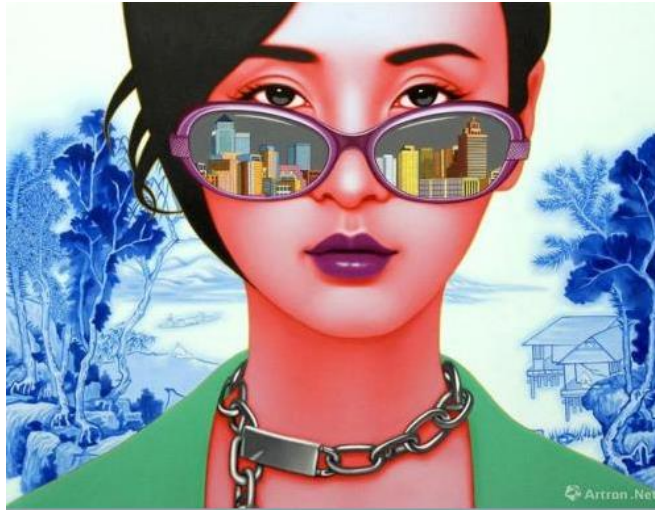


Chinese Popular Culture through Ethnography and Film  
Winter 2021 Anthropology 304 (CRN 15220)  
Prof. Sandra Teresa Hyde (she/elle)  
WED 4:05-5:15 & FRI 10:25-12:25



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**FRIDAY Ted-talk Lectures** posted on MyCourses 10 AM

**WEDNESDAY Synchronous Livestream** zoom discussions 4:05 PM - 5:15 PM

**EIGHT FILM LABS (outside of class)** – begin watching during class time on FRIDAYS. All films are required texts.

**Office Hours:** TR 3-5 PM

**OVERVIEW** As scholar Monroe Price says, “There is hardly a more important set of narratives for the twenty-first century than those concerning the role of China in the world.” This course is an introduction to popular culture in China focusing on the People's Republic of China (1949-present) through the mediums of ethnography and film. We will engage both these mediums in order to learn about Chinese history, from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, moving from the Chinese revolution and its aftermath to the post-reform period. The course will focus on the emergence of post-Cultural Revolution Chinese cinema and anthropological research over last thirty years. Chinese cinema of the 1980s is unique as it was when Chinese directors of “the Fifth generation” began to receive critical international acclaim for their experimental narratives and bold visual styles. During this same time period, anthropologists, after a long hiatus, returned to China to conduct lengthy fieldwork inside the socialist middle kingdom. The course themes are: China in the Cold War; the Cultural Revolution; the Tiananmen protests; gender, colonialism and representations of ethnic minorities; the generation model of Chinese filmography; migrant labor; Chinese capitalism(s), and Chinese environmental activism.

**Prerequisites:** One 200-level anthropology course; plus, one social science or humanities course; or majoring in East Asian Studies, or permission of instructor.

**CLASS SCHEDULE for COVID WINTER TERM**

The class has off-line and online components.

**Off-line** will begin on Fridays with a prerecorded mini-lecture podcast where I link the readings and themes to central questions in anthropology. You can listen to my mini-lecture and it will be posted by 10 AM. There is no formal online class component on Fridays as this is time to stream the film of the week. It also gives you time to begin linking the readings to the films for your synopses due the following Wednesday. Synchronous **ZOOM Online** are Wednesdays from approximately 4:05 PM - 5:15 PM where we will collectively launch into a fruitful and engaging discussion for 70 minutes. All students are expected to participate either online or through the chat function.

Keeping in mind fluidity and flexibility, here is the breakdown of class time.

#### **OFF-LINE – FRIDAYS 10:25-12:25 (note its scheduled for 2-hours)**

Prerecorded– Ted Talk-length introductory podcast posted to MyCourses by 10 AM

Class time 10:35 AM – 12:25 Listen to the mini-lecture podcast and begin watching the week’s film.

