CONTEMPORARY CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Washington University | Fall 2015
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00 am – 11:30 am
Course Location: Cupples II L015
Course Website: https://bb.wustl.edu/

Professor Priscilla Song, PhD
✉ priscillasong@wustl.edu
⏰ Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00–3:00 pm and by appointment (McMillan 336)

Teaching Assistant: Carolyn Powers, MS, NCC
✉ cspowers@wustl.edu
⏰ Office Hours: Thursdays 11:45 am–1:00 pm and by appointment (McMillan 301)

This course provides an introduction to emerging trends in Chinese culture and society. We will explore processes of change and continuity in the People's Republic, examining the complexity of social issues and the dynamics of cultural unity and diversity. While we will focus on the post-Mao reform era (1978 to the present), we will consider how contemporary developments draw upon the legacies of the Maoist revolutions as well as the pre-socialist past. The course provides an overview of anthropological approaches to the study of contemporary China, introducing students to key concepts, theories, and frameworks integral to the analysis of Chinese culture and society. Readings, lectures, and discussions will highlight not only macro-level processes of social change and continuity but also the everyday experiences of individuals involved in these processes. We will pay particular attention to issues of family life, institutional culture, migration, religion, ethnicity, gender, consumption, and globalization.
READING MATERIALS

Articles are available online through Ares. Books are available on reserve at Olin Library.

Required Books:


Selections from the following films will be screened in class:


🎬 *Senior Year [高三]*. 2006. Directed by Zhou Hao [周浩]. 110 minutes.


Key to Symbols:

📚 Reading from required course book.

🎬 Electronic article available through Ares ([http://ares.wustl.edu/ares/](http://ares.wustl.edu/ares/)).

🎬 In-class film screening.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

🌟 Attendance and Participation (10% of overall grade)

Regular class attendance is mandatory. The class participation grade will be based on your preparation for and contribution to class discussion. To that end, all students are required to complete the assigned readings (50-100 pages per week) before the scheduled sessions. Obviously, students cannot contribute to class discussion if they are absent; consequently, repeated unexcused absences from lectures will be reflected in the class participation grade. Each student is allowed a maximum of two unexcused absences during the semester. For each unexcused absence thereafter, five points will be deducted from your final grade. You are responsible for keeping the professor informed of any situation that prevents you from attending class. Students who have more than five unexcused absences will not pass the course.

As part of the participation grade, each student will serve as the class rapporteur for one class session. This will involve taking careful notes during the session, revising them in narrative form, and then posting the final synthesis in the "Discussion Board" section of the course website (https://bb.wustl.edu) within one week. These rapporteurs' notes will serve as a cumulative record of the course to help all students prepare for exams and writing assignments. Please sign up for a rapporteur session on the course website.

🌟 Online Response Posts (worth 25% of overall grade)

Each class participant is required to write online response posts in no fewer than 10 (out of 15) different weeks of the semester. Your comments should address the week's readings and must be posted in the "Discussion Board" section of the course website (https://bb.wustl.edu) no later than 9 pm on the day before class to receive credit. Half of the class will post on Mondays and the other half on Wednesdays; your day will be assigned at the start of the semester. Each post should be a short paragraph (150–200 words) that follows one of these formats:

**Close Reading** (title your post "Close reading: [name of author(s)]"): Identify a passage from one of the readings that excites or puzzles you; briefly explain how or why it does so; and pose an open-ended discussion question that might help your fellow classmates follow your inspiration or address your concern.

**Crosstalk** (title your post "Crosstalk: [topic or theme]"): Situate the week's readings within the context of the course as a whole. What new elements do they bring to our exploration of Chinese culture and society? Which previous readings do they build upon, which do they omit? How do they speak to course themes?

Response posts will be graded as check (2 points for a satisfactory response), check-plus (3 points for outstanding posts that go beyond the basic requirements), check-minus (1 point for unsatisfactory or late responses), or zero for non-submission. Posting the required 10 responses over the course of the semester and receiving 2 points on each post will earn you a baseline grade of B+ for this portion of your course grade. You are
encouraged to respond to your classmates' postings as well as post links to relevant news articles, images, websites, etc. Doing so on a regular basis will boost your overall response grade.

