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MCC-GE 2836  Culture and Media in Urban China  

This graduate course combines an interdisciplinary seminar on methods in China studies and a “writing group” format for graduate students developing original research on historical and contemporary formations of Chinese media and material culture: historical documents, art, photography, films, television shows, legal cases, novels, magazines, blogs and microblogs, material objects, ritual events, etc. We will read from outstanding books in China studies, including sociology, history, art history, anthropology, and media studies. Our discussion of these readings will focus on comparing methodological and analytical approaches to a range of text/objects, and contrasting forms of argument that focus on: 1) “cosmology” (cultures, conceptual schemes, languages, ideologies); 2) “politics” (conflict, difference, distinction); and 3) “structure” (networks and systems, kinship, clientalism, bureaucracy). Over the course of the semester students will develop analyses of their own text/objects, and use these analyses to develop journal articles, MA theses, or dissertation chapters.

LEARNING OUTCOMES  
Students in this course will be able to:  
- Demonstrate familiarity with specific aspects of Chinese material, popular, and media culture.  
- Synthesize theory and scholarship on material culture and urban culture.  
- Demonstrate understanding of methodological approaches to cultural analysis.  
- Apply methods to critical analysis to specific objects of study.  
- Formulate comparative analyses of Chinese cultural artifacts through the frameworks of cosmology, politics, and structure.  
- Produce a journal article, thesis draft or dissertation chapter of in-depth analysis.

Assignments:  
1. Text-Object, due week 5 (Bring to class to share): 10%  
2. Analysis, due week 7 (a 5-page rough draft, developing an analysis of the object): 20%  
3. Paper, due at the end of finals week (up to 20 pages including notes and bibliography, putting the object in a broader comparative, historical, ethnographic, or theoretical context): 30%  
4. Participation in class (including contribution to discussion of readings and feedback to colleagues in workshop sessions): 40%
Evaluation Rubric
A= Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B=Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

COURSE POLICIES
Absences and Lateness
Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for rescheduling exams. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format
Please type and double-space your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format Yourlastname Coursenumber Assignment1.doc
Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

General Decorum
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity
The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you
- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from other’s oral work;
paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
• copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

• Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
• Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
• Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
• Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
• Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions
When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the New York University Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.
STUDENT RESOURCES

- Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

- Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 4th Floor. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu or just walk-in.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1. Introductory lecture and discussion:
- Disciplines are (were) defined by their objects (forms of data), their analytical models, and the causes (structures/forces) to which they attribute phenomena. But disciplines overlap, share, interpermeate. Areas are (or were) defined by geography, political, social, cultural and linguistic boundaries; and by temporal period (era). What is method in an interdisciplinary context? What is the significance of area studies in the era of the “global network”?
- What is method in area studies? How do discipline and area intersect? Do certain place-times demand certain approaches?
- How do we isolate an object? How do we choose an analytic?
- Of what do we take our texts and objects as evidence?

Section 1: Cosmologies: cultures, conceptual schemes, languages, ideologies

Week 2.
Kuriyama, Shigehisa. 1999 The Expressiveness of the Body in Greek and Chinese Medicine. Zone books, Ch. 2 (on pulse), Ch. 4 (on colors), 6 (on winds)

Week 3.
Chu, Julie. 2010. Cosmologies of Credit. Duke. Ch. 3 Snakeheads and paper trails Ch. 5 Money for use in heaven or hell
Martin Ahern, Emily. 1973. Stanford. The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village (Ch. 1, 3)
Week 4.
Farquhar, Judy. 2008. Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-socialist China. Duke Ch. 2, Medicinal Meals, Ch. 3 A feast for the mind
Wu Hung. 1996. The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting. University of Chicago. (Ch. 2, 4)

Workshop: Week 5: Objects

Section 2: Politics: conflict, difference, distinction, transition

Week 6.
Zhang Xudong: Postsocialism and Cultural Politics (1, 2); Chinese Modernism in the Age of Reform (7, 11);

Week 7.
Liu Xin. 2009. The Mirage of China. Bergahn (Ch. 3,4)

Week 8.

Week 9.
Gao Minglu. Total Modernity and the Avant-Garde in twentieth Century Chinese Art. The ‘85 movement; the post-’85 avant-garde

Workshop: Week 10: Analyses

Section 3: Structure: network, system, kinship, clientalism, bureaucracy

Week 11.
Hevia, James. Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the MacCartney Embassy of 1763 Intro and Chapter 2 (interdomainal relationships)
Week 12.

Week 13.
Freedman, Maurice. 1966. Lineage Organization in Southeastern China

Section 4. History: genealogy sui generis

Week 14: Donald Deglopper, “Religion and Ritual in Lukang”

Workshop: Week 15: Papers