

EALC 298A, Tu/Th 1-2:20, Davenport 312

The Ethnography of Contemporary East Asia

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Course Description

Ethnography refers both to sustained anthropological field research and to a mode of writing based on such qualitative research. This course examines what it means to research, report on, and interpret contemporary East Asia ethnographically. The best of ethnography offers fine-grained analysis of daily life while at once shedding light on large social, economic, and political structures. Anthropologists then consider how lives are informed by larger structures. This course will consider East Asia as a region that is interesting to think across because of shared cultural and historical legacies on the one hand, and radically diverse contemporary experiences on the other hand. Rather than presume the coherence of East Asia – that is the logic of even thinking about East Asia as somehow discrete – we take coherence as an open question. The ethnographic selections have nonetheless been chosen to facilitate comparative consideration. This course will also consider the specificity of ethnography as a mode of research, writing, and knowing. In this vein, course documents also include 6 documentaries, 2 short stories, and a novel. Class sessions, films, and readings are divided evenly between the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea.

Reaching me

Email (see above) and office hours are best; I check email most every weekday. I am, outside of office hours, almost never in my office. Should you need to reach me by phone, my home phone is your best bet (Monday - Friday, 9-5): 328-5763.

Requirements

All written work will be letter graded on the plus-minus scale. Grades will be lowered for late work except in the case of permission based on prior consultation. I encourage you to work with and take inspiration from their classmates. Please cite your classmate's ideas (from classroom discussion or private communication) when relying on them in your writing.

During the second week of class I want to meet with each of you briefly during my office hours – I will set up appointments.

1. Four 2-page (no longer!) papers due in class as indicated on the syllabus. 4 x 10% = 40%

Although short essays, these are meant to be formal essays. They should make a point, and mobilize data (most likely cited from the reading) in support of that point. Sentence should be clear, and the connections between sentences and paragraphs should make sense. Also, we might spend some class time presenting or reading these essays. You may re-write 2 of these essays for a new grade.

2. Five 1-page (no longer!) film responses due the class session following the film viewing. 5 x 5% = 25% (note: there will be a total of 6 films).

These responses need not be as formal as the papers. Nonetheless you should substantiate the nature of your responses with both (1) examples from the film and (2) (when relevant) reference to the readings.

3. A 6-8 page proposal for a summer (2 months) of ethnographic research in Japan, China, or South Korea. 25%. Due Monday December 15 in my mailbox at the Department of Anthropology (SW corner of the first floor of Davenport Hall – enter from quad).

Due at the end of the semester, this proposal will allow you to propose your own research, drawing on what you have learned through class reading and discussion. Your research proposal should allow you to extend, refute, or further substantiate etc. findings that you have explored in class. To take a hypothetical example: you might have discovered interesting things about punkers in South Korea, but wonder about how different they really are from youth with other musical or artistic hobbies and thus develop a research proposal to address that interest. I will be circulating detailed information on how to organize and write a proposal. In weeks 9 and 10 I will meet with each of you individually to discuss your ideas as well supplementary bibliographic materials that you will consult for your proposal. You will only be required to consult 5 sources off the syllabus (of which at least 3 must be off-line).

4. You will be asked to prepare 5 (only!) questions based on the reading 4 times during the semester. You will do this with a group of classmates to be assigned in week 2. You will be give 5 minutes to present your questions to the class.

These questions should not be informational questions (e.g., what does the author say is the population of Tokyo?) Rather these should be thought provoking questions to help the class get at the most exciting and challenging issues sparked by the reading/s of the day. They also might be questions that point back to earlier readings or classroom discussions (e.g., does X's discussion of Y make you think differently about the portrait that A offered of B?)

5. On the basis of attendance and classroom participation your grade can be elevated or demoted by a half grade.

Required Texts

A course packet will be available for your purchase and on reserve at the library.

The following books will be read in full:

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Private Life under Socialism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yoshimoto, Banana. Kitchen. (1988) 1994. New York: Washington Square Press.

