wednesday 2:30-3:15, TBA.
Instructor Office Hours: Thursday 4:00-5:00 and by appointment
Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description: The remarkable economic emergence of China and Asia more broadly has transformed many impoverished and largely agricultural societies into the most dynamic region of the contemporary world. China’s burgeoning middle classes, rapid urbanisation, time-space compression and the shift from command economies to de-regulated markets have had profound effects on people’s everyday lives and the diverse cultural practices. This course offers an introduction into anthropological approaches to the study of culture, modernity and globalisation in China and Asia more broadly. Relevant themes that have attracted anthropological interest include changing traditions and popular culture, adaptive custom and cosmopolitanism, migration and citizenship, identity politics and social movements as well as the distinctive and emergent forms of governance.

Drawing on a rich corpus of social theory and ethnographic research from anthropologists past and present, the course will provide students with conceptual and analytical tools to appreciate adaptive cultural practices in comparative terms, to review and appreciate the key anthropological debates and influential works in the study of modernity, and to introduce students to ethnographic approaches for researching and writing on modernity.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate understanding of theories and debates around the concepts of modernity and culture, as they relate to China.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts in anthropology and its central research method - ethnography.
3. Critically utilize Chinese case studies and relevant source material when arguing analytical points.
4. Understand the relationships between processes of modernization, cultural change and cultural reproduction in China.

Language of Instruction: English.
Assessment:

1. Tutorial participation/forum posts: 25%: Attendance and active participation in tutorial meetings. Posting questions and comments on readings for tutorial on blackboard. You should post twice a week for at least 8 weeks and the deadline for each week is Wednesday morning before class at 9am.

*Forum posts:* For eight weeks of your choice, you will need to submit two forum posts on assigned readings (these should be either responses to your classmates’ comments or your own post if you would like to discuss something different). Your posts do not have to be long—they could be as brief as two-three sentences, but they must meet the following criteria:

- be pertinent to the main arguments of the readings (demonstrate that you have read the texts)
- be meaningful and original (demonstrate that you have thought about the texts)
- be polite and respectful

The posts should be posted to the forum “Discussion Forum” on Blackboard.

2. Take-home midterm exam: 35%: Exam questions covering the lectures and readings for the first six weeks will passed out after the lecture on October 14. Students will be required to answer 4 questions in approximately 1600 words. Exams responses are to be double-spaced, in 12-point font and submitted via the plagiarism detection engine VERIGUIDE and use any coherent academic style for citations. Hard copies are to be turned in to the department office. The due date is Friday October 23 at 12 noon.

3. Final exam: 40%: Exam questions covering the lectures and readings for the last six weeks will passed out on the last day of class, December 2. Students will be required to answer 5 questions in approximately 2000 words. Exams responses are to be double-spaced, in 12-point font and submitted via the plagiarism detection engine VERIGUIDE and use any coherent academic style for citations. Hard copies are to be turned in to the department office. The due date is Monday December 14 at 12 noon.

Course Schedule:

**Week One:** 09 September Introduction
- Course Introduction
- Definitions of Modernity

**Week Two:** 16 September, Modernity

Read: Kipnis, Andrew B. 2016 From Village to City, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-25,

watch the short you tube video “What is modernity”
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGgqmInww1k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGgqmInww1k)

- Ideas about Modernity, continued.
- Postmodernity, alternative modernity, etc.
**Week Three: 23 September, Concept of Culture**

Read the following three short newspaper articles/blog posts

https://www.sharingculture.info/my-culture.html
https://www.counseling.org/news/aca-blogs/aca-member-blogs/aca-member-blogs/2011/02/28/i’m-white-i-don’t-have-a-culture-

- Debates about Culture
- Criticisms of the Concept of Culture

**Week Four: 30 September, Urbanization and City Planning**


- Introduction to Zouping
- Planning and Process of Urbanization

**Week Five: 7 October, Industrialization**


- Industrialization in Zouping
- Work Unit Culture

**Week Six: 14 October, Technology, Time-Space Compression, MIDTERM HANDED OUT**

Read: Wang, Xinyuan. 2016 Social Media in Industrial China, UCL Press, pp. 57-96. Pages 97-127 are also recommended. The entire book may be downloaded for free.

- Technology and Time Space Compression
- Midterm handed out at the end of class. **DUE** Friday October 23 at 12 noon.
Week Seven: 21 October, Modernity and Education

There is no reading this week. No attendance will be taken in tutorial. I will use tutorial to answer any last-minute questions about the midterm.

- Education in Zouping
- Education and Modernity
- Education and Culture

Week Eight: 28 October, Modernity and Familial Change


- Kinship and Family Structure
- Chinese Policy and Demographic Change in Zouping

Week Nine: 4 November, Globalization and Change


- Globalization and Worlding
- Disparate Actors in Global Projects

Week Ten: 11 November, Development and Its Failures


- Watch Film: Peasant Family Happiness (possible)
- Development and Anti-Development
- Tourism, Tradition and Modernity

Week Eleven: 18 November, Religion and Modernization

Read: Kipnis, Andrew B. 2021. The Funeral of Mr. Wang, Chapter One.

- Religion and Modernity
- Religious Modernity in China
- Contemporary Funerals

**Week Twelve: 25 November, Youth and Modernity**


- Youth and Modernity
- Youth in Zouping
- Youth and Factory Work in China

**Week Thirteen: 2 December, Stranger Society and the Internet**


- Strangers and Urbanization
- Strangers and Ghosts
- Strangers and the Internet
- Hand out Final Exam

**FINAL EXAM DUE**  Monday December 14 at 12 noon

**GRADE DESCRIPTORS:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-range</td>
<td>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive</td>
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argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>C-range</strong></td>
<td>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses. 2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made.</td>
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<td><strong>D-range</strong></td>
<td>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. 2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</td>
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<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. 2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</td>
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