яд Kinship Assignment (worth 5% of overall grade)

This assignment entails drawing your personal kinship chart over four generations using anthropological kinship symbols and terminology you will learn in class. Your kinship chart is due at the beginning of class on Thursday September 10.

яд Midterm Exam (worth 15% of overall grade)

The Midterm Exam will take place in class on Thursday October 15 and will be based on all lectures, discussions, films, and required readings through October 13.

яд Ethnographic Profile Paper (worth 30% of overall grade)

This paper (10-12 pages) is an opportunity for you to synthesize lectures and readings in a creative format by writing an "ethnographic profile" of a person or place in contemporary China. For this project, you will begin with what you have learned about Chinese society and use your anthropological sensibility to mold characteristics into a profile. If a person, you should place him/her in a nexus of relationships and in terms of family background, geographic location, institutional context, ethnic and/or religious affiliations, and any other significant dimensions of personal identity. If a place, you should try to depict both its structural features and the characteristics and relationships of the people who customarily inhabit it. The point of this exercise is to use the device of a character profile to develop a realistic and revealing perspective on the lifeways and institutions of contemporary China. Guidelines, writing hints, examples, and an evaluation rubric will be available on the course website. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your ideas and questions.

There are two deadlines: By the beginning of class on Thursday November 5, you must submit a first draft of the essay. I expect it to show a good faith effort to be engaged in the project, but I also expect that it will be rough, partial, unfinished, tentative, and preliminary! If you do not submit a first draft by this date, you will be ineligible for a final grade above a B.

The final version of the essay is due at the beginning of class on Thursday December 3. Please note that I will not grant any extensions on this assignment. I expect you to budget your time so that the essay can be completed despite theater performances, sports competitions, travel plans, computer malfunctions, and other obligations at the deadline. One full letter grade will be deducted for each day the paper is submitted late.
Take-Home Final Exam (worth 15% of overall grade)

The Take-Home Final Exam is a cumulative, essay-based exam. You will receive the essay questions on the final day of class and have one week to work on the exam. Your completed exam must be turned in no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 10 to the instructor's mailbox in the main office of the Anthropology Department in McMillan 112. One full letter grade will be deducted for each day the exam is submitted late. Because this is a take-home examination, no make-up final examination will be given.

COURSE POLICIES

- **Late Policy**: All assignments (including response posts and drafts) are due on the scheduled day and time. As noted above, one full letter grade will be deducted for each day the Ethnographic Profile or Take-Home Final Exam is submitted late.

- **Academic Integrity**: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Undergraduate Student Academic Integrity Policy. The university's policy is available on the internet at [http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html](http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html). This includes explicit guidelines on avoiding plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas without attribution. In all of your assignments, including your response posts and paper drafts, you must always make clear where you have borrowed from others by identifying the original source and extent of your use of another's work. This obligation holds whether the sources are published or unpublished and whether they are in print or on the internet. Plagiarism or other breaches of academic integrity will be reported to the academic integrity officer of the College of Arts and Sciences and can result in a failing grade for the course.

- **Academic Support Services and Disability Resources**: Cornerstone: The Center for Advanced Learning ([http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/](http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/)) is Washington University's official site for academic support services, including disability resources, writing help, and study skill workshops. Students seeking disability-related accommodations and guidance from the University must notify the Disability Resources staff at Cornerstone to make specific request for accommodation. Eligibility for accommodations is determined on an individual basis, must be supported by professional documentation, and must be renewed each semester.