A large selection will be read from the following book (selection are, however, in the reader):

White, Merry. 2002. Perfectly Japanese: Making Families in an Era of Upheaval. Berkeley: UC Press.

Course Reader

A Course Reader is available now at Dup-It Copy Shop (808 South 6th Street, Champaign; 337-7000). I have ordered copies for all of you, but it is often still best to call ahead.

Schedule

Thursday, August 28

Introduction

I. Is there a Rationale for East Asia?

Cultural Legacies

Week 1

Tuesday, September 2

Yi, Eunhee Kim. 2001. Mothers and Sons in Modern Korea. *Korea Journal* 41 (4): 5-27.

Thursday, September 4

Kondo, Dorinne. 1990. Circles of Attachment. *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 119-160.

Week 2

OFFICE HOUR VISITS TO GET TO KNOW YOU

Tuesday, September 9

Wolf, Margery. 1968. Houses and Families. In *The House of Lim: A Study of a Chinese Farm Family*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 23-35.

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Preface & The Chinese Family and the Study of Private Life. *Private Life under Socialism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. xi-xiii, 1-13

Orientalism, Colonialism, Imperialism

Thursday, September 11

Kondo, Dorinne. 1997. Orientalizing: Fashioning Japan. In *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater*. NY: Routledge. 55-99.

Week 3

Tuesday, September 16

Chôn, Kwangyang. (1962). 1993. Kapitan Ri. In M.R. Pihl and B. and J.C. Fulton, eds. *Land of Exile: Contemporary Korean Fiction*.

Thursday, September 18

DOCUMENTARY: *Japan's Rituals of Remembrance* (by anthropologist John Nelson). 32 minutes.

Week 4

Tuesday, September 23

Choi, In Hoon. (1966) 1999. The End of the State Highway. Trans. Ted Hughes. *Mānoa* 11 (2):15-20.

Cummings, Bruce. 1992. Silent But Deadly: Sexual Subordination in the U.S.-Korean Relationship. In Sandra P. Sturdevant and Brenda Stolfus eds. *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*. New York: The New Press. 169-175.

Choi, Chungmoo. 1998. Nationalism and the Construction of Gender in Korea. In *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, eds. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi. NY: Routledge. 9-14, 25-31.

PAPER #1 DUE IN CLASS: Is there a rationale for the study of East Asia as an entity?

II. Daily Life, People, and the State

The Development Self in South Korea

Thursday, September 25

Kendall, Laurel. 1996. A Rite of Modernization and Its Postmodern Discontents. In *Getting Married in Korea: of Gender, Morality and Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 52-82.

FILM RESPONSE #1 DUE IN CLASS

The Socialist and other Selves in China

Week 5

Tuesday, September 30

DOCUMENTARY: Yang, Mayfair Yang. *Through Chinese Women's Eyes*, (52 minutes).

Thursday, October 2

NO CLASS. Begin reading: Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Private Life under Socialism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Week 6

Tuesday, October 7

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Private Life under Socialism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 17-85.

FILM RESPONSE #2 DUE IN CLASS

Thursday, October 9

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Private Life under Socialism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 86-161.

Week 7

Tuesday, October 14

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Private Life under Socialism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 162-235.

PAPER #2 DUE IN CLASS: What does the state have to do with daily life?

III. Class the "Normative Life Style/Course"

Thursday, October 16

Factory Workers in South Korea

Kim, Seung Kyung. 1997. The Myth of Social Mobility: Its Creation and Reproduction among Women Workers. Class Struggle or Family Struggle?: The Lives of Women Factory Workers in South Korea. NY: Cambridge University Press. 57-96.

Kim, Hyun Mee. 1997. Gender/Sexuality System as a Labor Control Mechanism: Gender Identity of Korean Female Workers in a U.S. Multinational Corporation. Korea Journal 37.2: 56-70.

Week 8

Tuesday, October 21

The Urban Middle Class in South Korea

Yi Eunhee Kim. 1998. 'Home is A Place to Rest: Constructing the Meaning of Work, Family, and Gender in the Korean Middle Class. Korea Journal 38.2:168-213.

