# YSS3268 ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHINA Semester II, AY 2020-21

Note: Classes end 10 minutes prior to the timetabled end time.

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Hours: Tue/Fri 3-4:30pm
Please book at howlett1.youcanbook.me.

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The rise of China is creating unprecedented global challenges and opportunities. This course helps students achieve a nuanced cultural understanding of this potential superpower by critically examining the concepts of "China" and "Chineseness" from an anthropological perspective. Topics include ethnic relations, imperialism, and the civilized-barbarian distinction; gender, patriarchy, and the family; popular religion, popular culture, and rebellion; bureaucracy, corruption, and social connections (*guanxi*); and overseas Chinese and the Chinese diasporas. In addition to reading classic and contemporary works of China anthropology, students will watch some highly selected films and documentaries on China.

The only required prerequisite is Modern Social Thought. No knowledge of the Chinese language is required.

# **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course aims to provide you with an overview of the China anthropology subfield. By the end of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Critically assess the concepts of "China" and "Chineseness" from an anthropological perspective.
- Clearly and persuasively articulate culturally nuanced arguments about the anthropology of China.
- Apply social theory to ethnographic evidence; use that evidence to make theoretical arguments.
- Integrate your cultural insights about China into your daily lives as citizens of a rapidly globalizing world.

# REQUIRED TEXTS AND READING LOAD

For this course, we will mostly be reading full-length ethnographies, that is, books by anthropologists of China. We will be moving through about one book per week, but I will work with students to **keep the reading load manageable** either by assigning selected chapters or by divvying up the reading load appropriately (i.e., different groups read different chapters). Most of the ethnographies are recent, published in the last 10 years. These ethnographies are selected because they are both highly readable and because they represent the state-of-art of the field.

You are encouraged to purchase the required texts. But all required texts will either be on reserve or available as e-books through the library.

# Required texts:

- Chu, Julie Y. 2010. Cosmologies of Credit: Transnational Mobility and the Politics of Destination in China. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0822348061
- Engebretsen, Elisabeth L. 2015. Queer Women in Urban China. Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Fong, Vanessa L. 2011. Paradise Redefined: Transnational Chinese Students and the Quest for Flexible Citizenship in the Developed World. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Friedman, Sara L. 2015. Exceptional States: Chinese Immigrants and Taiwanese Sovereignty. University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520286238
- Kipnis, Andrew B. 2016. From Village to City: Social Transformation in a Chinese County Seat. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Mueggler, Erik. 2001. *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520226319
- Santos, Gonçalo D., and Stevan Harrell, eds. 2017. Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1999. Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0822322696
- Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui. 2020. Re-Enchanting Modernity: Ritual Economy and Society in Wenzhou, China. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

### **COURSE FORMAT**

The course format encourages participation, with students initiating and leading discussions. The workload is designed to be manageable so that we can focus on reading and discussing the texts. For most assignments, you determine your own deadlines, which is intended to help you with planning your workload. You will have four kinds of required assignments:

- Discussion Questions (DQs) 10 per semester.
- Class Discussion Questions (CDQs) 2 per semester.
- Critical Book Precis (that is, book summaries) 2 per semester.
- Transnational Migration Ethnographic Interview Project 1 per semester.

All assignments will be posted publically in discussions on Canvas so that you can read and engage with your classmates' work.

Discussion Questions (10 submissions per semester)

Over the course of the academic term, you will be required to submit class Discussion Questions (DQs) a total of 10 times to Canvas. That means that you need to submit DQs about every other meeting of our class. As long as you make your ten required DQ submissions, the precise schedule according to which you complete them is up to you. You should submit your DQs by midnight of the day before seminar. This will give everyone a chance to read and reflect on your DQs before we meet. You need not and should not submit DQs for sessions for which you are preparing CDQs (see below).

Your DQs can take many forms. For example, you may want to raise a point that you did not understand or that you wish to clarify; alternatively, you may wish to push our discussion further by contributing a critical or provocative viewpoint. Sometimes you may want to bring the perspective of one reading to bear on another reading, or combine or synthesize your understanding of different readings. Finally, you are very much encouraged to relate the readings to your thoughts about society, history, or the world around you. You should use your DQs to guide our seminar toward issues that you connect with emotionally and/or intellectually.

Generally, each DQ should be between a sentence and a paragraph. In some cases, a short question is all you need. In other cases, you may wish to develop a more complex thought or write a few sentences to set up some context for your question.

