

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES OF CHINA

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Course Description

This course addresses the major paradigms in anthropological studies of China. It examines the relationship between anthropological studies and the politico-economic circumstances within and outside China under which the knowledge about Chinese culture and society was produced. We will give particular attention to four issues: (1) the relationship of anthropological practices to domestic political and economic concerns; (2) the interplay between anthropology and different forms of colonialism and imperialism; (3) the significance of class, gender and ethnicity in the production of anthropological understanding; and (4) the politics of fieldwork and ethnographic writing.

Seminar organization

The course will be organized as a seminar and normally will involve a close reading of both major anthropological works and secondary texts that relate these works to the historical conditions under which they have emerged. Besides some introductory lectures on course topics, usually presented by the instructor a week before the topic to be addressed, the principal responsibility for running each class will fall upon those participants who have been assigned as chief discussants for individual reading materials. The assignment for each week--two participants being responsible for one reading item according to the reading schedule, one for presentation and the other for guiding discussion--will be made one week before following the alphabetical order of the participants' names running in a cycle. Both of the presenter and the discussant are required to make a handout for the class that outlines the presentation or the questions and topics relating to the reading item to organize the discussion. This handout will be passed out to the class at the beginning of each meeting. The presenter should get to the main issues addressed and the arguments of the author(s), within his or her 15 minutes of presentation. The discussant should have not only "a firm grasp" on the subject but also a fully positioned stake in the direction of the discussion. The person will open the discussion with an extremely clear and concise 10 to 15 minute presentation of issues and questions to be addressed. S/he is then responsible for eliciting and directing the discussion to make sure that important points get covered. Every student is required at all times to actively contribute to the discussion. Everyone should come every week, having read all of the required readings extremely carefully and creatively. Students failing to attend a particular class is required to write up a summary of all the reading materials for that class, and absence for more than 4

classes will lead to an F grade for the course.

Written requirements

For each class, participants who are responsible for presentation and guiding discussion are required to turn in an outline of the presentation and questions for discussion respectively based on the assigned reading materials.

Each student is required to write a review essay (6-10 pages in length) on one or a combination of a few course topics listed below in relation to his/her research interest. The review essay has to be turned in two weeks after the class of the course topic(s). Students are required to work on one seminar paper 10-20 page long based on his/her review of certain topic(s) and first or second hand ethnographic data about some phenomena of Chinese societies in relation to his/her research interest. The ethnographic data should be analyzed in critical perspectives as discussed in this course.

Tentative Course Schedule

(A) ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Week 1: Course organization

The Nature and Practices of Anthropology: An Introduction

Week 2 : Contemporary Theories and Polemics of Anthropological Study of China

(B) ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHINA IN RETROSPECTS

Week 3: Studies of China in Western Anthropological Tradition

Anthropology in Mainland China

Anthropology in Taiwan

The Politics of Nativization

(C) TOPICS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES OF CHINA

Week 4: The Lineage Model

Frontier society and state-making: Lineages in southern China

Week 5: Gender, Chinese Family and Marriage

Chinese family organization; varieties of marriage; gender differences.

Week 6: The Role of Rural Elites

Week 7 *Guanxi* as Social Relations

Worldview and social relations, local communities and *guanxi*, politics of *guanxi*.

Week 8 Marketing Hierarchy and Regional System

Week 9 Cities, Urbanization, and the Flowing Population

Urbanization and modernization; cities and migrants; globalization and cities, sociocultural urbanization.

Week 10 Consumption and Economic Behavior

Concepts of rationality and fate; capitalism and traditional economic culture; post-reform consumption and consumerism

Week 11 Popular Religion and the Chinese State

Week 12 Chinese Cultural Identity and Nationalism

What is Chinese? Chinese Cultural Identity

Folk models, imperial culturalism, and modern nationalism

Week 13 Ethnic Diversity and the Chinese World Order

From “barbarians” to “national minorities”: Minority politics and cultural strategies

\Week 14 Research Project Presentations

Week 15 Seminar paper due

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Comprehend basic terms, concepts and theories in cultural anthropology about Chinese cultures and societies in ethnographic writings;
2. Write critical essays on the development of particular topics anthropological studies of Chinese societies.
3. Develop appreciation and respect of cultural diversity and understand the importance of cultural awareness for social interaction in contemporary daily life.