#### **ONLINE – WEDNESDAYS Livestream ZOOM 4:05-5:15**

4:05 – 4:10 Logistics and announcements

4:10 – 5:20 Group livestream discussion linking readings and films

#### **WRITTEN TEXTS**

Rojas and Litzinger book is available as an Ebook from the McLennan Library website and Ni Zhen is available for purchase at Paragraphe Books 2220, McGill College Avenue. All additional readings are posted to MyCourses. All films are available to stream through McGill or YouTube.

**Rojas, Carl and Ralph Litzinger (2016) *Ghost Protocol: Development and Displacement in Global China*.** Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Ebook.

<https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1215/9780822374022>

**Ni Zhen (2003) *Memoirs of the Beijing Film Academy*,** Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

**Purchase hard copy.**

All other required readings are available on MyCourses – **marked MC**.

#### **FEATURE FILMS and DOCUMENTARIES**

Sue Williams, 1989, ***China A Century of Revolution: Part 1. 1911-1949***, (120m)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5cl0GjPjy4>

Xie Jin, 1961, ***Red Detachment of Women*** (*Hongse niangzi jun* 红色娘子军, 92m)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoPM9d18e9o>

Carma Hinton & Richard Gordon, 1996, ***Tiananmen: The Gate of Heavenly Peace*** (200m)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Gtt2JxmQtg>

Chen Kaige, 1984, ***Yellow Earth*** (*Huang tudi*, 黄土地 86 m)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEqfyZGYVrM>

Zhang Yimou, 1991, ***Raise the Red Lantern*** (*Da hong denglong gaogao gua*, 大红灯笼高高挂 126m)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDmVNpIRRIQ>

Lu Chuan, 2005, ***The Mountain Patrol***, (*Kekekexili*, 可可西里 85m) – to be streamed

Jia Zhangke, 2013, ***A Touch of Sin***, (*Tian Zhuding* 天注定 156m) - to be streamed

Qiu Sheng, 2018, *Suburban Birds* (*Jiaoqu de niao*, 郊区的鸟 118m) – on Canopy

## PART 1 DOCUMENTARY IMAGINARIES

**Week 1: FRI JAN 8<sup>th</sup>** Review syllabus and complete preparatory mind-map exercise on MyCourses.

### **WED JAN. 13: China, Popular Culture and Film – What’s at Stake?**

**Livestream ZOOM and discussion** - Logistics and introduction to why popular culture, ethnography and film provide the perfect kismet for understanding contemporary China.

**Reading:** The Economist, Editors. (2019). The story of China’s economy as told through the world’s biggest building. *The Economist*. **MC**.

Wicks, J. (2009). Cinema in China: A Brief History. In *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China* (pp. 396–404). Berkshire Publishing Group. **MC**.

Editors of Time Out Shanghai. (2014). “The 100 best Mainland Chinese films,” *Time Out Shanghai*. **MC**.

### **Week 2: FRI JAN. 15 From the Revolution to the Cold War**

**Ted Talk Lecture** – A nutshell history of China up to China’s role in the Cold War

**#1 Film Screening** – Sue William’s, *China a Century of Revolution*: Part one 1911- 1949. 120m. 1989. To stream

**Reading:** Dai, J. (2018). History, Memory, and Politics of Representation. In L. Rofel (Ed.), & R. Karl (Trans.), *After the Post–Cold War: The Future of Chinese History* (pp. 140–159). Duke University Press. **MC**

Lovell, J. (2019). Chapter 1: What is Maoism? In *Maoism: A Global History* (pp. 25–59). **MC**

**JAN. 20 DISCUSSION** Dai Jinhua, Julia Lovell and William’s Film

### **Week 3: JAN. 22 Revolution within a Revolution**

**Ted Talk Lecture** - The Cultural Revolution and its aftermath

**#2 Screening** – Xie Jin’s *Red Detachment of Women*. 89m. 1961. To stream

**Reading:** Lovell, J. (2019b). Chapter 4: World Revolution and Chapter 12: Mao-ish China In *Maoism: A Global History* (pp. 125-150 and 420–458). **MC**

Ramzy, A. (2016). China’s Cultural Revolution, Explained. *The New York Times*.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/15/world/asia/china-cultural-revolution-explainer.html>)

**JAN. 27 DISCUSSION** Xie’s film and Lovell’s two chapters.

### **Week 4: JAN. 29 Nationalism and its Discontents**

**Ted Talk Lecture** - Tiananmen and the 1989 Democracy Movement

**#3 Film Screening** – *Tiananmen: The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon, dir., **note its 200m**. 1996.

