CHES 5110 Selected Themes on Chinese Media
Digital China--1980s till Today

2019-20, Term 2, Tuesdays + 18:30-21:15, WMY 504

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Course Description

This course will introduce students to the digital transformation of China, including the rise of online social movements and digital contention, censorship and control, the digitization of the state and efforts to encourage indigenous technology, as well as the notion of China as a new global cyberpower. The structure of the course will help students understand the articulation between different facets of digital China: political economy, social movements, and geopolitics. A choice of readings will provide opportunities to discuss various methods used to study digital politics, from ethnographic observation and interviews to digital humanities.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, you should:
- have a basic understanding of the landscape and history of the Chinese digital industry and services,
- understand the articulation of the digital with social movements and transnational trends;
- be able to discuss the different research methods one can use to study the developments of the digital from a social science perspective.

Learning activities

Each class will be composed of a lecture (2/3) and discussions with the class or student presentations (1/3).
It is strongly encouraged to do the readings before class as these will be discussed at the beginning of each session.

This course uses the CUHK eLearning system, which can be found at https://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk. You can find the course readings, assignments and recent announcements on this platform. Make sure to check it regularly.

Assessment scheme

- **Essay (2000 words)**
  Each student will pick a subject among the presentation topics proposed in the schedule below and inform the instructor by email before week 4. It is possible to propose an alternative subject, upon agreement with the instructor.
  Several students can choose the same subject, but this is an individual assessment, it is not permitted to write the essay together. Strong similarities between essays will lead both students to lose points.
  Specific instructions and recommendations will be posted after the start of the semester.
  10% of the grade will be deducted for each day of late submission.

- **Oral presentation (groups of 2, adjusted depending on enrollment)**
  Each group will pick a subject among the presentation topics proposed in the schedule.
It must be a different subject from the one chosen for the essay. Specific instructions and recommendations will be posted after the start of the semester. A Doodle will be set after session 2 to arrange the order of the presentations, on a first come, first serve basis.

- Mid-term exam and final exam
Open questions testing the acquisition of concepts discussed during lectures.

- Attendance and participation

All written assignments should be submitted with signed VeriGuide receipt. VeriGuide can be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide.

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<tr>
<th>Course Grading System:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam 10%</td>
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<td>Final exam 30%</td>
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<td>Attendance and participation 10%</td>
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Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/.

Course schedule

PDF versions of all readings and assignments can be found on the CUHK eLearning System. Registered students may access the CHES 5110 page by using their Student ID and CWEM password.

Session 1 (7 January): Introduction
Goals of the course and evaluation
First overview of course contents and general statistics
Guidelines on sources of information about the Chinese Internet

No reading required

Part 1: Infrastructure Policy and the Creation of the Chinese Digital Landscape

Optional: general reading for part 1

Session 2 (14 January): Telecommunications and media policy since the 80s


No student presentations - Class debate

Doodle: Choice of subjects for group presentations
Session 3 (21 January): Forms of the digital divide in China


No student presentations - Class debate

---- 28 January: No class – Lunar New Year Vacation ----

Session 4 (4 February): The digitization of the state, from e-government to the social credit system


Presentation topic:
- Smart cities
- E-health

**Deadline for choice of subject for the essay** (email or after class)

Part 2: Social media, Social movements and the Control of Online Public Opinion

Optional: general reading for part 1


Session 5 (11 February): The rise of civil society online


Presentation topic:
- The Sun Zhigang case
- Citizen journalism

Session 6 (18 February): Censorship and propaganda


Presentation topic:
- A Chinese Intranet?
- Google and China

Session 7 (25 February): The complexity of public space

(chap 7: The user-generated nation)

Presentation topic:
- The "Little Pinks"
- Human Flesh Search Engines

Session 8 (3 March): Big Data, algorithms, markets, labor and surveillance


Presentation topics:
- No sense of privacy in China?
- Facial recognition

Session 9 (10 March): Digital humanities and the Chinese Internet

Exam: 1 hour


No presentations

Part 3: China and the Global Internet

Session 10 (17 March): Technonationalism and globalization

Exam results and feedback


Presentation topics:
- Huawei
- Made in China 2025

Session 11 (24 March): Internet governance

Essay due


Presentation topics:
- The 2017 Cybersecurity Law
- The World Internet Conference

Session 12 (31 March): Extraterritoriality: soft power and sharp power

Essay results and feedback


Presentation topic:
- 5G Technology and China
- Telecommunications and the BRI

Session 13 (7 April): Hong Kong, Taiwan


Presentation topic:
- Audrey Tang and vTaiwan
- Social media and the Umbrella movement
- Social media and the Sun Flower movement

Session 14 (14 April): Exam and wrap up

Exam: 2 hours

Summary of the course
Feedback on the class