Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus

Course Code: HUMA 1639
Course Title: Marriage, Family and Kinship in Cross-cultural Perspectives
Course Offered in: Spring 2019
Course Instructor: Professor Ma Jianxiong

Course Description:

This course examines the diverse cultural meanings and structures of kinship relations and organizations. Different anthropological approaches in analyzing the structures and practices of marriage, family and kinship will be examined.

Learning outcomes:

The students will be able to (1) identify the diverse cultural meaning and structure of kinship relations and organizations, (2) better understand one’s own culture and society as well as other cultural practices in the world, (3) identify the technique of studying family and kin relations, and (4) have opportunity to improve presentation skills.

Course Outline:

Weeks 1-2. The invention of family and kinship.

Introduction and basic concepts.
Family as a basic social institution.

No tutorial during the Add & Drop period.

Reading:
Goodenough, Ward H.
2006. “Introduction”. In Description and Comparison in Cultural Anthropology.

Weeks 3-4. Marriage, family kinship and descent groups.

Kinship systems.
Descent groups: patrilineal and matrilineal descents.
Tutorial: Presentation teams organization.


Weeks 5-6. Romantic love.

Romantic love under different cultural context.
Romantic love in socialist China.


Presentation. Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan,

Chapters 1-4.

Reading:
Macfarlane, A.


Chinese lineage system.
The Nansha and the Ping Shan cases.

Tutorial: A documentary on Chinese family.

Fieldtrip, on Chinese Lineage.

Readings:
Potter, Jack M.
1970 “Land and lineage in traditional China”, in Family and Kinship in Chinese Society,
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Weeks 9-10. Diverse kinship and marriage ties in Southwest China.

Marriage ties and kinship.  
Marriage ties and matrilineal societies: the Lahu and the Moso.

2) *The women’s kingdom* (22 min.) DS793.Y8  
W66 2006.  

**Presentation:** *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Chapters 5-7.

Assignment 1. *Fieldtrip Report*.

Readings:  
Shanshan Du,  
2003 “Chopsticks only work in pairs”: gender unity and gender equality among the  
*Lahu of Southwest China*, New York, Columbia University Press, pp.52-76.

Weeks 11-12. Gender and family.

Gender issues in different cultures.  
Gender and social change.

**Film:** *Sacrifice* (46 min.). HQ242. A5 S23 2007  
**Presentation 3. Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Chapters 8-10.

Assignment 2. *My family: on anthropological perspective*.

Readings:  
Watson, R.S.  

Weeks 13-14. Kin ties as social and cultural capital.
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Kin ties in Chinese economic development and its change.
Marriage, family and kin ties in the further.

Tutorial: Film: *The trains to my hometown* (62. min., 2009).


Readings:
Whyte, Martin K

Final exam: according to university arrangement.

Planned Assessment Tasks:
Two assignments: 15%
Participation: 15%
Final exam (multiple choice and short questions): 70%