

## ANTH 223: Contemporary Chinese Society

Instructor: Julie Y. Chu

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 AM; Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 PM

Course Number: ANTH 223

Course Location: PNE 349, Mondays and Thursdays 11:10 AM-12:20 PM

### Course Description:

This course draws from anthropological and cultural-historical frameworks to explore the contemporary terrain of China in relation to an emergent “New World (Dis)Order.” While introducing students to key concepts and major historical developments in twentieth-century China, the course will focus largely on ethnographic studies of social change and everyday life betwixt and between the Mao (1949-1978) and Post-Mao (1978-Present) eras. Topics examined include nation-building, Chinese modernities, capitalist development, gendered desires, class inequalities, religious revivalism and cosmopolitan identities. Students will be asked to critically and creatively think about change and continuity in contemporary China not only in terms of the organization of Chinese political institutions, but also in relation to the role of Chinese diasporic populations and other transnational and globalizing forces in producing spatial-temporal imaginaries.

### Course Objectives:

1. Heighten student appreciation of historical change and continuity, cultural diversity and the complexity of social issues in contemporary China, including China’s interconnectedness and positionality in the world order.
2. Broaden student knowledge and appreciation of anthropological approaches to the study of contemporary China, with an emphasis on ethnographic participant-observation across a diverse range of settings.
3. Develop students’ understanding and mastery of key concepts and analytical frameworks for examining China from an anthropological perspective.
4. Sharpen students’ critical listening, reading and writing skills, particularly their ability to grasp, articulate, synthesize and challenge key arguments in course readings, lectures and discussions.
5. Hone students’ ability to apply analytical skills and knowledge from this course to issues of contemporary relevance in China and beyond.

**Prerequisites:**

There are no prerequisites for this course. Students do not need any background in Anthropology or China/East Asian Studies to do well in this course. I will provide basic historical and social context for all topics we address in class sessions. However, while students do not need any specialized background to excel in this course, they are expected to keep up with current events (e.g. reading major news sources like the *New York Times*) during the semester as well as look critically and reflexively at their own personal histories and surroundings in order to enrich class discussions and assignments. Intellectual curiosity and critical thinking are valued and will be rewarded.

**Required Readings:** All books are available for purchase at the Wellesley College Bookstore. They are also on reserve at the Knapp Center in Clapp Library.

Chan, Anita, Richard Madsen and Jonathan Unger. 1992 [1984]. *Chen Village Under Mao and Deng*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dutton, Michael. 1998. *Streetlife China*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ong, Aihwa and Donald Nonini. 1997. *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. New York: Routledge.

Selected Texts on E-Reserve and in the Firstclass subconference, "ANTH 223-Online Links."

**Recommended Book:**

Spence, Jonathan D.

1990 *In Search For Modern China*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

**NOTE On This Course's Online Conference:**

All students enrolled will automatically have "ANTH 223" as a Firstclass conference on their desktop. You must regularly check this online conference for weekly readings, key terms, course notices and assignments.

**Course Requirements:**

This course will consist of both lecture and discussion with the expectation that students come to class ready with questions and comments about the assigned readings and key concepts for each week. Students also need to be prepared to draw on readings and other course materials to critically discuss in-class screenings of films and presentations of cultural artifacts as well as for small group work, which will be a recurring feature of this course. For these reasons, class attendance and participation are essential. You will have one permissible skip day (no questions asked) and beyond that, each unexcused absence will cost you 1 point from your final total of 100. Excessive tardiness (10 minutes or more late to class) will also cost you 1/2 a point from your final grade. As far as participation, you will be expected not only to contribute comments and questions in

class but also to post additional thoughts and concerns online via our Firstclass course conference. Particularly, I encourage you to share your reactions and questions about weekly readings *prior* to our discussions of them in our Monday and Thursday sessions. Evaluation of participation will be based on how engaged you are both in our class sessions and online in our Firstclass course conference.

Besides attendance and active engagement (10%), there will be several writing assignments:

- 1) Two short papers (5-7 pages each) chosen from assigned topics will be due after Section II and Section IV of this course (20% each).
- 2) Some time during the semester, each student must write a short and concise media review (2-3 pages) of newspaper or magazine coverage, television or film representation, or online sources concerning contemporary China. This review must be posted online to the ANTH 223 Firstclass conference. Other students are expected to respond to each review with comments online as part of their participation grade (15%).
- 3) In lieu of a final exam, students will develop a final paper (8-12 pages) on a topic of their choice, with approval of the instructor (35%).