**Reading:** Litzinger, R. A. (1999). Screening the Political: Pedagogy and Dissent in The Gate of Heavenly Peace. *Positions: Asia Critique*, 7(3), 827–850. **MC**  
Rojas, C. (2016). Introduction: “Specters of Marx, Shades of Mao, and the Ghosts of Global Capital.” In *Ghost Protocol*, (pp. 1–12).  
Chronology. (n.d.). 20th Century China: A Partial Chronology. Chronology.  
(<http://www.tsquare.tv/chronology/>)

Visit and study the web page on the film at: [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gate](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gate)

**WED FEB. 3 DISCUSSION** Litzinger, Rojas and Litzinger and Hinton Film.

## **PART 2**

### **THE RISE of LATE-SOCIALIST AESTHETICS and ETHICS**

#### **Week 5: FEB. 5 The Making of the “Fifth Generation”**

**Ted Talk Lecture** - The Rise of a Late-Socialist Film Aesthetic and the History of Chinese Film

**Reading:** Ni, Z. (2002). Chapters 1 & 2. In *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy: The Genesis of China’s Fifth Generation* (pp. 1–112).

**Supplemental reading:** Dai, J. (2002). Severed Bridge: The Art of the Son’s Generation. In *Cinema and Desire: Feminist Marxism and Cultural Politics in the Work of Dai Jinhua* (pp. 13–48). Verso Books. **MC**

**FEB. 10 DISCUSSION** Ni and Dai reading.

#### **Week 6: FEB. 12 Popular Art Films as Ethnographic Texts**

**Zoom Guest Lecture** – Prof. Blaine Chiasson, Professor of Chinese History, Wilfred-Laurier University on History and Representation in Chen Kaige’s Films

**#4 Film Lab** Chen Kaige, *Yellow Earth*, 86 m. 1984. To stream

**Reading:** Ni, Z. (2002). Chapters 3, 4, and Postscript. In *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy: The Genesis of China’s Fifth Generation* (pp. 114–191 & 192–200).

**Supplemental reading:** Marchetti, G. (1988). “Two from China’s fifth generation: Interviews with Chen Kaige and Tian Zhuangzhuang,” *Continuum*, 2(1), 128–134. **MC**.

**FEB. 17 DISCUSSION** via Zoom Ni Zhen, Marchetti and Chen film.

**Week 7: FRIDAY FEB. 19 – FRIDAY FEB. 26th** Midterm take-home exercise posted to MyCourses, and there is no lecture on the following Wednesday giving you ample time to write and polish your essays.

**DUE: Take-home Midterm midnight FRIDAY Feb. 26 (technically TR morning)**

**Winter break March 1 - 7**

## **PART 3**

### **GENDER, ORIENTALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM**

**Week 8: WED MARCH 10** Individual meetings with Professor about your progress

## **FRI MARCH 12 Biopolitics and Gender Now and Then**

**Ted Talk Lecture** – Gender, Ethnicity and Orientalism

**#5 Film Lab** - Zhang Yimou, *Raise the Red Lantern* 126m. 1991

**Reading:** Hyde, S. T. (2007). Introduction and Chapter 4. In *Eating Spring Rice: The Cultural Politics of AIDS in Southwest China* (pp. 1-34 and 128-149). University of California Press. (ebook access TBA)

Leng, R. (2016). Chapter 7: “Queer Reflections and Recursion in Homoerotic Bildungsroman”. In C. Rojas & R. A. Litzinger (Eds.), *Ghost Protocol* (pp. 150–163).

