CHES5106 Selected Themes on Chinese Anthropology:
Family, Marriage and Love: Exploring Intimate Relationships in Contemporary China

2020-21, Term 1, Wednesdays 2:30-5:15pm
ZOOM system

Instructor: Lynn SUN (lynnsun@link.cuhk.edu.hk)
Teaching Assistant: TBC

Course description
This course introduces anthropological perspectives on a range of intimate relationships in contemporary Chinese society. It seeks to denaturalize notions such as family, marriage and love through contextualization--putting them back in the historical, political and socio-cultural context in which they are embedded. The questions that will be raised in class include: What factors shape the economic and social formations of intimate relationships in contemporary China? What does it mean to say that romantic love is an ideology? How do Chinese people "do" family today? Are intimate relationships formed in the virtual world any less authentic than those formed in the real world?

The course approaches various kinds of intimate relationships through an anthropological lens, which means that we will explore people's intimate life experiences via ethnography. Based on a series of captivating readings, video clips, discussions and other class activities, this course invites the students to pay attention to the interconnectedness between the “private” and the “public” -- the everyday practices and the economic and socio-political processes. Moreover, this course aims to show how to conduct ethnographic fieldwork and how to use the data collected during fieldwork for analyzing intimate relationships in Chinese society.

Learning Activities
Students are required to attend a two-hour lecture, followed by a one-hour tutorial session every week presenting and discussing the relevant readings on that week's chosen topic. They are expected to have done the required readings before lecture, so that they can ask informed questions. Some tutorial time will also be spent on discussing ethnographic methods to help the students develop their own research papers.

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

Learning Outcomes
After taking this course, students should:
- Critically understand key concepts related to intimate relationships, such as love, marriage, and family;
- Apply a theoretical debate on the social and cultural construction of one's “private” versus “public” life and their historical significance;
- Learn ethnographic methods to collect data on people's everyday intimate experiences;
- be able to locate and use secondary sources relevant to selected topics.

Assessment Scheme
- Attendance and participation (15%)

Prompt attendance at each class meeting, active and informed participation are keys to a meaningful learning experience. Completing assigned readings before coming to each class,
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listening attentively to others, raising insightful questions, posing alternative interpretations, sharing your related experiences are some of the effective ways to do so. The evaluation will be based on both your attendance, and more importantly, your engagement in classes. Since teaching will be conducted online via ZOOM system, students are required to join the ZOOM classroom on time. Please make sure your electronic device is equipped with a ZOOM app and a camera (available on Desktop, iPad, Mobile Phone). The instructor or TA will ask all students to show up in front of the camera at the beginning and the end of the lecture to check attendance. During the lecture, participants might be muted to avoid echo/noise. There might be group discussion questions during the lecture as well as tutorial to ensure everyone is actively listening and participating.

- Discussion Facilitation (25%):

  9 tutorials will be open to facilitation by 3 to 4 student(s). Sign up for the topic you are interested in during the 2nd lecture (Week of Sep.16).

  Your cardinal job is to raise critical questions and lead the class to discuss particular issues that your group finds important. Feel free to bring in outside material – news stories, case studies, film clips, and use a variety of formats – role play, debate, games etc. – to facilitate learning. As facilitators, it is important for you to think through these exercises carefully before coming to class, planning it step by step with clear instructions. The tutorial facilitation will be hold on ZOOM until face-to-face class resumes.

- TWO (2) Discussion Posts (10% each - 20% total)

  Students should post initial responses (no less than 400 words, no more than 500 words, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margin at all sides, double-spaced, page numbered) to the Blackboard together with a PDF file of the signed Veriguide receipt. Each post should address a topic of your interest listed in the weekly readings. Posts should not be simple reading summaries, but should engage with critical issues discussed in class; address specific passages, quotes, or scenes from the assigned readings. Posts are due by 8pm every Tuesday.

- Research paper (40%):

  Students should write a paper on a specific intimate relationship of their choice. Using the analytical tools you have acquired and the critical distance you have gained throughout the course from your own ideals of intimacy/family/marriage, write an essay based on the ethnographic research (mainly one or two in-depth interviews, as well as some participant observation if feasible) you conducted during the semester.

  The writing of the paper is divided into two steps. First, students will be required to submit a brief proposal outline related to their paper topic (10%), due on November 18 before class (Submit a soft copy of your piece via Blackboard to the instructor). The final research paper (3,000-3,500 words) accounts for 30% of the class grade. Students will receive two sessions of how to conduct ethnographic research and write an ethnographic paper in the fourth session (WEEK 4) and the last session (WEEK 13). A soft copy of the final paper should be submitted via Blackboard to the instructor together with a signed Veriguide receipt no later than December 11 (Fri.), 2020. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.

  VeriGuide can be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide.

Course Grading System:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Facilitation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>40% (10% proposal+30% final research paper)</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/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/). With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

### Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 1 (9 Sep): An Anthropological Approach to Intimate Relationships in Contemporary China</th>
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<th>WEEK 2 (16 Sep): Constructing Ideals: Changing Public Discourses Surrounding Family, Love and Sexuality I</th>
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<td><strong>NO TUTORIAL (Sign up for the tutorial facilitation)</strong></td>
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<th>WEEK 3 (23 Sep): Constructing Ideals: Changing Public Discourses Surrounding Family, Love and Sexuality II</th>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK 4 (30 Sep): Learning Ethnographic Methods for Studying Everyday Intimate Experiences</th>
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<th>WEEK 5 (7 Oct): Courtship, Love and Premarital Sex</th>
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1 Readings with ** are recommended readings.
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WEEK 6 (14 Oct): The Politics of Conjugal Relationship I (gender dynamics)


WEEK 7 (21 Oct): The Politics of Conjugal Relationship II (Love and Sexuality)


WEEK 8 (28 Oct): The Politics of Conjugal Relationship III (economic aspect)


WEEK 9 (4 Nov): Intergenerational Relationship I: Parenting


WEEK 10 (11 Nov): Intergenerational Relationship II: Filial Piety


WEEK 11 (18 Nov): The Ethics of Intimacy

Final Research Paper Proposal Due


WEEK 12 (25 Nov): Beyond Nominal Family and Marriage: Sexuality and Performativity


Lo, Kam Yip Lucetta. 2010. “Opening Up Marriage: Married Lalas in Shanghai”. In As Normal As Possible: Negotiating Sexuality and Gender in Mainland China and Hong Kong, pp. 87-102.


WEEK 13 (2 Dec): Individual Consultation Sessions via ZOOM System

NO TUTORIAL

Friday, 11 December 2020: Final paper due