Kim, Eun-shil. 1997. Women and the Culture Surrounding Childbirth. Korea Journal. 37.4. 174-194.

Thursday, October 23

The "Middle Class" in Japan

Kelly, William 2002. "At the Limits of New Middle-Class Japan: Beyond 'Mainstream Consciousness.'" In Social Contracts under Stress: The Middle Classes of America, Europe, and Japan at the Turn of the Century. Oliver Zunz, Leonard Schoppa, and Nobuhiro Hiwatari eds. New York:Russell Sage. 232-254.

Week 9

OFFICE HOUR VISITS TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL IDEAS/BIBLIO

Tuesday, October 28

White, Merry. 2002. Perfectly Japanese: Making Families in an Era of Upheaval. UC Press. 63-121.

PAPER #3 DUE IN CLASS: What are your thoughts about the relationship between class and the "normative life style/course"?

IV. Sex and Gender...

Performing Sex/Gender and Family in Japan

Thursday, October 30

Robertson, Jennifer. 1992. Doing and Undoing "Female" and "Male" in Japan: The Takarazuka Revue. In Japanese Social Organization, ed. Takie S. Lebra. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 165-193.

Week 10

OFFICE HOUR VISITS TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL IDEAS/BIBLIO

Tuesday, November 4

DOCUMENTARY: Dream Girls. 1994. A film by Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams (50 minutes).

Thursday, November 6

Ogasawara, Yuko.1998. The Japanese Labor Market and Office Ladies *and* Gossip. Office Ladies and Salaried Men: Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies. Berkeley: University of California Press. 17-43, 70-97.

Kelsky, Karen. 1999. Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan. Cultural Anthropology 14.2: 229-255.

FILM RESPONSE #3 DUE IN CLASS

Week 11

Tuesday, November 11

DOCUMENTARY: The Good Wife of Tokyo (Hunt, Claire and Longinotto, Kim) (52 minutes).

White, Merry. 2002. Marketing the Bite-Size Family. Perfectly Japanese: Making Families in an Era of Upheaval. UC Press. 183-204.

Thursday, November 13

Yoshimoto, Banana. Kitchen. (1988) 1994. New York: Washington Square Press. 3-152.

FILM RESPONSE #4 DUE IN CLASS

The Gendering of Modernity in South Korea

Week 12

Tuesday, November 18

Kwon, Insook. 2000. Childhood: Child Incarnation of Chunghee Park. In Militarism in My Heart: Women's Militarized Consciousness and Culture in South Korea. Dissertation. Clark University, Women's Studies. Pp. 103-132.

Cho Haejoang. 2002. Living With Conflicting Subjectivities: Mother, Motherly Wife, and Sexy Woman in the Transition From Colonial Modern to Postmodern Korea. In Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea, ed. Laurel Kendall. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 165-195.

PAPER #4 DUE IN CLASS: topic open

VI. ...And Youth

Gender, Desire, and Youth in China

Thursday, November 20

Farrar, James. 2002. Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 150-208.

Week 13

Tuesday, December 2

Documentary: Woman Being (1995, Qin, Wen-Jie) (20 minutes)

Rofel, Lisa. 1994. Liberation Nostalgia and a Yearning for Modernity. In Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, eds. Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 226-249.

Thursday, December 4

Farrar, James. 2002. Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 208-257.

FILM RESPONSE #5 DUE IN CLASS

Week 14

Tuesday, December 9

Documentary: Our Nation (2001, Stephen J. Epstein and Timothy R. Tangherlini) (39 minutes).

Thursday, December 11

Epstein, Stephen. 2000. Anarchy in the UK, Solidarity in the ROK, Punk Rick Comes to Korea. Acta Koreana 3. 2-33.

FILM RESPONSE #6 DUE IN CLASS

PROPOSAL DUE IN MY ANTHROPOLOGY MAIL BOX, DECEMBER 15