

## **CHES5101 Selected Themes on Gender in China: Gender and Culture in Contemporary China**

*2021-22, Term 2, Wednesdays 1:30-4:15pm*  
**Venue: TBC**

**Instructor:** Lynn SUN (lynnsun@cuhk.edu.hk)

**Teaching Assistant:** TBC

### **Course description**

This course takes an anthropological perspective to debate on a general human category, gender, in the context of contemporary Chinese society. Through this approach the course will show how the notion of gender is largely a sociocultural product. The anthropological approach helps us contemplate taken for granted beliefs regarding gender and sexuality. Gender politics in essence address difference and inequality. Reflecting upon how gender became a category of analysis for anthropologists, we bring to the fore the relationship between culture and power. Students will explore material, economic, political, and sociocultural factors that underpin such processes of construction. This course will start from introducing core concerns, arguments, and approaches related to gender and sexuality in China. After the introductory sessions, we will focus, week by week, on common (or controversial) gender and sexual issues we encounter in our daily lives. Students are encouraged to examine their own gender identities and beliefs critically; to not only understand how our gender assumptions are shaped but also to develop one's own gender statement.

### **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:

- examine how gender becomes an analytical category for anthropology;
- understand gender and sexual diversities in contemporary China;
- analyze how gender intersects with other forms of differences and understand hierarchies in Chinese society;
- cultivate critical reflections about gender stereotypes and choose one's standpoint;
- also, do independent research on gender-related 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, 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 class (5% of this part of the grade will depend exclusively on your tutorial participation, see below).**

- Discussion Facilitation (20%):

**Nine** tutorials will be open to facilitation by 2 to 3 students. Sign up for the topic you are interested in **during the 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture** (Week of Jan.19).

Each group will have **20 to 25 minutes** to present. Your cardinal job is to raise critical questions relating to that week's theme and provoke thinking. While you need to prepare your presentation based on the course readings provided by the below weekly reading list, feel free to bring in outside material relating to the theme of the week – 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 remaining **20 to 25 minutes** are **exclusively for in-class discussion**. Every student is encouraged to participate. **5% of the overall “attendance and participation” grade** stated above will depend on your performance in this part.

- Presentation and Reflection Paper on a Gender Issue in Contemporary China (15% + 20%)

Use one piece of advertisement, news, movie, song, painting photo, etc. or your personal story about yourself, your relatives, your friends, etc. that describes your ideas about a gender issue in contemporary China. Describe in **1,200- 1,500 words** why it catches your attention and why you think it's worth discussing. A good reflection paper should also relate the story to the issues discussed in class and in the readings. This is a good chance for you to scrutinize your view towards gender/sexuality.

A sharing and story-telling session will be held on **Mar 2**. **Submit a soft copy of your piece with the relevant image (if applicable) on that day via Blackboard before the class starts, together with a PDF file of the signed Veriguide receipt.**

- Research paper (30%):

Students will research and write a paper of **3,000 to 3,500 words** on a specific gender issue in China of their choice. Topic for this research paper can be related to your reflection paper or an entirely new one. The paper should be based mainly on **primary data** collected by yourself via interviews/surveys/library (archival) research/digital (social media) research, etc. Students are also required to use **no less than three course readings** to facilitate their arguments. Using outside secondary sources is certainly welcome too. All students seeking to produce high quality work should discuss the research design and source base of their paper with the instructor.

Students will receive one compulsory consultation session on the writing of this paper **in WEEK 15 (Apr. 20)**. **A soft copy** of the final paper, in **PDF form**, should be submitted **via Blackboard** to the instructor together with a **signed Veriguide receipt no later than April 29, 2022**. **Late assignments will NOT be accepted.**

\*\*In order to ensure the quality of your final paper, you are encouraged to submit a brief proposal/plan (no more than 500 words) on or before **April 6** via **email** and tell the instructor your ideas about how to develop and organize your final paper. **It is entirely optional.**

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

### Course Grading System:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Discussion Facilitation	20%
Presentation and Reflection Paper	35% (15% presentation+ 20% reflection paper)
Research paper	30%

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/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

### Course Schedule

WEEK 1 (12 Jan): What is Gender, and Why do We Study Gender?: *An Anthropological Approach to Gender and Sexuality*

**NO TUTORIAL**

Ortner, Sherry. 1974. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture, and Society*, M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds. Pp. 67-87.

\*\*<sup>1</sup>Rosaldo, Michelle. 1974. "Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview." In M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds. *Woman, Culture and Society*. Pp. 17-42.

WEEK 2 (19 Jan): *Performing Chinese Femininities*

**NO TUTORIAL (Sign up for the tutorial facilitation)**

Pei, Yuxin, and Petula Sik-ying Ho. 2006. "Iron Girls, Strong Women, Beautiful Women Writers and Super Girls: A Discourse Analysis of the Gender Performance of Women in Contemporary China." *Lilith* 15: 61-71.

Pei, Yuxin. 2011. "Multiple Sexual Relationships as a New Lifestyle: Young Women's Sexuality in Contemporary Shanghai." *Women's Studies International Forum* (34): 401-410.

Feng, Jin. 2013. "Men Conquer the World and Women Save Mankind." In *Romancing the Internet: Producing and Consuming Chinese Web Romance*, pp. 85-108.

WEEK 3 (26 Jan): *The Hybridity and Pluralism of Contemporary Chinese Masculinities*

Song, Geng, and Derek Hird. 2014. "Chinese Masculinity: Is There Such a Thing?" In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*, pp. 1-21. Leiden: Brill.