# Class Discussion Questions (2 submissions per semester)

Twice per semester, I will ask you to submit Class Discussion Questions (CDQs). CDQs are similar to DQs. In contrast to DQs, however, CDQs are designed for the whole class to help us move through the text. Generally, you will work together with a partner or two to prepare 3 or 4 CDQs for the class. Along with your questions, it is often useful to include some direct quotations from the text to help anchor our discussion (remember to cite page numbers). During class, we will split into groups, each group discussing one of your questions for 15 minutes or so before we convene as a class to discuss all the questions together. At the beginning of class, I will ask you to give a brief (1- or 2-minute) informal statement explaining your questions to kick things off.

Your CDQ submissions will be due by 4pm on the day before seminar by email to zachary.howlett@yale-nus.edu.sg. I will read through your CDQs and sometimes make some suggestions. Then I will email them back to you before seminar and post the finalized CDQs to Canvas.

I will prepare CDQs for the first seminar or two to model how to approach the CDQs. For the CDQs in particular, remember that a short, pithy question often focuses discussion better than a long, rambling one (something that I have to keep continually reminding myself as well!).

# Critical Book Precis (2 per semester)

You will be required to write two critical precis (summaries) of texts that we read over the course of the semester. Usually these texts consist of selections from a book, but for the weeks in which we extracts of different books or articles, you may summarize the readings in concert with each other. These summaries will generally consist of 3-4 pages of synopsis, in which you present some main arguments of the text or texts, and 1-2 pages of critique, in which you critically assess the text or texts from your point of view. On weeks that you are submitting book precis, I will expect you to take a greater role in class discussion. Your deadline for the book precis will be **midnight of the fifth day after we conclude discussion of the text.** (So if we finish discussing the text on a Friday, your precis will be due on Wednesday evening at midnight; and if we finish discussing the text on Tuesday, your precis will be due on Sunday evening at midnight.) In the spirit of creating an open learning community, your precis will be

"open source," available for your classmates to read and draw from for their own papers and projects.

# Transnational Migration Ethnographic Interview Project

A significant part of the course (three weeks, see below) is devoted to transnational migration. During this part of the course—the final three weeks—I will ask you to interview a person with Chinese cultural heritage about their transnational migration experience. This can be one of your classmates, a family member, a member of staff at Yale-NUS College, or anyone else who will agree to be interviewed. You will be required to submit a 8-10 page report summarizing your interviewee's migration experience. In this report, you should engage with some of the texts that we have read. For example, you can employ some of the analytical concepts that we learn, or relate your interviewee's experiences to those of people about whom we read in the texts.

**Peer review:** In the spirit of productive collaboration and to replicate the way in which scholarly writing is actually produced, you will workshop drafts of your paper in seminar.

**Peer citation:** As an important component of the writing process, you will be required to cite at least two of your classmates' critical precis and/or ethnographic project drafts in your final paper. The purpose of this exercise is to encourage you to perceive yourself and your peers as producers of original knowledge.

### LEARNING CONTRACT AND GRADING POLICY

In this course, I take a Learning Contract approach to grading.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this approach is to de-emphasize grades as an end in themselves. **Thus you will not receive grades on individual assignments; rather, I will base your grade holistically on a portfolio of all the assignments that you submit for the course.** I have high expectations for you but I also have great confidence in your ability. Thus any student who fulfils the following basic Learning Contract will receive a "B" range grade. By "B" range grad, I mean a B or a B+. Conscientious performance of the following tasks qualifies you at least for a grade in the "B" range:

# Learning Contract:

• On-time attendance at all class meetings: Avoid being absent more than twice and being late more than three times to ensure that your attendance meets the requirements for a "B" range grade. If you need to miss a class, please contact me in advance.

• Conscientious completion of all required assignments on time and according to the submission guidelines (see "Guidelines for Formal Essays" below): This class revolves around collaboration; your on-time submission of assignments is required to make it work. Avoid handing in DQs, CDQs, and papers late to stay on track for a "B" range grade. Your assignment will be considered late if it misses the deadline without an assistant dean's note or a medical certificate. If you know in advance that you will miss a class in which a paper is due, make arrangements with me to hand in your paper in advance of your absence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See for example Peter Elbow and Mary Deane Sorcinelli's discussion of Contract Grading in "Using High-Stakes and Low-Stakes Writing to Enhance Learning," in *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College Teachers*, ed. Wilbert J. McKeachie (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2014), chapter 16.