More details on all assignments will be posted to the Firstclass subconference, ANTH 223-Assignments, as deadlines for each assignment approaches. I will also post a specific guide to grading standards for this course online in ANTH 223-Syllabus/Policies.

### Course Evaluation

Preparation and engaged class participation – 10%

Short Paper #1 – 20%

Short Paper #2 – 20%

Online Media Review – 15%

Final Paper – 35%

### Course Policies and Protocol:

All students are expected to abide by the Wellesley Honor Code. While students are encouraged to work collaboratively with each other, you are expected to develop original arguments in your written assignments and cite properly when drawing on the ideas of others (including from class lectures and discussions). A more detailed guide on proper citations for this course will be posted online as assignment deadlines approach.

**Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any incident of dishonest work will be immediately reported to your class dean and advisor.**

Unless you have prior permission and *verifiable* reasons for missing deadlines for assignments, late work will be docked half a grade per day past the formal deadline. For instance, if you are one day late, your maximum grade will be A-. After two days, the maximum grade will be B+ and so forth.

**All papers must be time-dated electronically by posting online to the Firstclass conference folder, ANTH223-Student Submissions. Make sure you SAVE your email copy of student submissions in case of computer system glitches. If your paper fails to upload to the online drop box, the burden of proof is on you...**

The process for discussing or contesting a grade for a particular assignment is as follows:

1. Students must wait at least 24 hours to reflect and review their assignment and the instructor's comments before coming to discuss a grade.
2. After 24 hours, if the student still wants to contest a grade, they must write and submit a one-page explanation of why they deserve a different mark on their assignment.
3. The instructor will then meet with the student to discuss possible options for working towards a better grade in the course.

Regarding general class protocol—students are expected to come to class on time and engage in open and respectful discussion with each other and the instructor. Make sure you turn off your cell phones and other disruptive electronic devices before the start of class.

### **Course Schedule by Topic:**

#### **I. Introduction: Looking back and forward in Contemporary China**

Session 1: Monday, 1/30

- Orientation to the class

Session 2: Thursday, 2/2

- Begin reading Anita Chan et. al., *Chen Village*, pp. 1-40

Session 3: Monday, 2/6

- Continue reading Anita Chan et. al., *Chen Village*, pp. 41-102

Session 4: Thursday, 2/9

- Continue reading Anita Chan et. al., *Chen Village*, pp. 103-140
- Michael Dutton, "Naming" in *Streetlife China*, pp. 165-171.

Session 5: Monday, 2/13

- Continue reading Anita Chan et. al., *Chen Village*, pp. 141-185
- In-Class Screening: Excerpt from *Morning Sun* (2003), dir. Carma Hinton

Session 6: Thursday, 2/16

- Continue reading Anita Chan et. al., *Chen Village*, pp. 186-266

NO CLASS on Monday, 2/20 (President's Day)

- Finish reading Anita Chan et. al., *Chen Village*, pp. 267-335

## **II. Periodizing "Revolution": Memory, Modernity and the State**

Session 7: Thursday, 2/23: The Politics of Memory

- Lisa Rofel, "Liberation Nostalgia and a Yearning for Modernity" in *Engendering China*, pp. 226-249.
- Erik Mueggler, "A Carceral Regime: Violence and Social Memory in Southwest China," in *Cultural Anthropology* 13:2 (1998): 167-192.

**Attend Anthro's Departmental Lecture, PNE Atrium, 5 PM on Thurs, 2/23!**

Angela Zito, New York University

"How can we be modern without religion? Mediating the bodies of Falun Gong"

Session 8: Monday, 2/27: Repetition with a Difference

- Michael Dutton, "Dreaming of Better Times: 'Repetition with a Difference' and Community Policing in China," *positions* 3:2 (1995): 415-447.
- Michael Dutton, "Part V: Stories of the Fetish: Tales of Chairman Mao" in *Streetlife China*, pp. 238-271

Session 9: Thursday, 3/2: Modernity Deferred

- Judith Farquhar and James Hevia, "Culture and Postwar American Historiography of China," in *positions*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 486-525.
- Wu Hung, "Tiananmen Square: A Political History of Monument" in *Representations*, no. 35 (1991)

**NOTE: Short paper assignment #1 will be distributed today and must be posted in "ANTH 223-Student Submissions" by next Thursday, 12:30 PM, 3/09/06.**

## **III. (Un)marking Chineseness: Nation and Nationalism**

Session 10: Monday, 3/6—Imagining the Center

- Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han 'Race' in Modern China," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, pp. 34-52.
- Beth Notar, 2002, "Viewing Currency Chaos: Paper Money For Advertising, Ideology, and Resistance in Republican China," in *Defining Modernity: Guomindang Rhetorics of a New China, 1920-1970*, pp. 123-149.