**MARCH 17 DISCUSSION via Zoom** Hyde, Leng and Zhang Yimou film.

## **Week 9: MARCH 19 Tibet, Protests and the Environment**

**Zoom Guest Lecture by Libo**, the former executive director of China’s first national environmental NGO, Friends of Nature 自然之友.

**#6 Film Lab** - Lu Chuan’s *Kekexili*, 85m. 2005

**Reading:** Tilt, B. (2016). Chapter 4: "Dams, Displacement, and the Moral Economy in Southwest China" in *Ghost Protocol*, (pp.

Yeh, E. T., & Kabzung. (2016). Chapter 5: "Slaughter Renunciation in Tibetan Pastoral Areas: Buddhism, Neoliberalism, and the Ironies of Alternative Development". In C. Rojas & R. A. Litzinger (Eds.), *Ghost Protocol*, (pp.

Woesser, T. (2016). “Why Are Tibetans Setting Themselves on Fire?” *The New York Review of Books*. **MC**

**MARCH 24 DISCUSSION via Zoom** - Kabzung and Yeh, Tilt, NYRB piece.

## **PART 4**

### **DANGER, DESPAIR AND HOPE IN THE AGE OF CAPITAL**

## **Week 10: MARCH 26 China’s Migrants Masses**

**Ted Talk Lecture** – Migrants and Postcolonial Political Economy in Xishuangbanna

**#7 Film Lab** - Jia Zhangke, *A Touch of Sin*, 153m. 2013, to stream.

**Reading:** Litzinger, R. A. (2016). Chapter 9: "Regimes of Exclusion and Inclusion: Migrant Labor, Education, and Contested Futurities". In C. Rojas and R.A. Litzinger (Eds.), *Ghost Protocol* (pp. 191–204).

Hairong, Y., and Yiyuan, C (2015). Agrarian Capitalization without Capitalism? Capitalist

Dynamics from Above and Below in China. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 15(3), 366–391. **MC**

Zhang, L. (2018). Convergence and Divergence among the Rich and the Poor. In D. J. Solinger (Ed.), *Polarized Cities: Portraits of Rich and Poor in Urban China* (pp. 43–56). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. **MC**

**MARCH 31 DISCUSSION via Zoom** - Jia film, Litzinger, Zhang Li, and Yan Hairong and Chen Yiyuan.

## **Week 11: APRIL 3 Memory**

**Ted Talk Lecture – Resurrecting the Past in the Present**

**#8 Film Lab - Qiu Sheng, 2018, *Suburban Birds* (*Jiaoqu de niao*, 郊区的鸟 118m)**

**Reading: TBA**

**APRIL 7 DISCUSSION via Zoom – Qiu Sheng film and readings**

**Week 12: APRIL 9 Wrap-up mini-Ted Talk lecture and final zoom discussion.**

**DUE: Comparative Film Review posted to MyCourses midnight FRI APRIL 16<sup>th</sup>**

**REQUIREMENTS**

This course combines lectures, weekly discussion, (five) written film critiques and **eight** streamed film labs. This is an intensive writing course that requires 7 writing assignments that amount to 20 pages of text. You are graded equally on composition and content as this is a writing across the curriculum course. English as a Second Language students are highly encouraged to seek AUS writing center support and peer editing.

**FILM SYNOPSES** -- A 1-page single-spaced, 12pt font, no more than 500 words, analytical synopsis is due for **5 out of the 8 film weeks**. [A sample is posted on MC](#). I grade synopses on a check scale √+, √ (+), √/√+, √, √- that roughly corresponds from excellent to unsatisfactory.

**FINAL FILM REVIEW** – The final assignment will draw on your previously submitted short synopses from the second half of the course. You will compare any two films, using a similar format to our weekly synopses, and you have one week to complete the assignment.

Participation – As this is dual-pedagogy course, you will have 75 minutes a week with the instructor and your classmates to discuss and link the readings to the films. You will be graded on the quality of your participation. I realize there is a subjective element to grading participation, but it is a small percentage of your grade. What will not get you a B grade is never opening your mouth or posting only to the Zoom chat function.