- *Meeting with me for any required conferences:* If I schedule required conferences, be sure to attend them.
- Careful and thorough reading of the texts: Your careful and thorough reading is evidenced by your active and thoughtful participation in the seminar. I expect you to read your peers' Discussion Questions in addition to the required texts for each session.
- Active participation in all class activities: Although frequency of participation is important, I value quality of contribution over quantity alone. I also strive to avoid an ethnocentric (culturally biased) definition of participation. I value many different participation styles. Participation has many aspects. You will get full marks by actively involving yourself in group work, listening to others, and contributing to class discussions, including by asking questions. (Remember that no question is ever "stupid"; if you have a question, others probably have the same question too.) You should always feel free to disagree with me and with one another. Critical, constructive dialog is at the heart of scholarship and learning. But keep in mind the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Unless I inform you otherwise, you can assume that your work—by demonstrating conscientious performance of the tasks outlined above—is on track to qualify you for a grade in the "B" range. Upon request, I will provide an estimate of your grade, but only after Recess Week and only in an in-person meeting.

# Getting an "A"

To receive a grade in the "A" range, you must perform the above tasks conscientiously and, in your formal essays (2 precis + 1 ethnographic interview project), consistently demonstrate writing that I deem objectively to be of superior quality according to the evaluation criteria that I append to every assignment. Although these criteria may vary according to the assignment, they generally include (but are not limited to) persuasiveness of argument and artfulness of presentation. I also expect "A" students to demonstrate superior citizenship and participation, although, as I note above, I strive to maintain a culturally sensitive, expansive view of participation, valuing quality of participation over quantity alone. Participation is also demonstrated through thoughtful submission of DQs and CDQs.

# Guidelines for Formal Essays

All written work for the two formally assigned essays must be submitted on Canvas and in hardcopy to me in class on the day that they are due. Written work must conform to the following guidelines:

- ✓ Word processed or typed
- ✓ Written in 12 pt. Times New Roman font.
- ✓ Double spaced with one-inch margins.
- ✓ Your name written on top of each page in the header
- ✓ Sources cited according to the Chicago author-date style, which the standard in anthropology. (Refer to the Chicago-Style Quick Guide and come to me with any questions.)
- ✓ Pages stapled.

- ✓ Proofread and spell checked. (As a good all-around writing reference, I recommend the Purdue Online Writing Lab.)
- ✓ **Pages numbered.** (Repeat offenders will have to buy everyone snacks!)

# Diversity and Inclusion

As a learning community, we are pledged to work together to create an inclusive and welcoming space for all members of our community irrespective of race, ethnicity, culture, national origins, gender identity, religious affiliation, socioeconomic background, and any intersection of these identities or others. As an instructor, I pledge to work proactively together with you the students to ensure that the classroom is an open, safe, brave, and respectful learning environment where everyone can share their points of view and engage productively with others. Diversity includes socioeconomic diversity and I understand, for example, that students working multiple jobs may occasionally need some flexibility with assignment deadlines. I see us as partners and cocollaborators in creating a classroom environment that empowers us all as learners and producers of knowledge. I strive to be maximally aware, flexible, and committed in my approaches and outlooks toward creating an inclusive space and I regularly solicit your anonymous feedback on how to do this better.

### Awareness of Public Domain

Please be aware that as part of our class activities your writing may be read by all members of the course. Follow the Golden Rule to foster a safe and productive environment for everyone.

# Plagiarism Policy and Resources

The faculty and staff of Yale-NUS College expect that students—regardless of their academic background or training—will become intimately familiar with what constitutes plagiarism and avoid it. Please see the Yale-NUS College policy on <u>Avoiding Plagiarism</u> for further information, including detailed discussions and definitions of plagiarism. All essays will be checked with Turnitin.

You are encouraged to make full use of authorized collaboration. Such collaboration includes peer review and critique of your essays, both organized by me and by yourselves. You are also encouraged to take full advantage of the Yale-NUS College Writers' Centre. You will find more information about the Writers' Centre below.

#### Canvas Discussion

I have created a general discussion on Canvas for course-related matters. You should check the discussion every week and feel free to post any questions or comments that you have.

### College Policies

I respect and uphold Yale-NUS College policies and regulations with regard to the observation of religious holidays, assistance available to differently abled students, plagiarism, sexual harassment, and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with College regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to my attention.

The Yale-NUS College Writers' Centre

The Writers' Centre provides support for individuals at any stage of the writing process. It is a free resource available to all students for nearly any kind of writing project, including applications, presentations, lab reports, essays, papers, and more. Tutors serve as responsive listeners and readers who can address questions about the writing process or about particular pieces of writing. They can also consider questions of confidence, critical reading, analytic thought, and imagination. Many writing tutors have experience working with non-native speakers of English.

