

JIAXI HOU

Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies

The University of Tokyo, Japan

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EDUCATION

PhD

In Graduate School of
Interdisciplinary
Information Studies
The University of Tokyo
2017-Present

[Thesis Title] *Reassembling Class in Digital China: Inequality, Technology, and Agency from Below*

Will inequality be reduced when the poor are also granted the access to the internet? This project answers this question by ethnographically exploring the everyday experiences of marginality and precarity among the disadvantaged populations in China today. It illustrates the on-going intertwinement of online and offline inequality and reflects on the mutually constitutive relationship between digital technologies and class-based neoliberal subjectivities.

M.A.S

In Graduate School of
Interdisciplinary
Information Studies
The University of Tokyo
2015-2017

[Thesis Title] *Chinese Participatory Culture on a Danmaku Website: Technology, Content, and Interactivity*

Focusing on Bilibili, the largest video sharing website with *danmaku* functions in China at that time, this thesis examines the profound interconnection between platform affordances, subcultural memes, and the playful resistance among Chinese youths.

B.A.

In School of
Journalism and
Communication
Tsinghua University
2009-2013

Main courses include Communication Theory, New Media Studies, Documentary Producing, World History of Journalism and Communication, Statistics and Quantitative Research Method.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

The 18th Chinese Internet
Research Conference
2021 June

Best Student Paper Award

As the first author, my co-authored paper *Disciplining the Underclass Users on Kuaishou: From Vulgar Hanmai Rap Videos to Live Streaming with "Positive Energy"* won the Best Student Paper Award.

Japanese Ministry of
Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology &
The University of Tokyo
2017-2020

Integrated Human Science Scholarship for Cultural Diversity (¥2,400,000 JPY per year)

The scholarship aims at encouraging junior researchers to contribute towards the building of a multicultural society with an interdisciplinary perspective. I was selected for my proposed project

about the usages of digital technologies among Chinese socio-economically disadvantaged population.

Graduate School of
Interdisciplinary
Information Studies,
The University of Tokyo
2018 March

Excellent Master's Thesis Award

My thesis *Chinese Participatory Culture on a Danmaku Website: Technology, Content, and Interactivity* won the Excellent Master's Thesis Award.

Japanese Ministry of
Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology &
The University of Tokyo
2015-2017

Integrated Human Science Scholarship for Cultural Diversity (¥1,800,000 JPY per year)

The scholarship aims at encouraging junior researchers to contribute towards the building of a multicultural society with an interdisciplinary perspective. I was selected for my proposed project about the platform-based subcultural memes and playful resistance among Chinese youths.

Tencent
2014 January

Best Documentary of the Year (¥50,000 CNY)

As one of the two co-directors, my work *2306* concentrated on the slum-like living conditions of the educated migrant workers in Beijing. It won Tencent's best documentary award of 2014.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

Hou, J. (2023). Making ends meet by mining on blockchain: Subalternity, materiality, and yearnings of Chinese amateur crypto miners. *Journal of Digital Social Research*, 5(2), 80-117.
<https://doi.org/10.33621/jdsr.v5i2.133>

Yu, Z., **Hou, J.**, & Zhou, T. (2023). Short video activism with and on Douyin: An innovative repertoire of contention for Chinese consumers. *Social Media + Society*, 9(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231157603>

Hou, J. (2022). To exaggerate data at all costs: Data-driven fan culture, platforms, and the remaking of the new poor in China. *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, 9(3), 273-301.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-bja10035>

Hou, J., & Zhang, Y. (2022). "Selling poverty" on Kuaishou: How entrepreneurialism disciplines Chinese underclass online participation. *Global Media and China*, 7(3), 263-282.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/20594364221095895>

Hou, J. (2021). A platform for underclass youth: *Hanmai* rap videos, social class, and surveillance on Chinese social media. *First Monday*, 26(9).
<https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v26i9.10587>

Hou, J. (under review). Playing to earn: An overview of Chinese informal gamer-workers. *Global Media and China*.