Geng SONG, "Chinese Masculinities Revisited: Male Images in Contemporary Television Drama Serials." *Modern China* 36:4 (July 2010): 404-434.

\*\*MANN, Susan. 2000. "The male bond in Chinese history and culture." *American Historical Review* 105 (5): 1600-1614.

WEEK 4 (2 Feb): **NO CLASS (Lunar New Year Holiday)**

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<sup>1</sup>Readings with \*\* are recommended readings.

WEEK 5 (9 Feb): Gender and the Chinese State

Rofel, Lisa. 1999. "Allegories of Postsocialism." In *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism*, pp. 217-256. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yang, M. M.-H. 1999. "From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women's Public Sphere in China." In *Spaces of Their Own: Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China*. M. M.-H. Yang, ed.: Pp. 35-67. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

\*\*Yang, Wenqi, and Yan Fei. 2017. "The Annihilation of Femininity in Mao's China: Gender Inequality of Sent-down youth during the Cultural Revolution." *China Information* 31 (1): 63-83.

\*\*NAGEL, Joane. 1998. "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, 2: 242-68.

WEEK 6 (16 Feb): Gender, Marriage, Power and Resistance

Siu, Helen F. 1990 "Where were the Women? Rethinking Marriage Resistance and Regional Culture in South China". *Late Imperial China* 2(2): 32-62.

Chao, Emily. 2005. "Cautionary Tales: Marriage Strategies, State Discourse, and Women's Agency in a Nazi Village in Southwestern China." In Nicole Constable, ed, *Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia*, pp. 34-52.

\*\*Wolf, Margery. 1972. "CH3: Uterine Families and the Women's Community." In *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*. Pp. 32-42. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

\*\*Watson, Rubie S. 1991. "Wives, Concubines, and Maids: Servitude and Kinship in the Hong Kong Region, 1900-1940." In *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, edited by Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey, 231-255. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WEEK 7 (23 Feb): Empowerment or New Forms of Exploitation?: Gendered Mobility in Contemporary China

Schein Louisa. 2005. "Marrying out of Place: Hmong/Miao Women Across and Beyond China." In Nicole Constable, ed, *Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia*, pp. 53-79.

Klein, Kerstin. 2016. "Assisted Reproductive Technologies, Sperm Donation, and Biological Kinship: A Recent Chinese Media Debate." In *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century*: pp. 219-233.

WEEK 8 (2 Mar): **Presentation Day**

**\*Reflection paper Due**

**NO TUTORIAL**

WEEK 9 (9 Mar): Gender, Class, and Work

Yan, Hairong. 2008. "Part I 'Intellectuals' Burden' and Domestic Labor." In *New Masters, New Servants: Migration, Development, and Women Workers in China*, pp. 57-79. Durham: Duke University Press.

Pun, Ngai. 2005. "Imaging Sex and Gender in the Workplace." In *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*, pp. 133-164. Durham: Duke University Press.

WEEK 10 (16 Mar): Gender, Eating and Cooking

Martin, Diana. 2001. "Food Restrictions in Pregnancy among Hong Kong Mothers." In David Y. H. Wu and Chee-Beng Tan, eds., *Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia*, pp.97-122. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Gao, James, Z. 2013. "Eating, Cooking, and Shanghai's "Less-than-Manly Men": The Social Consequences of Food Rationing and Economic Reforms." *Front. Hist. China* 8 (2): 259-293.

WEEK 11 (23 Mar): Gender, Aging and Caregiving

Zhan, Heying Jenny. and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery. 2003. "Gender and Elder Care in China: The Influence of Filial Piety and Structural Constraints." *Global Perspectives on Gender and Carework* 17 (2): 209-229.

Eleanor, Holroy. 2001. "Hong Kong Chinese Daughters' Intergenerational Caregiving Obligations: A Cultural Model Approach." *Social Science & Medicine* 53 (9): 1125-1134.

WEEK 12 (30 Mar): **NO CLASS** Work on Your Final paper!

WEEK 13 (6 Apr): Gender, Body and Consumption

**Final Research Paper Proposal Due (Optional)**

Wen, Hua. 2013, "The Commodification of the Body." In *Buying Beauty: Cosmetic Surgery in China*, pp. 125-146.

Zheng, Tiantian. 2009. "Turning in the Grain: Sex and the Modern Man." In *Red Lights: The Lives of Sex Workers in Postsocialist China*, pp. 105-146.

\*\*Song, Geng, and Derek Hird. 2014. "Masculinities at Leisure." In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*, pp. 169-210. Leiden: Brill.

WEEK 14 (13 Apr): Romancing and Queering the Cyberspace: Gender and the Charm of "Beautiful Men"

Tan, Chris K.K., and Xu Zhiwei. 2019. "Virtually boyfriends: the 'Social Factory' and Affective Labor of Male Virtual Lovers in China." *Information, Communication & Society*.

Feng, Jin. 2013. "Addicted to Beauty." In *Romancing the Internet: Producing and Consuming Chinese Web Romance*, pp. 53-83.

\*\*\*"Androgynous Beauty, Virtual Sisterhood: Stardom, Fandom, and Chinese Talent Show under Globalization." in *Super Girls, Gangsters, Freeters, and Xenomaniacs*. Eds. Susan Dewey and Karen Brison. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. 104-124.

WEEK 15 (20 Apr): Individual Consultation Sessions (TBA)

**NO TUTORIAL**

**Friday, 29 April 2022: Final paper due**