You can find out more and book an appointment by visiting the Writers' Centre website: <a href="https://writerscentre.yale-nus.edu.sg/">https://writerscentre.yale-nus.edu.sg/</a>. Everyone is strongly encouraged to use this great resource.

#### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

NB: Schedule is subject to updates and changes. Changes will be announced in class and posted to Canvas.

For each section, I have included a list of **supplementary readings**. These supplementary readings are not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, I have selected books and articles that I mention in class and/or that complement the books that we read in useful ways. For those of you who wish to pursue further reading in the anthropology of China, these readings will form a useful bibliographic resource.

Film screenings will take place in the evening at a time that we determine together as a class. Attendance of film screenings will be optional. Students can also arrange to watch the films on their own time.

PART I: WHAT IS "CHINA"?

Seminar 1-A: Introductory Matters

No readings; instructor introduces course and students sign up for critical precis and CDQ slots (you can choose the weeks in which you submit your assignments).

Seminar 1-B: Culture and Identities

Chun, Allen. 1996. "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity." *Boundary 2* 23 (2):111–38.

Seminar 2-A: Markets and Regions

Skinner, G. William. 1980. "Marketing Systems and Regional Economies: Their Structure and Development," pp. 1-16 (ending with "Let us see how it worked out in the case of a single macroregion."); 21-24; 44-47; 55-71; 89-90.

Supplementary: Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State* (1988); Magnus Fiskesjö, "On the 'Raw' and 'Cooked' Barbarians of Imperial China" (1999); Dru Gladney, *Dislocating China* (2004); Hill Gates, *China's Motor: A Thousand Years of Petty Capitalism* (1997);

Stevan Harrel, "Introduction," *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (1995); Sow-Theng Leong, *Migration and Ethnicity in Chinese History* (1999); Thomas Mullaney, et al., *Critical Han Studies* (2012).

# PART II: CENTER-PERIPHERY RELATIONS

Seminar 2-B

Mueggler, Erik. 2001. The Age of Wild Ghosts, chaps 1 & 4.

### Seminar 3-A

Mueggler, Erik. 2001. The Age of Wild Ghosts, chaps 6 & 8.

Supplementary: Darren Byler, "Spirit Breaking" (2018); Kevin Carrico, *The Great Han* (2017); Mette Halskov Hansen, *Lessons in Being Chinese* (1999); Katherine Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang* (2000); Shao-hua Liu, *Passage to Manhood* (2011); Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages* (2004); Charlene Makley, *The Battle for Fortune* (2018); Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules* (2000).

### PART III: POPULAR RELIGION

Seminar 3-B

Yang, C. K. 1967. Religion in Chinese Society, chaps 6-7.

#### Seminar 4-A

Yang, Mayfair Mei. 2020. Re-enchanting Modernity, chap 1.

### Seminar 4-B

Yang, Mayfair Mei 2020. Re-enchanting Modernity, chaps 3 & 8.

Supplementary: Sébastien Billioud, *The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China* (2015); Adam Chau, *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China* (2006); Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (1993); Marcel Granet, *The Religion of the Chinese People* (1975); Julia C. Huang, *Charisma and Compassion* (2009); Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories* (1998); David Palmer, *Qigong Fever* (2007); Emily Martin, Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man* (2008); Gary Seaman, "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution" (1981); Lily Tsai, *Accountability without Democracy* (2007); Angele R. Zito, *Of Body and Brush* (1997).

## PART IV: SEXUAL POLITICS

#### Seminar 5-A

Sangren, P. Steven. 2000. *Chinese Sociologics*, chap 7, "Women's Production: Gender and Exploitation in a Patrilineal Mode."

\*\*Class on February 12 cancelled due to Chinese New Year\*\*

#### Seminar 6-A

Santos, Gancalo and Stevan Harrell, ed. 2017. *Transforming Patriarchy*, introduction (pp. 3–36)

#### Seminar 6-B

Santos, Gancalo and Stevan Harrell, ed. 2017. *Transforming Patriarchy*, chapter 7 (Jankowiak & Li) & chapter 12 (Zhang)

\*\*\*Happy Recess Week!\*\*\*

#### Seminar 7-A

Engebretsen, Elisabeth. 2015. Queer Women in Urban China, chaps 1 & 2

### Seminar 7-B

Engebretsen, Elisabeth. 2015. Queer Women in Urban China, chaps 3 & 5

#### Seminar 8-A

Friedman, Sara. 2015. Exceptional States, preface, intro, & chap 1.