Book Chapters Hou, J. (2020). Contesting the vulgar *banmai* performance from Kuaishou: Online vigilantism toward Chinese underclass youths on social media platforms. In D. Trottier, R. Gabdulhakov, and Q. Huang (Eds.), *Introducing vigilant audiences* (pp. 49-75). Cambridge: Open Book Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0200.03>

Hou, J. (forthcoming). Vulgarizing a subaltern taste on Chinese social media: The rise and fall of *banmai* rap and social shake dance. In J. Xu and G. Zhang (Eds.), *Vulgar internet cultures and its governance in China*. Amsterdam University Press.

Book Reviews Hou, J., & Hillenbrand, M. (forthcoming). A conversation about *On the Edge: Feeling Precarious in China*. *Asiascape: Digital Asia*.

Hou, J. (2023). Larisa Kingston Mann, *Rude citizenship: Jamaican popular music, copyright, and the reverberations of colonial power*. *International Journal of Communication*.

Hou, J. (2021). Jeremy W. Morris and Sarah Murray (Eds.), *Appified: Culture in the age of apps*. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20501579211024893b>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS:

Main Conference Presentations Yue, L. & Hou, J. (2024, June 30-July 4). Provincialized Affordance between Two ‘Sister Apps’ Taobao and AliExpress: An Alternative Globalization Strategy in Digital Platform Economy. *LAMCR*. Christchurch.

Hou, J. (2024, June 17-18). Algorithm-based Hidden Transcripts: The Micropolitics of Chinese Rural Mothers on Kuaishou. *The 21st Chinese Internet Research Conference*. Brisbane and online.

Hou, J. (2024, May 31-June 1). Run to earn and stake to lose: A convoluted embrace of gamified fintech among Chinese disadvantaged individuals. *Symposium on the Convergence of Gamification and Financialisation*. Dundee and online.

Hou, J. (2023, November 8-11). Assembling a lumpen internet in digital China: Agency from below, platforms, and the state. *45*. Honolulu and online.

Hou, J. (2023, July 9-13). “Moving bricks” in digital gaming: The digital housewifeness of Chinese gamer-workers. *LAMCR*.

Paris and online.

Hou, J. (2023, March 16-19). From vulgar *hanmai* to poverty selling: The changing online subculture of the Chinese underclass. *AAS*. Boston and online.

Hou, J. (2022, November 2-5). Can the subaltern benefit from blockchain? The Chinese amateur crypto-miners' yearnings and frustrations. *AoIR*. Dublin.

Hou, J. (2022, November 2-5). To generate data at all costs for traffic celebrities: The remaking of Chinese new poor through data-driven fan culture. *AoIR*. Dublin.

Hou, J. (2022, May 20-21). *Hanmai*: An alternative rap from the Chinese lumpen internet. *Internet Musicking Conference*. Online.

Han, X. & **Hou, J.** (2021, October 13-16). Fake popularity for real money: Commercial astroturfing and data bubble on Chinese digital platform. *AoIR*. Online.

Hou, J. (2021, October 6-9). The function of a failed platform: PandaTV in Chinese live-streaming ecosystem. *4S*. Online.

Hou, J. & Zhang, Y. (2021, June 25-27). Disciplining the underclass users on Kuaishou: *Hanmai* rap videos and social class. *The 18th Chinese Internet Research Conference*. Online.

Hou, J. & Zhang, Y. (2020, July 12-15). Love the state as an idol: The perplexity of nationalism and fandom culture on Chinese social media platform. *LAMCR*. Online.

Hou, J. (2019, May 24-28). The authenticity and vulgarity in the visual representations of Chinese underclass: In the platformizing context. *ICA*. Washington D.C.

Hou, J. (2018, August 29-31). Refined algorithm vs. vulgar image: Disassemble the representations of Chinese working-class youths through online platform. *4S*. Sydney.

Hou, J. (2018, May 22-23). The active audience and susceptible user: How online participatory culture is organized on a Chinese *danmu* Website. *The 16th Chinese Internet Research Conference*. Leiden.