- **PLEASE NOTE**: This syllabus is subject to change. Topics, readings, and assignments may be adjusted depending on class interest. It is your responsibility to check the course website on Blackboard regularly for announcements, guidelines, and updates.
LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

Session 1 (Aug 25): Introduction to the Course


Session 2 (Aug 27): Vocalizing Revolution: A Tour of Modern Chinese History

- Carsick Cars [晕车的车乐队]. "Zhong Nan Hai 中南海". [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pz6M20GN8Nw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pz6M20GN8Nw)

Session 3 (Sep 1): Kinship and the Politics of Patriliny (29 pp)


Session 4 (Sep 3): Gender, Self, and Social Life (15 pp)


September 3: Last Day to Drop/D

Session 5 (Sep 8): Marriage, Love & Changing Gender Dynamics (27 pp)

Kinship Assignment due by the beginning of class on September 10.

Session 6 (Sep 10): Birth Control and Changing Fertility Culture (32 pp)

Session 7 (Sep 15): Desire, Sexuality, and LGBT Identities (27 pp)

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Part II: Social Change

Session 8 (Sep 17): Food as a Lens for Social Change (46 pp)

Session 9 (Sep 22): Little Emperors: Coming of Age in the Era of Modernization (68 pp)

Session 10 (Sep 24): Transforming the Educational System (58 pp)

September 27 (15th day of the 8th lunar month): Happy Mid-Autumn Festival! 中秋节快乐！
Session 11 (Sept 29): Intergenerational Relations and the Crisis of Filial Piety (60 pp)


Part III: The Rural-Urban Divide

Session 12 (Oct 1): Household Registration [hukou] and the Rural-Urban Divide (50 pp)


Session 13 (Oct 6): Urban Work Units and the Shattering of the Iron Rice Bowl (38 pp)


Session 14 (Oct 8): Revolutions in Chinese Health Care (20 pp)


October 9–11: Parent and Family Weekend – Parents and family members are welcome to join us in class on October 8.

Session 15 (Oct 13): Midterm Review Session (29 pp)


Session 16 (Oct 15): MIDTERM EXAM
October 16: Fall Break – No Classes

Session 17 (Oct 20): Rural-to-Urban Migration and the "Floating" Population (25 pp)


Session 18 (Oct 22): Gender and Migration (45 pp)


Part IV: Ethnicity, Religion, and Identity Politics

Session 19 (Oct 27): Ethnic Identity and the Politics of Nation Building (42 pp)


Session 20 (Oct 29): The Hui Muslims of Xi'an (46 pp)

- Guest Presenter: Maris Gillette, Ph.D.
  (Professor & Director of Museum Studies, University of Missouri- St. Louis)

Session 21 (Nov 3): Varieties of Being Muslim in China (63 pp)


FIRST DRAFT of Ethnographic Profile due by the beginning of class on November 5.

Session 22 (Nov 5): Food, Race, and Modernity (~50 pp)

  *** Choose two of the following three chapters to read ***
  Chapter 4: "Traditional Food & Race" (pp. 114-144)
  Chapter-5: "Factory Food, Modernization & Race" (pp. 145-166)
  Chapter 6: "Alcohol and 'Building a Civilized Society" (pp. 167-191)
Part V: Modernity and Globalization

Session 23 (Nov 10): Made in China: The Global Commodity Chain (44 pp)


Session 24 (Nov 12): China's Mental Health Crisis and the Rise of Counseling (26 pp)

- Guest Presenter: Carolyn Powers, MS, NCC (Ph.D. Student in Anthropology, Washington University)

Session 25 (Nov 17): Sports and the New World Order (30 pp)

- CLASS SCREENING: Selections from the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games.

Session 26 (Nov 19): Pollution and China's Environmental Crisis (42 pp)


Session 27 (Nov 24): Consuming Modernity: Fast Food Nation (51 pp)


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**November 25-29: Thanksgiving Break – No Classes**

**Session 28 (Dec 1): Internet Culture, E-Sweatshops, and the Great Firewall**


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**Session 29 (Dec 3): Course Review and Wrap-Up**


*FINAL VERSION* of Ethnographic Profile due by the beginning of class on December 3.

*TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM* due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 10 to the instructor's mailbox in McMillan 112.