## Seminar 8-B

Friedman, Sara. 2015. Exceptional States, chaps 5 & 6.

Supplementary: Leta Hong Finger, Leftover Women (2014); Vanessa Fong, Only Hope (2006); Dorothy Ko, Cinderella's Sisters; Susan Mann, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History (2011); Matthew Sommer, Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China (2000); Margery Wolf, The House of Lim (1968); Tiantian Zheng, Red Lights (2009); Tiantian Zheng, Tongzhi Living (2015).

## PART V: CLASS AND CLASS FORMATION

## Seminar 9-A

Kipnis, Andrew B. 2016. From Village to City, chaps 1 & 4

#### Seminar 9-B

Kipnis, Andrew B. 2016. From Village to City, chaps 9 & 10

Supplementary: Xiaotong Fei, From the Soil ([1947] 1992); Andrew Kipnis, From Village to City (2016); Andrew Kipnis, "Suzhi: A Keyword Approach" (2006); Arthur Kleinman, ed., Deep China (2011); John Osburg, Anxious Wealth (2013); Alan Smart, "Gifts, Bribes, and Guanxi" (1993); Terry Woronov, Class Work (2015); Yunxiang Yan, The Flow of Gifts (1996); Mayfair Yang, Gifts, Favors, and Banquets (1994); Jie Yang, Unknotting the Heart; Li Zhang, In Search of Paradise (2010).

#### PART V: TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

#### Seminar 10-A

Ong, Aihwa. 1999. Flexible Citizenship, intro.

\*\*\*Workshop interview questions for Transnational Migration Ethnographic Interview Project

#### Seminar 10-B

Ong, Aihwa. 1999. Flexible Citizenship, chapter 8 & afterword.

#### Seminar 11-A

Chu, Julie Y. 2010. Cosmologies of Credit, introduction.

\*\*\*Class on April 2 cancelled due to Good Friday\*\*\*

#### Seminar 12-A

Chu, Julie Y. 2010. Cosmologies of Credit, chapter 6.

#### Seminar 12-B

Fong, Vanessa L. 2011. Paradise Redefined, chapter 1.

#### Seminar 13-A

Fong, Vanessa L. 2011. Paradise Redefined, chapter 3.

### Seminar 13-B

\*\*\*Peer review of Transnational Migration Ethnographic Interview paper drafts\*\*\*

Supplementary: Giovanni Arrighi, Takeshi Hamashita, Mark Selden et al., "Historical Capitalism, East and West" (2003); Nicole Constable, *Maid to Order* (2007); Jean DeBernardi, *The Way that Lives in the Heart* (2006); Andrew Kipnis, "Neoliberalism Reified" (2007); Gary G. Hamilton, "Overseas Chinese Capitalism, (1996); Philip Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others* (2008); Donald Nonini, *Getting By* (2015); Ellen Oxfeld, *Blood, Sweat, and Mahjong* (1993).

\*\*\*Final drafts of Ethnographic Interview papers due on Canvas by April 30 at 23:59\*\*\*

\*\*\*Special film screening TBA in Reading Week\*\*\*

# **COMPLETE COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Billioud, Sébastien, and Joël Thoraval. 2015. *The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Byler, Darren. 2018. "Spirit Breaking: Uyghur Dispossession, Culture Work and Terror Capitalism in a Chinese Global City." PhD diss., University of Washington. https://digital.lib.washington.edu:443/researchworks/handle/1773/42946.

Carrico, Kevin. 2017. *The Great Han: Race, Nationalism, and Tradition in China Today*. Oaklan: Univ of California Press.

Chau, Adam Yuet. 2006. *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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- Hansen, Mette Halskov. 1999. Lessons in Being Chinese: Minority Education and Ethnic Identity in Southwest China. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Hansen, Mette Halskov. 2015. *Educating the Chinese Individual: Life in a Rural Chinese Boarding School*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Harrell, Stevan. 1995. "Introduction." In *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, edited by Stevan Harrell, 17–27. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Jing, Jun. 1998. *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village*. Stanford University Press.
- Kaup, Katherine. 2000. Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner.
- Kipnis, Andrew B. 2006. "Suzhi: A Keyword Approach." *China Quarterly*, no. 186: 295–313. Kipnis, Andrew B. 2016. *From Village to City: Social Transformation in a Chinese County Seat*.
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