<b>1) FILM SYNOPSES AS REFLECTIONS 40 %</b>	Five film synopses that link the readings and films. The goal is to build your analytical and interpretive writing skills (min. word count 400).	<b>write 5/8 – single spaced 1-page in minimum 12-point font.</b> <b>Post to Course Dropbox by Wednesday at 2pm</b>
<b>2) MIDTERM 25%</b>	A take-home that will consist of two essays linking the materials in the first half of the course.	<b>FEB 26<sup>th</sup> to MyCourses assignments tool</b>
<b>3) FINAL FILM REVIEW 20%</b>	Linking and revising two film critiques adding a general introduction and a conclusion. One must be from Part 3 or 4.	<b>April 16th to MyCourses assignment tool</b>
<b>4) PARTICIPATION 15%</b>	Attend and participate in a 1-hour discussion group over Zoom on	<b>Wednesdays during registered class time for the course.</b>

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:**

All course content, including slides, zoom video recordings, lecture notes, assignment questions, and instructions, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. You may certainly use course materials for your own learning needs. However, you are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so violates the instructor's and the university's intellectual property rights and is cause for disciplinary action.

**EMAIL POLICY:** As this is going to be a time consuming and challenging semester for all of us, I kindly ask that students use their **official McGill email** and email me during working hours M-F from 9-5.

**PRONOUNS:** Please inform me of your preferred name, nickname and/or pronouns.

**ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** I will do my best to accommodate students with disabilities. If this pertains to you, I encourage you to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009 or 1010 Sherbrooke Ouest, suite 410) so that we can provide necessary accommodations as soon as possible. (<https://www.mcgill.ca/osd>).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/>) Please note the syllabus (and possibly class time) will change depending on the needs of those attending this class and the challenges of the COVID pandemic.

**WRITTEN LANGUAGES:** Following McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students have the right to submit all written assignments in English OR Français.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** McGill University is located on unceded indigenous territory. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of territory and waters on which McGill stands. Tioitiá:ke/Montreal is historically a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population and we respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationship with the Indigenous and diverse populations that live here.

**Recommended Readings:**

Carl Rojas and Eileen Chow, Eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar, Eds. *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation*, Columbia University Press, 2006.

Felicia Chan and Andy Willis, Eds. *Chinese Cinemas: International Perspectives*, Routledge Publishers, 2016.

Shuqin Cui, *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema*, University of Hawaii Press, 2003.

Tonglin Lu, *Confronting Modernity in the Cinemas of Taiwan and Mainland China*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002.

Zhang Yingjin, Ed. *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2012.

**Useful websites and blogs in English:**

South China Morning Post newspaper online <http://www.scmp.com/frontpage/international>

China Digital Times – Out of University of California at Berkeley <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/about/>

Sixth Tone online <http://www.sixthtone.com/>

The China Story Yearbook: <https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2019-china-dreams/>

<https://madeinchinajournal.com> short entries, driven by current events focusing on labor issues. (What has happened to the labor movement and why since 2015 it culminated in the recent crackdown on the Jasic protests and the arrest of Wei Zhili

arrests <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/0115/2019/en/>

<https://madeinchinajournal.com/2019/05/16/afterlives-of-chinese-communism/>

This on the Confucian Institutes debates-

<https://www.amazon.com/China-World-Anthropology-Institutes-Globalization/dp/0824878205>

This CI issue is important to consider in our current political environment, with the Trump attacks on students and scientists from China. (See Sup China's: <https://supchina.com/2019/07/03/the-new-yellow-peril/> ).

On the protests in Hong Kong, including the Occupy movement. See book, *City of Protest*:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/08/02/activist-legacy-of-taiwan-s-sunflower-movement-pub-76966>

Same for Xinjiang Muslim Internment camps. See Darren Byler blog <https://livingotherwise.com/author/lutbulla/>