Session 11: Thursday, 3/9 (NO CLASS)—The Margins Within

- Janet L. Upton, "Home on the Grasslands? Tradition, Modernity, and the Negotiation of Identity by Tibetan Intellectuals in the PRC" in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, pp. 98-124.
- Uradyn E. Bulag, "Models and Moralities: The Parable of the Two 'Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland'," in *The China Journal* 42 (July 1999): 21-41.

Session 12: Monday, 3/13—The Nation Unbound

- Prasenjit Duara, “Nationalists Among Transnationals: Overseas Chinese and the Idea of China, 1900-1911,” in *Ungrounded Empires*, pp. 39-60
- Stephen Murray and Keelung Hong, “American Anthropologist Looking Through Taiwanese Culture,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 16 (1991): 273-299.
- Allen Chun, “Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity,” in *Boundary 2*: 23:2 (1996): 111-138.

#### **IV. Enter the Market: Exchange, Value and the Politics of Reform**

Session 13: Thursday, 3/16—Socialism with “Chinese Characteristics”?

- Alan Smart, “Oriental Despotism and Sugar-Coated Bullets: Representations of the Market in China,” in *Meanings of the Market* (1997).
- Louisa Schein, “The Other Goes to the Market: The State, the Nation and Unruliness in Contemporary China” in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 2:3 (1996): 197-222.

NO CLASS on Monday, 3/20, and Thursday, 3/23 (Spring Break)—Gift and *Guanxi*

- Michael Dutton, “The Gift of Self” and “The ‘Gift’ and the Confucian Notion of Propriety, *Li*,” in *Streetlife China*, pp. 39-42.
- Mayfair Yang, “The Gift Economy and State Power in China,” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989): 25-54.
- Alan Smart, “Gifts, Bribes, and Guanxi: A Reconsideration of Bourdieu’s Social Capital,” in *Cultural Anthropology* 8:3 (1993)
- You-tien Hsing, “Building *Guanxi* Across the Straits: Taiwanese Capital and Local Chinese Bureaucrats,” in *Ungrounded Empires*, pp. 143-166.

Session 14: Monday 3/27—Making Sense of “Prosperity”

- Dru Gladney, “Getting Rich is Not so Glorious: Contrasting Perspectives on Prosperity among Muslims and Han in China,” in *Market Cultures*.
- Ann Anagnost, “Prosperity and Counter-Prosperity: the Moral Discourse on Wealth in Post-Mao China,” in *Marxism and the Chinese Experience*, pp. 210-234.

#### **V. Stepping Out: Remaking Space and Place**

Session 15: Thursday, 3/30—Danwei

- Michael Dutton, “Daily Life in the Work Unit” and “To be Defined a *Liumang*,” in *Streetlife China*, pp. 42-62.
- Elizabeth Perry, “From Native Place to Workplace: Labor Origins and Outcomes of China’s Danwei System” in *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, pp. 42-59.

Session 16: Monday, 4/3—Hukou

- Michael Dutton, “Analysis,” “Government Strategies (1)” and “Government Strategies (2),” in *Streetlife China*, pp. 76-129
- In-Class Screening: *Out of Phoenix Bridge* (1997), 110 min., dir. Li Hong

Session 17: Thursday, 4/6—Hukou

- Li Zhang, "Migration and Privatization of Space and Power in Late Socialist China." *American Ethnologist* 28:1 (2001): 179-205.
- Chen Tiejun and Mark Selden, "The Construction of Spatial Hierarchies: China's Hukou and Danwei Systems," in *New Perspectives on State Socialism in China*, pp. 23-50.

Session 18: Monday, 4/10—Privatizing Space

- Michael Dutton, "Part IV: The Architecture of Life," in *Streetlife China*, pp. 192-235.
- Yan Yunxiang, "Domestic Space and the Quest for Privacy," in *Private Life Under Socialism*, pp. 112-139.