Invited Talk **Hou, J.** (2022, June 30). Doing digital ethnography on China-based mobile apps. *Researching Mobile Apps in China: Technicity*,

Culture and the Everyday Workshop. Sheffield and online.

TEACHINGS

Instructor I taught two courses, *Introduction to Media Studies* and *Introduction to Sociology*, to socio-economically underprivileged college students who aim to enter graduate programs of elite universities. I also provided mentorship and research tutorials.

TC Education Group
Tokyo
2019-2022

Teaching Assistant I took on multiple responsibilities from grading assignments, holding office hours and preparing course materials to leading seminar discussions and delivering specific portions of the lectures in four courses, including *Academic English Writing* (BA/BS); *Introduction to Media and Communication* (MA); *Gender and Media Theory* (MA); and *Computer-Mediated Communication, Social Media, and Mediated Publicness* (MA).

Graduate School of
Interdisciplinary
Information Studies &
College of Arts and Science
The University of Tokyo
2019-2021

Guest Lecturer I was invited to give a lecture on *Digital Ethnography* in Visual Anthropology class (MA), hosted in School of Journalism and Communication. It introduced the methodology, toolkit, and ethics of digital ethnography.

Tsinghua University
2022 June

Guest Lecturer I was invited to give a lecture on *Platforms and Underclass Users in East Asia* in Internet and Platforms in Global Contexts class (BA), hosted in the program of Global and International Studies. It introduced the similarities and differences of internet users with humble backgrounds across East Asian societies.

Carleton University
2022 March

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Participant New Media and Social Justice Summer School (2020 August). Fudan University, China.

Participant Digital Media Research Summer School (2019 February). Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

ACADEMIC SERVICES

Panel Co-organizer **Chinese Digital Media Culture in the Era of Automated-Decision Making**

Together with Jian Xu, we organized this panel at *the 21st Chinese Internet Research Conference* (Brisbane and online).

Panel Co-organizer **When Matrix of Oppression Meets Platform-based Economies: The (In)formalization of Underclasses in China**

Together with Xiaofei Han, we organized this panel at *Global Perspectives on Platforms, Labor & Social Reproduction Conference* (Amsterdam and online).

Panel Co-organizer **Provincializing Platform Economies: The (Re)making of Power Dynamics and Social Order in China**

Together with Lianrui Jia and Xiaofei Han, we organized this panel at *the 19th Chinese Internet Research Conference* (Hong Kong and online).

Seminar Coordinator **Media, Gender, and Sexuality Group**

2019-2022

I facilitated communication between graduate students of our department and scholars in Japan's Kanto area. I also organized topical discussions, book reading activities, and public lectures on a monthly basis.

Peer Review for Journals *Information, Communication, and Society; Continuum; Chinese Journal of Communication; Global Media and China; Social Media + Society, The China Journal, Journal of Digital Social Research.*

Coordinator

Global Office

The University of Tokyo

2018 September

I took on multiple responsibilities in the university's diversity and inclusion campaign including organizing orientation lectures and on-site fieldtrips for international students and facilitating group discussions between international and local students.

OUTREACH

Media Presence **Writer**

How China's Underclass Creators Act Poor to Get Rich. *Sixth Tone: Fresh Voices from Today's China.*

<https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1013441>

Discussant

People on TikTok Are Paying Elderly Women to Sit in Stagnant Mud for Hours and Cry. *Rest of World: Reporting Global Tech Stories.*

<https://restofworld.org/2023/indonesia-government-ban-tiktok-mud-bath/>

Discussant

China's Blue-collar Workers Find jobs over Livestream. *Rest of World: Reporting Global Tech Stories.*

<https://restofworld.org/2022/china-jobs-on-livestreams/>

Discussant

When the Invisible Social Classes Become Visible on Digital Platforms. *Time Travel Institution Podcast* (in Chinese).

Industrial Experience **UX Analyst** (2017) in Media and Entertainment Business Department, Sumitomo Corporation, Tokyo.

News Editor (2013-2014) in SOHU.com, Beijing.