Session 19: Thursday, 4/13—Translocal and Transnational Practices

- Xin Liu, "Space, Mobility, and Flexibility: Chinese Villagers and Scholars Negotiate Power at Home and Abroad," in *Ungrounded Empires*, pp. 91-114
- Lida Junghans, "Railway Workers Between Plan and Market," in *China Urban*, pp. 183-200.
- Louisa Schein, "The Consumption of Color and the Politics of White Skin in Post-Mao China." *Social Text* 41 (1994): 141-164.

## **VI. Body Politics: Population "Quality" and Gendered Appetites**

Session 20: Tuesday, 4/18 (Rescheduled Class)—Subjectifying Bodies

- Tani Barlow, "Theorizing Woman: *Funu, Guojia, Jiating*," in *Body, Subject, Power*, pp. 253-289.
- Michael Dutton, "Homosexuals in Beijing," "Subaltern Tactics, Government Responses" and "Framing" in *Streetlife China*, pp. 70-74, 130-159, 172-179.

Session 21: Thursday, 4/20—Managing the "Population"

- Ann Anagnost, "A Surfeit of Bodies: Population and the Rationality of the State in Post-Mao China," in *Conceiving the New World Order*, pp. 22-41.
- Susan Greenlagh, "Planned births, unplanned persons: 'Population' in the making of Chinese modernity" in *American Ethnologist* 30:2 (2003): 196-215.

**NOTE: Short paper assignment #2 will be distributed today and must be posted in "ANTH 223-Student Submissions" by next Thursday, 10:00 AM, 4/27/06.**

Session 22: Monday, 4/24—Embodying Desire

- Judith Farquhar, Excerpts from *Appetites: food and sex in post-socialist China*, pp. 37-47, 167-174.
- Lisa Rofel, "Yearnings: Televisual Love and Melodramatic Politics in Contemporary China," in *American Ethnologist*, 21:4 (Nov., 1994): 700-722.
- Susan Brownell, "Training the Body for China" in *Training the Body for China*, pp. 155-179.

## **VII. “Spirits” of the Times: (Re)Staging Religiosity and Ritual Life**

Session 23: Thursday, 4/27

- Ann Anagnost, “The Politics of Ritual Displacement” in *Asian Vision of Authority*
- Stephan Feuchtwang and Wang Mingming, “The Politics of Culture or a Contest of Histories: Representations of Chinese Popular Religion” in *Dialectical Anthropology* 16 (1991): 251-272.

Session 24: Monday, 5/1

- Diane Dorfman, "The Spirits of Reform: The Power of Belief in Northern China." *positions* 4:2 (1996): 253-289.
- Helen Siu, “Recycling Tradition: Culture, History, and Political Economy in the Chrysanthemum Festivals of South China,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32:4 (1990): 765-94.

**NOTE: Final Paper Topics Must Be Emailed to the Instructor by 5 PM Today!**

## **VII. Bridge Over Water? Chinese Cosmopolitanism and Globalization**

Session 25: Thursday, 5/4

- Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang, “Mass Media and Transnational Subjectivity in Shanghai: Notes on (Re)Cosmopolitanism in a Chinese Metropolis,” in *Ungrounded Empires*, pp. 287-322.
- Katharyne Mitchell, “Transnational Subjects: Constituting the Cultural Citizen in the Era of Pacific Rim Capital,” in *Ungrounded Empires*, pp. 228-258.
- In-Class Screening: *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* (1996), dir. Peter Chan

Session 26: Monday, 5/8

- Aihwa Ong, “Chinese Modernities: Narratives of Nation and of Capitalism” in *Ungrounded Empires*, pp.171-202.
- Arif Dirlik, “Critical Reflections on ‘Chinese Capitalism’ as Paradigm,” in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 3:3 (1997): pp. 303-330
- Stephen Uhalley Jr., “ ‘Greater China’: The Contest of a Term” in *positions* 2:2 (1994): 274-293.
- Ted C. Fishman, “The Chinese Century,” *New York Times Magazine* (July 4, 2004).
- Jutendra Joshi, “Chinese oil bid hits sore spot in the US,” *Agence France Press* (June 26, 2005).

**NOTE: Final Papers Due By 4:30 PM on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>**